

# The Optimist



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## *I Hope You Dance*

### **President Karen's Message: "Choices"**

Now that we can look back on the last decade, we are faced with what to call them. I was born in the 50's, went to a rural elementary school and graduated from high school in the 60's, went to college got married and had my kids in the 70's, went to work full time in the 80's, watched my kids in their activities and sports and my kids graduate in the 90's and college in 2000. But even as time moves on and decades "LIFE" is about choices. Every moment of every day you either consciously make a choice or a choice is made for you. But there is a choice, and the ability to make a choice is your greatest power.

I have already shared with you my favorite song and the theme for this year's conference "I Hope You Dance!" I believe that life is an adventure into the unknown, and is so exciting that you should be in wonderment. But if you look at the faces of most people you don't see excitement. Instead you see scowls often cross their face or their eyes reflect fatigue or fear. Attitude is everything and if you change your perception, what you see becomes an entirely different view.

We have the opportunity to get up and dance! It means letting fear go so you can see wonderment of each day. Stop worrying – worrying about something has never fixed anything! If a door closes, know that another will soon open.

Why do people sit on the sidelines rather than dance? Is it because they can't dance well so they are afraid people will make fun of them? Is it because they have no partner or are worn out? Are they waiting for someone to ask them to dance? What is stopping them from getting up to dance?

Dancing is fun. Dancing is invigorating. Dancing is freeing. Dancing is great exercise. Dancing allows people into your life, new and not so new. Dancing uplifts your spirit.

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**President Karen's Message (Cont.)**

So what do you think is the best choice here? Is it better to live life sitting on the sidelines? Does sitting on the sidelines uplift your spirit, free you to be who you are, allow you to interact with others? No, it does not.

So I am telling you to get up and dance. Grab life with gusto and enjoy every minute of it. An exciting life has nothing to do with other people; it only has to do with what you feel inside your heart and what you do with it.

You have a choice. It is really that simple – you must make a choice. Do you want to sit on the sidelines or get up and dance? Sure you can go to the dance, mingle with people, but if you don't dance you miss out on the main part of the event. So many people pass through life and never feel this experience, so they miss out on the main part of the main event, the whole point of being here.

Days will pass, decades will pass, but if you put a song in your heart, or a song on your lips and wear a smile you will change the people around you. Whatever comes from within you is what will show up in your life. So do you want to dance? I HOPE YOU DANCE!

See you at conference June 16, 17, 18, 2010 in Pierre, DANCING!

Karen Speed, SDAEOP President

**30th Anniversary of SDAEOP**

Mark your calendar everyone! The 30th Anniversary of our SDAEOP Association will be June 16, 17, and 18, 2010 at the Ramkota, in Pierre, SD.

It was confirmed at Bd. Mtg. Wednesday, cost will be \$65 registration fee, \$80 for nonmember, must be member by April 1<sup>st</sup> for member rate. Rooms will be \$89.99 for 1 – 4 person occupancy. Reservations may be made by calling Ramkota @ 605-224-6877 and mention that you are with the SDAEOP conference.

Room rate is also good for 2 days before the conference and 2 days after the conference. More info to follow in Spring Optimist or they can contact Karen Sharp at 605-223-7741 (work); 223-2523 (home); 222-3140 (cell); or email: [Karen.Sharp@k12.sd.us](mailto:Karen.Sharp@k12.sd.us)

## Area Report

### News From Area VI

Area VI met Saturday January 9th for an in-service, with 23 in attendance. We started our meeting with High School student Bailey Cox singing the National Anthem. She did a wonderful job! Then after sharing a yummy brunch, Renee Brazil spoke regarding Ergonomics- the proper aligning of our bodies while sitting at our workspace. We all learned some tips we could use to make our spaces more body friendly. Jodi Harris, from Back to Nature Health Food Store, spoke about ways we can de-stress and keep our bodies healthy. Unfortunately, for some of us, we learned just how bad our current diets are!

Karen Speed and Sue Smalley led us in a game of Human Bingo, a fun way to learn little things about our neighbors and co-workers. Sharon Rank and Sue Smalley were the first ones to get bingo. We then broke into groups and worked together to come up with ideas for the 2011 Conference which will be held at the Holiday Inn Express in Sturgis in June 2011. Jenni, from the Holiday Inn, informed us of the many amenities they have to offer. She also presented a door prize for a one night stay in the Jacuzzi Suite. Bev Draine, from Spearfish, was the recipient. We had many great ideas and are looking forward to putting them into action. June Guy and Dede Long have agreed to co-chair this event.

We adjourned our meeting with the intentions of meeting again this spring to share even more fun, enthusiastic ideas, and learning together.

A note from SDAEOP President Karen Speed – I would like to thank everyone for attending this Area VI In-service, and also for bringing food and sharing ideas. It certainly goes to show you that teamwork made this In-service successful.

June Guy

Sturgis/Meade Schools

### A Decade of Changes

#### Education sees it all... The Good, The Bad, and the Beautiful

In this newsletter we thought it would be nice to have people write about the changes in their jobs in the past decade. It was such a success we had to split the articles between this newsletter and our Spring OPTimist. If you do not see your article, never fear, it will be in the next one. I hope you enjoy it!

Nancy L. Spoolman, SDAEOP Editor

#### Changes in Education

Changes in education seem to be the norm these days; the rate of changes appears to be increasing each year.

In the past few years the biggest change has been the impact of No Child Left Behind; that federal legislation requires that schools educate all children; this accountability movement requires schools to be sure that every child is learning as evidenced on the DakotaSTEP testing in April. Schools who not attain AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) have to develop improvement plans; federal monies are available to help schools implement their improvement plans. Students have to be prepared to compete in a global economy.

Another change in education is the funding of schools; prior to 1997, school boards had the responsibility to determine the tax level needed to fund each local school. In 1995, then-Governor William Janklow signed a new funding law that allocated funding based on the number of students enrolled in schools. While the funding formula is not necessarily a wrong method to fund schools, underfunding the per pupil amount, beginning in 1997, has continued to impact school's ability to provide quality programs.

## **Changes in Education (Cont.)**

Technology is another change in education; many schools are utilizing laptops for all students; other schools are using Smart boards; the Internet is providing access to information. Students are learning to use information instead of “parroting back” facts.

Hands-on learning activities and simulations have become more prevalent as schools look for ways to connect with real life and provide opportunities for students to apply learnings.

Technical education has become more important as schools prepare students for the world of work; many jobs require technical skills learned in both high school and technical colleges. Oftentimes, technical occupations provide very livable wages for students and fill the needs of society.

In summary, in today’s world students have to be accountable, just like the schools they attend. The world demands that students think and perform at high levels. Performance on high stakes tests, funding realities, using technology, hands-on learning and technical education are important trends and create many factors influencing South Dakota schools today.

Mr. Marlin Smart, Superintendent  
Milbank School District

## **Technology Changes in the Lemmon School District**

Time and technology sure seem to go fast. It seems like yesterday that a new desktop lab with ONE GIG of memory was ordered for the CAD lab at Lemmon High School to replace the “Governor’s Gateways”. What an upgrade we thought that was. Then five years ago, the state starts talking about 1:1 WIRELESS schools. What a change that would be for our students! Do we really need it? Can we afford it? If we don’t do it now, will we ever have this chance again? We didn’t have any wireless, was wireless worth the trouble? All of these questions and many more

were discussed by the administration, teachers, techs and the school board of the Lemmon School District.

Lemmon took the challenge and we are now in our fourth year of a 1:1 wireless environment for grades 7-12. This past summer, our Elementary went to a modified wireless 1:1 with students in grades 4-6 having their own laptops and the lower students sharing a laptop lab. Another addition to our technology this year has been five Promethean Boards (Four at the elementary and one at the High School). These white interactive boards have been installed in our 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms and the Agricultural Education classroom.

With all of these technological advances, our teachers have had to decide how much or how little they wanted to incorporate technology into their classrooms. It is amazing to watch the elementary students work with the Promethean Boards. One of the Special Education teachers said, “I did a ‘Mouse on a Cookie’ with a student and he was engaged the entire time and loved it! Had I given him a worksheet, he would not have done it!!!” The students love the interaction the Promethean Boards provide and by incorporating them into our curriculum, we have taken one step closer to teaching kids using mediums they can relate to.

At the High School level, we have one teacher who has gone completely paperless. By utilizing the state provided WebCT program, she sends all of her assignments to her students electronically, the students turn in their assignments the same way. She then grades the papers on her tablet and returns the corrected papers back to the students. Now, not all of our teachers have taken technology to this level, but it is amazing to watch students creating and presenting VIDEO reports on foreign countries OR illustrating original children’s books using paint and then adding audio and recording them on a CD or DVD to be used in our elementary classrooms OR presenting a speech without standing in front of the class because they have prerecorded it so it could be viewed at any time or in any place.

## Technology Changes in the Lemmon School District (Cont.)

Our students are growing up in a technology world that wasn't here a decade or more ago. The administration and teachers of Lemmon School District are taking steps to help our students learn 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills that will help them become successful when they go into the "real world".

JoLinda Hay (Former SDAEOP member)  
Technology Coordinator  
Lemmon School District

### 2000-2009: A Decade of Accountability

Are schools failing? How should schools decide what to teach? How can schools show if they are successful? These are questions that politicians and educators have wrestled with over the past decade.

No Child Left Behind was the driving force behind South Dakota choosing to develop a criterion referenced test based on standards developed for math, reading, and science. These standards were determined by committees of educators with the expectation that all schools in South Dakota would align their curriculums with the new standards. The South Dakota State Test of Educational Progress (DSTEP) would then assess students determining their educational progress at below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced.

This means of using one measure of determining a school's success is flawed at best, but it has promoted accountability. Data driven decision making has become more common as schools try to communicate with their constituents why they make certain decisions. Teachers are expected to use research based instructional strategies that have been proven to work. Objectives need to be measurable to show if improvement is indeed taking place. School improvement plans are encouraged with templates to follow. Constant evaluation of the plan and adjusting for change is necessary.

Success normally starts with a good plan that is based on key required elements. The past decade in education has reinforced this important concept. Those involved in the education process from support staff, teachers, administrators, parents, and the public need to

set students up for success by working together, setting goals, and following through on those goals. It will continue to be a debate when answering the questions asked at the beginning of this article, but being open and accountable to all stake holders will make the process stronger.

Jeff Ward is the Curriculum and Technology Director for the Meade School District 46-1. He has been in education for 22 years, 19 of which were as a classroom teacher.

### More SDAEOP Information

To learn more about our SDAEOP organization, point your browser to: <http://www.sdaeop.com>. Learn more about PSP. Take the "True Colors" test and find out what your color personality is.

Check out our SDAEOP cookbook for sale. \$5.00 for one, or two for \$9.00.

Look through our Constitution and Bylaws, or browse through the conference pictures. There is a tremendous amount of opportunities for your Professional Growth and leadership.

Download the Student Scholarship form. Or submit someone's name for the **SDAEOP Office Professional of the Year**, or **SDAEOP Administrator of the Year**. Forms are online.

If you have questions you cannot find on our SDAEOP website, please contact any of the officers or webmaster.

If you wish to see something on the website that is not available, contact Nancy Spoolman at [nanc@spoolman.com](mailto:nanc@spoolman.com).

Don't forget to join us for our 30th Anniversary SDAEOP Conference in Pierre, June 16-18, 2010!

Thought about joining our National organization, NAEOP? Check it out! <http://www.naeop.org>. More to come regarding conference in the Spring OPTimist!

<p>Love People and Use Things - Not Love Things and Use People - Author Unknown</p>
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**You'll know if you're in the New Decade because....**

**(or, Good Heavens, it's time to retire!)  
(or, why are we all STILL here!)**

Compiled by Carol Fellner, Meade School District

**Computer Teacher comments:**

We now have electronic testing which used to be done by paper and pencil.

We all have a computer with a projector; the overheads are dead!

Jump Drives/Pen drives/flash drives have replaced floppy disks.

**School Counselor comments:**

Many students have no boundaries, and they interact with staff members in a disrespectful manner. Bullying has become a concept that requires school policies and management.

**School Secretary comments:**

You'll know you are in the new decade if you sit at your desk and can have these three events occur simultaneously – the desk telephone can ring, your cell phone can ring, an e-mail can arrive, and a text message can interrupt your cell phone call. Technology has made communication instantaneous...for better or for worse. Cell phones have exploded into the hands of students of all ages. Text messages and e-mails are the new, preferred, and vastly improved method of note-passing. Does all this instantly available knowledge help? Prior to the year 2000, I did not own a cell phone. I can remember my husband disavowing ever wanting one. Of course, we are now “with it” and he has even learned not to misplace his!

You know you're in a new decade when students AND their parents come to school in pajama bottoms! When parents defend the rights of their buxom daughters to wear revealing tank tops,

when tee-shirt logos consist of pseudo four-letter words purposefully written to fool the eye, when winter weather means that MAYBE you abandon the flip-flops. Female students' tops seem to hang lower and our male students' pants also seem to hang lower. Secretaries frequently tell students to pull up their pants or change their shirts!

The rise of web-based student database management programs such as Infinite Campus! Parents did not have access to real-time information on their children like they do today.

**Custodial staff comments:**

The old saying of how many janitors does it take to change a light bulb has come true. Technology requires documentation, and where it used to be a simple matter of the staff member seeing a janitor and telling him or her verbally that a light is out in their room. Now the same problem involves about 4 to 5 people. The person fills out a work order on the computer which goes to the administrator for approval, is in turn submitted to the central buildings and grounds office for documentation. Then the turn-around report gets sent back to a custodian who has to perform the task, and then report again to his or her office that the work has been complete. In other words, much more documentation which slows down the entire process.

Technology has increased and new products are much better, so the newer facilities are easier to clean and maintain.

**School Business Office**

The accounting/reporting requirements are more detailed. Instead of doing an excel spreadsheet and calling it “good” there are entire software programs to manage accounts. Fiscal management has added layers that require more intensive oversight.

Always remember that the future comes one day at a time. ~ Dean Acheson

## Decade of Teaching

I have been a teacher for a decade! I had no idea that I would ever do anything for that long. I started teaching in 2000. Students were much the same as they are today. When I started there were lots of “helicopter parents” as there are now. I taught nice students, disrespectful students, scary students, video game addicts, nonreaders, and super students. The students and families have not changed all that much.

What has changed the most during the past ten years is the pressure that is put on teachers to perform well on standardized tests. Interestingly teachers do not take the test. Students take the test. However, administrators put the heat on teachers around February to get those scores up! Make sure everyone in your room is proficient. The entire school spends countless hours of in-service analyzing scores and making plans to raise those test scores! It really seems that we spend more time thinking about the test and less time thinking about actual learning and getting our students to think!

Another change over the past ten years has been a transition from basal based curriculums to state standards based curriculum. Along with the state standards we are also nudged more towards an inquiry based method of teaching. This pushes students to be thinkers. The days of planning “fun activities” seem to be a part of the past. We don’t have time to get fun stuff in. We have too many math and reading standards to cover. The days of opening the reading textbook and just doing the lesson plans from there are also a part of the past. Part of quality teaching now involves lots of planning, differentiating, and pulling multiple resources together. This translates to lots of work. In one word I would have to say now that teaching is TOUGH. Teaching has always been lots of work, but now it seems like more work than ever.

A positive of all of this work is that as a profession I think that teachers have become stronger. We are tougher because the job is tougher. We are capable of teaching students that law enforcement struggles with. We bring 23 kids together in one room and we teach all of them no matter what their

background, socio-economic status, or ability level. That makes educators pretty amazing people with a pretty amazing job.

## Changes in Last Decade

Three changes in regard to my job over the past decade are: increased school accountability (NCLB), changes to accounting practices, and increased use of technology.

**Increased School Accountability:** For decades politicians have been trying to “fix” public education. Most recently we have had to endure the requirements of NCLB. While the accountability piece of No Child Left Behind has been good for public education, some of the goals, such as; all children will be proficient by 2014 are unrealistic. Although, we have adapted well to the requirements of NCLB and will continue to do so, I’m concerned about the direction of public education because of the continued interference of policy makers.

**Changes to Accounting Practices:** Every so often some financial institutions get greedy and find themselves in trouble. Most recently it happened in 2008 when banks over extended credit and the Federal Government spent trillions of dollars to bail these institutions out to save our financial system from going belly up. As a result of their actions, new accounting procedures were put in place (with more to come) to prevent this from happening again. Because of these changes school districts will have to abide by new rules and make changes locally that affect how we do business. For example, the 403b changes this year were the result of what happened on the national level and yet changed how the Douglas School District conducts business with its’ employees.

**Increased use of Technology:** The continuous changes in technology are amazing. In my job I find that I use technology to communicate with staff more often. That is a plus as it increases the interaction between CO and individual buildings. In addition, it enables me to communicate with colleagues around the state and country when I have a concern/issue on the state or national level.

Additionally, I can ask several people at a time and get immediate feedback. Lastly, I am able to monitor weather conditions and make weather related announcement more accurately.

Loren Scheer, Ed.D.  
Douglas School District

## Business Decade of Changes

In the year 2000 – 10 years ago – we were just getting past the scare of the Y2K bug. We had planned and taken every precaution to ensure all that hard work we had done on all our computers would not be lost forever. It was prior to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, so there was a sense of security and privacy and trust, and there was a free-flow of information, not only with Ellsworth Air Force Base, but with everybody we did business with. We used email to communicate, but not as much as we used the phone. We drove to all of our meetings; we printed all of our checks on dot-matrix printers; we did not have any credit cards for school use; and we did not track employees hours worked in any form. Students were allowed to bring treats to school that they had made from home, and we had not ever heard about a drug called Meth.

Here we are in the year 2010 – 10 years later – and we have most definitely progressed. We rely very heavily on computers to function on a daily basis so that if we must go without them for half a day we hardly know what to do with ourselves. There is no naivety, and there is even a sense of mistrust and caution when dealing with other entities to gather information. We rarely use the phone to communicate because email is so much more efficient, and most people even carry around devices to ensure that they get their email no matter what time of day or where they are. We have conference calls or webinars whenever possible to save on time, travel and cost. We direct deposit as many checks as possible to avoid printing checks. We have several credit cards that are used more and more all the time, and we have time clocks that are utilized on every computer in the District. Students can only bring store-bought items as treats to school, and sadly, every one of us knows of the dangers of Meth.

We have more constraints and less money. We have more expectations and less time to get them done in. We have more knowledge in more areas, and are expected to do more with less in all of them. We have children who need more from us than they ever have

before. However, we also have more opportunities for our students than we ever have before. We have more sources of income to help our students in more ways than we ever have before. We have more to offer our employees in means of training and education and it is all directly at our fingertips. And, more than anything, we have more people in every area who are willing to work more in order to help however possible.

In the last 10 years, the world has changed significantly as has my position. Things have become more automated and less personal. Things move faster than ever with the internet and email and cell phones and other hand-held devices. Every day there is a new expectation to be met, but whenever something of that nature arises, the first thing I do is to turn to the people who I have made relationships with over the last 10 years for their guidance. There is no replacement for a person and their experiences and their “gut feelings” and no matter how much things change in my job, or in the world, that is one thing that will never change. We are all in this together, and without each other, we would never make it.

Trista Hedderman  
Douglas School District

## Infinite Campus at Conference

South Dakota’s Campus representative, Joe Rutledge, will be covering a workshop session at the upcoming SDAEOP conference in June.

If you have questions about Infinite Campus, now is the time to begin compiling them so you are prepared. This is something Julie Holmes started many years ago, so let’s take advantage of this opportunity!

The majority of attendees last year felt it would be beneficial to have a workshop session during the conference, rather than each person asking our Campus representatives questions that might benefit the entire group. However, Joe will be available throughout the conference.

Email Nancy Spoolman, [nanc@spoolman.com](mailto:nanc@spoolman.com), if you have questions.

Laughter is the sun that drives winter  
from the human face. ~ Victor Hugo

**SOUTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL OFFICE PROFESSIONALS  
Membership Application July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010**

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Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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Elementary     Middle School     Secondary     Administration     Higher Education

State Department     Other \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

School District \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Years in SDAEOP \_\_\_\_\_ (including this year) No. of years in NAEOP \_\_\_\_\_ (including this year)

Personal interests and hobbies \_\_\_\_\_

Are you now or do you plan to continue your education? \_\_\_\_\_ (College, PSP, etc)

If you have served on the SDAEOP Board of Directors, please list the office(s) and committee(s) you have served on and the year served:  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have not had the opportunity to serve on the SDAEOP Board of Directors, would you be interested in doing so and in what capacity?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Comments regarding our Association: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to SDAEOP and mail (along with this form) to:**

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