

Parent Advocate

NEW COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION CHOSEN

The State Board of Education has selected Dr. Roger Breed, Superintendent of Elkhorn Public Schools, as the next Nebraska Commissioner of Education. The details of Dr. Breed's contract are being negotiated and it is likely that he will assume his role as full-time Commissioner by Jan. 1, 2009.

Twelve applied for this position and six semifinalists were previously interviewed.

Other finalists for the position were: Virginia Moon, Superintendent of Ralston Public Schools; Dan Hoelsing, Superintendent of Laurel-Concord, Coleridge, Newcastle, and Wynot Public School districts; and Larry Ramaekers, Superintendent of Aurora Public Schools.

The final round of interviews took place on Sept. 22 in Lincoln. Jeremy Murphy, Associate Director for Education Issues for the Nebraska Catholic Conference, observed all the finalists' interviews with

the full State Board of Education (eight members).

Private school representatives earlier participated in a focus group providing input to the State Board in the selection process. Participants included Msgr. James Gilg, Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Omaha and William McGahan, Superintendent of North Platte Catholic Schools.

Education Issues In Nebraska Elections

The Nebraska Catholic Conference has distributed surveys to federal and state candidates for political office, asking them to share their positions on a variety of issues, including education issues. Questions address support for educational choice and the role of non-governmental schools in the overall educational landscape. Please remember to check candidates' positions so you can make an informed decision when you vote on Election Day. Responses to the Catholic Conference's questionnaire will be published in *The Catholic Voice* on Oct. 17th, and in the *Southern Nebraska Register* and the *West Nebraska Register* on Oct. 24th. Candidate responses also will be posted in full on the Conference's website: www.nebcathcon.org. Election Day is November 4th, less than 40 days away!

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Enroll, Renew, Reduce, Recycle!

The NFCSP membership drive for 2008-09 is well underway. Please renew! We hope to enroll as many Catholic school parents as possible for this school year. We also want to try to ensure that every Catholic school family is given an opportunity to join NFCSP. Encourage others.

How can you enroll? Check with your school to see if it is enrolling all its parents. If not, please send in the renewal form located on page four of this newsletter or visit www.nebcathcon.org/nfcsp.html.

Dues have not increased; still only \$3.00 per family.

Please provide us with your e-mail address when you enroll or renew your membership. It saves NFCSP valuable economic resources in reducing our postage and copy expense; it is environmentally responsible to reduce unnecessary copies and mass mailings; and we can provide you information electronically faster than we can by postal mail.

Thank You!

2008-09 NFCSP GOVERNING BOARD

Officers and other governing board members of the Nebraska Federation of Catholic School Parents during the 2008-09 school term are as follows:

Archdiocese of Omaha

Jeff Wilmes, Fremont, President
Nicole Neesen, Omaha, Vice President
Frank Keller, Humphrey
Jim Stolze, Omaha
Msgr. James Gilg, Superintendent of Schools

Diocese of Lincoln

Kent Bieker, Falls City
Xann Linhart, York
Connie Munguia, Lincoln
Msgr. John Perkinton, Superintendent of Schools,
Treasurer

Diocese of Grand Island

Kathy Hranac, Kearney
Terry Pfeifer, Grand Island
Rev. Tom Ryan, Superintendent of Schools

Ex-Officio

James R. Cunningham, Executive Director,
Nebraska Catholic Conference
Jeremy P. Murphy, NCC Associate Director for
Education Issues, Recording Secretary

The NFCSP promo video will run during NET coverage of the state high school football and volleyball championships. Please watch for it and let us know what you think. Thank you for your support of the Nebraska Federation of Catholic School Parents.

Creighton's Institute for Catholic School Initiatives and the Magis Program

Creighton University is establishing an Institute for Catholic School Initiatives in connection with some other projects of the University, including the Magis Catholic Teaching Corps program. Eighteen students have graduated so far from that program, in which 19 current participants are teaching in all three Catholic dioceses of Nebraska and one South Dakota diocese. Students pursue master's education degrees tuition-free while teaching in under-resourced Catholic schools. The Magis program was modeled after Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program.

The new Institute seeks to expand and broaden

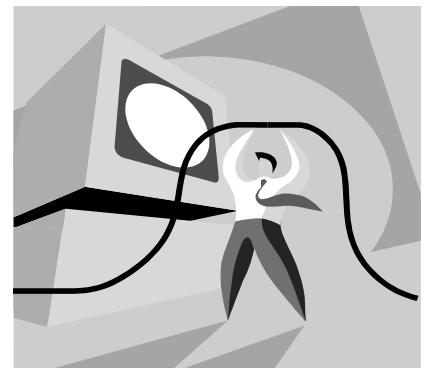
the reach of Magis to other dioceses throughout the country needing student teachers with training in Catholic education. The Institute will also serve as a consultant for inner-city and rural Catholic schools seeking assistance.

Creighton is offering a new award-winning Catholic School Leadership certificate, which is attracting students nationwide.

Scholarly research will be conducted by the institute on critical issues in Catholic education. The Institute will seek to broaden its use of web resources that are available. It will also seek to make its outreach capability global in its impact.

Did You Know?

Some have called distance education a "disruptive innovation". This does not mean an instantaneous breakthrough, but rather an innovation which gradually builds support by extending its benefits to present "non-consumers" of distance education, then offering improvements to those already consuming it, thus increasing its breadth and its impact. However, it clearly has become a force to be reckoned with. Researchers estimate that by 2014, 10% of all K-12 courses will be computer-based. By the year 2019, it is likely that half of all K-12 public school courses taken will be provided by some means of distance education. (NCES study discussed in Summer 2008 edition of *Education Next*.)



NFCSP PARENT LIAISONS RETURNING

More than 10 years ago, the NFCSP had parent liaisons with almost every Catholic school in the state. Since then, nearly all of these relationships have lapsed. We are re-establishing these parent liaison roles for the present 2008-09 school year. We have determined that effective advocacy on behalf of Catholic schools and families will require a direct personal connection to each school setting in order to work smoothly.

Parent liaisons will serve as primary parental contacts with each school/school-family organization. The Nebraska Catholic Conference office will provide training for liaisons electronically. After this fall's election, they will meet with public policy officials, especially state legislators, to bring to their attention issues and concerns related to Catholic education. The NCC office will provide liaisons with suggested issues and points to cover in making contact and in maximizing its impact. Liaisons will identify themselves in their role as on behalf of the

Nebraska Federation of Catholic School Parents. Without these contacts, elected officials will be less aware of the organized Catholic school/parent network and pressing issues and concerns.

Immediate concerns for these liaisons include textbook loan funding for the 2010-2012 Biennium as well as possible educational choice legislation. Persuading policy makers on these issues will not be possible if we do not have the necessary grassroots logistical support from families who are willing to actively involve themselves in the political process in order to improve their children's education and future opportunities and possibilities.

NFCSP needs your help. Please consider becoming a liaison for your school. If you have any questions, please contact Jeremy Murphy (JeremyMurphy@neb.rr.com). NFCSP looks forward to working with liaisons to strengthen and to better organize our Catholic school family network and to increase its effectiveness. Thanks!

N-CAPE BACK IN BUSINESS, TIES WITH CAPE RESTORED

Earlier this year, the board of directors of Nebraska-Council on American Private Education ("N-CAPE") met in order to reorganize, to conduct a business meeting and an election. Board members of N-CAPE include Msgr. James Gilg (Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of Omaha), Lorelee Muhlenbeck, Acting Superintendent of Schools, Kansas-Nebraska Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Msgr. John Perkinson (Superintendent of Schools, Lincoln Diocese), Rev. Tom Ryan (Superintendent of Schools, Grand Island Diocese), and Don Weber (Executive Secretary for Education for the Missouri-Synod Lutheran schools of Nebraska).

Father Tom Ryan was elected President, Don Weber was elected Vice-President, and Msgr. John Perkinson was elected Treasurer. On July 1, N-CAPE joined as a state affiliate of CAPE (the Council for American Private Education), the national oversight organization over statewide CAPE affiliates. Nebraska is the 32nd state to join the national CAPE community. CAPE publishes a monthly newsletter called CAPE Outlook. See www.capenet.org for further information.

N-CAPE monitors public policy decisions and how they affect private schools and recommends nominees to the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education to serve on state educational committees and commissions, including the Accreditation Committee, the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), and NCTE (Nebraska Council on Teachers Education). The latter is an advisory group which provides periodic insight and input on teacher certification rules such as NDE Rules 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24. The current N-CAPE-designated member on NCTE is Barbara Schweiger (Coordinator of Human Resources for the Archdiocese of Omaha) and the current alternate is Rev. Lawrence Stoley, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Lincoln Diocese.

WHAT'S NEW?

The Governor's office recently returned proposed revisions of NDE **Rule 10** (school accreditation) to the Department of Education without approval. This was due to its inconsistency with the newly passed state assessment system. NDE officials have indicated that they will commence work on a new version of Rule 10 sometime this fall.

Also, revised NDE **Rule 51** (which governs special-education) had a new hearing in August and has been signed by the Governor following approval by the State Board of Education and the Attorney General. It took effect on Aug. 30, 2008. There are significant improvements in the rule dealing with the provision of services for private school students.

Nebraska Federation of Catholic School Parents Enrollment Form 2008-2009
PO Box 94872, Lincoln NE 68509

Annual Membership is \$3.00 (Individual or Family)

Name: _____ School: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ *Email: _____

*** Please provide your email address to receive Action Alerts and Legislative Updates.**

NEBRASKA FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

Identity Unity Collaboration Empowerment

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