



## *Superintendent's Notes*

### **Myths that continue to Confound Us.....**

Our educational policy deliberations are dominated by a belief that we can cure our educational problems if only we can find a magic bullet—"scientifically proven" teaching methods, school choice, or increased student testing. These beliefs are based on a set of loosely coupled myths about U.S. education. The myths form the basis for much of our rhetoric and many of our policies.

#### **The first of these myths: That we can "fix" our schools without addressing the problems of poverty. We can't!**

The achievement gap based on family socioeconomic status is the most significant problem in all countries, and accounts for about three-quarters of the variation in student performance among schools in the United States. Compounding the problem in this country are large inequalities in school resources, largely to the disadvantage of poor communities. We have one of the largest income and wealth gaps between rich and poor when compared with other industrialized countries, and, at the same time, our system of school finance is also one of the most unequal. Both have major consequences for the educational achievement of students from low-income families.

#### **A second myth: That test-score comparisons are valid measures of the quality of education.**

The fact is that test-score comparisons tell us little about the quality of education in any country or state. The first problem is sampling. For example, which schools and students are selected to participate? To what extent have children from low-income families dropped out of school before the test is administered? Are children with disabilities tested? Language-minority children? The point is that the more selective the sample, the higher the average score. The second problem in interpreting comparisons is poverty. We know that poverty plays a major role in educational achievement, and that regions vary enormously in the level of poverty and the extent to which low-income children are even in regular attendance to be tested. A community that has a relatively high level of child poverty but also actually works to have low-income students to stay in school will be at a disadvantage in the test-score comparisons. The difficulty of interpreting test-score comparisons is also repeated in comparisons of test scores between districts and schools within districts under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Paraphrased from *Iris C. Rotberg, professor of education policy George Washington University.*

#### **I would suggest a third myth: That we can overcome our challenges and be successful without working cooperatively together. We Can't! However,**

**"TOGETHER WE CAN!"**

**Have a Great Week!**

*Steve Schoonmaker*

# Spencer-Van Etten Elementary School



*"With These Hands We Will All Be Connected"*

*by Jacqlyn (4<sup>th</sup> Grade)*

This week Mrs. Mack's 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade classroom spent time writing paragraphs entitled "My Hands".

I love my hands. My hands can help me swim. I use my hands to do gymnastics. My hands help me paint. I drop a ball with my hands. My hands are great for climbing. I use my hands to help build.

By Claudia

My hands can do wonderful things. I pick up the cat. I tie shoes. I have big hands that can hold dirt.

By Chelsie

My hands can do many things. I help Ethan my cousin. I help him swim. I hug Ethan and he hugs me. I ride my bike. I ride it with Nick. I hug with my hands. I hug nicely.

By Jessica

I love my hands. My hands can play. I write with my hands. My hands can run. My hands can catch. My hands can eat. My hands can pet cats.

By Dalton



My hands are very amazing. I can write and I can cut with my hands. Today was a fantastic day for my hands. It was good. Are my hands good at many things? Yes!

By Charles

## Got Spirit?

Your child has been given a Spirit and Pride order form for *Spencer-Van Etten Elementary* t-shirts, sweatshirts and other spirit wear items.

All orders are due with payment by **October 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

If you did not receive an order form and would like one, they are available at the school office.

## IMPORTANT DATES

**October 1<sup>st</sup>** – "Books Good Enough To Eat" Dinner – 6 – 7:30 p.m.

(Reservations Necessary)

**October 10<sup>th</sup>** – School Photo Day

**October 10<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>** – Scholastic Safari Book Fair

**October 16<sup>th</sup>** – SVE Elementary Open House