It's the most wonderful time of the year! With the kids jingle belling and everyone telling you "Be of good cheer!" It's the most wonderful time of the year!

I absolutely love this time of year! However, the most wonderful time of the year is not without its stressors. Often when I think of Christmas, I think of making sure the Christmas program is ready to go, preparing for family gatherings, hectic buying of gifts, and getting my cards out on time! Every year it seems as though we brave undisciplined mall crowds, hurriedly whip up Christmas goodies and re-learn the delicate art of gift wrapping. In short, the time flies by too quickly, and we get wrapped up in the hustle and bustle. There’s always too much to do, too little time and too many people making demands on our time.

Our normal days usually go by faster than any runner, and we let them fly away without seeing the joy in them. So this note is to serve as a reminder to all of us that we need to restore a balance in our hurried lives so that we can truly enjoy this wonderful time. After reading an interesting article, this is what I will encourage all of us to do: First, maybe we can tuck away our “tech” during the evenings (at least for a while). I get quite overwhelmed by the flood of daily data. Several years ago, we were told that less paper and more technology would free us to work less and give us time to pay more attention to the most important things in our lives. Now I don’t know about you, but it seems to me that my work-related activities have now extended into my personal time.

Next, I want to be more realistic about my work load. Do I really need to spend that many hours at school? Maybe what I really need is to make the most of my day from 8:00 – 4:30 by looking for opportunities to cut back or maybe even delegate.

Finally, I’m going to embrace my ability to say “NO”. While that may sound selfish, I need to remind myself that it’s truly okay to step back once in a while and realize that I can only do what I can do in a certain time frame. When those pangs of guilt rush in, I’ll ask myself, “Am I the only person that can do this?” Usually, I’m not!

It IS the most wonderful time of the year, and I want to cherish it and get all the enjoyment of the holiday season that I can. With all my extra time, I’ll spend more time looking for just the right gifts. I’ll turn up the Christmas tunes as I slowly stir the caramel, and I just might talk my family into caroling for our neighbors! So, I hope you can experience the same enjoyment of Christmas, and I leave you with this very familiar thought:

And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled ‘till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn’t come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.

-- Dr. Seuss

I wish you MORE! Merry Christmas to you and yours with best wishes for a glorious 2015!
Keith Leintz  
McVay Elementary School  
Williston, ND

My name is Keith Leintz and I am running for my first term in the Vice President position with NDAESP. I am extremely excited to have the opportunity to serve the membership in this position and beyond.

I have been in education for 22 years and have served as an elementary principal for the past 16 years. In 1992 I began my teaching career in Killeen Independent School District, Killeen, Texas where I taught 3rd-5th grades. In 2000 I completed my master of education in Educational Administration and began as an assistant principal at a Pre-K to 5 school. In 2003 I moved to Williston where I currently hold the position of elementary principal for grades K-6 at McVay Elementary School.

I have been a member of NDAESP for 13 years. Prior to joining NDAESP, I was an active member of TAESP and NAESP. NDAESP have given me an opportunity to meet other administrators in North Dakota, learn new educational leadership skills and develop a network of principals that I can contact with questions. NDAESP is a very active organization and it was very helpful to me starting out in North Dakota as a new administrator and has continued to offer me great resources now that I am a “veteran” administrator. I served as the Region I Representative in 2007 and enjoyed working with the organization and Board in that capacity. I have also had the opportunity to work with the NDAESP Vice President on the Constitution Ad Hoc committee in 2007, updating and making recommendations to the Board for revisions to the current Constitution. I also had the opportunity to serve on the Region Ad Hoc Committee where we had the duty of revising the current region map to make a six region map to replace the current eight region map. I am excited about doing more with the Board and becoming more involved in what we do as an organization for administrators. I am very pleased to be a member and want to give back to the organization by serving on the Board.

I believe that it is extremely important for the educational leaders in North Dakota to work together to create and sustain a strong educational base for our youth. NDAESP does a wonderful job of providing us with that opportunity and I am excited about the opportunity to serve on the Board and help continue our great traditions and success. I welcome the opportunity to serve on the NDAESP Board as Vice President. I will be committed and dedicated to serving this office with loyalty and honesty and will strive to get input from the members to help create a bigger and better organization.
I am excited to have the opportunity to run for the office of NDAESP Vice-President and would feel privileged if you chose to put your trust in me in this position. I have been a member of NDAESP and NAESP since becoming a principal seven years ago. The last four years I have served as the Secretary-Treasurer of our organization. My time spent on the board has been professionally rewarding, and the knowledge and experience I have gained has been invaluable as a principal. I feel that I am prepared for the challenges and responsibilities of this office having gained a strong knowledge of our organization and our parent organization, NAESP through my past service and direct involvement. I believe that our organization is strong, and as members we all have a responsibility to give of our time in order to support principals everywhere whether new to the profession or veterans with years of experience.

I am currently in my first year as principal at Oakes Elementary School. I have 290 students in K-6 and about 35 staff members. Prior to returning to my hometown of Oakes, I was the principal at Ellendale Elementary School and spent six awesome years leading the students and staff at a school I am very proud to have been a part of! I was a teacher for 17 years before moving into the principalship and have never regretted the decision to make the move as the rewards have been life-changing and rewarding beyond words. I graduated with my bachelor degree from Minnesota State University-Moorhead and earned my masters from NDSU. I am currently starting the process of obtaining my Doctorate in Ed. Leadership and am hoping to focus on curriculum and assessment. In the future, I would love to teach part-time in higher education while continuing my career as a principal.

Last year in February I had the HONOR and PRIVILEGE of being chosen as the 2014 North Dakota National Distinguished Principal. I recently returned from the National Awards Ceremony held in Washington, DC, October 15-18…an experience I wish all principals could have! I was humbled and so extremely proud to represent our state, and my beliefs were just reaffirmed that our state indeed is top-notch on the national education stage. I was able to share our successes and struggles with principals from all 50 states, while gaining a vast amount of knowledge from experienced and informed professionals to bring back to our state organization.

I am married to Randy Sell and we live on a farm in the small community of Guelph. We have two grown children that attend the University of Jamestown. Makenzie, is a nursing major and Kaleb, is a criminal justice major. Our straggler, Logan, is currently a 7th grader at Oakes High School. Family plays a major part in my life, and belief in a strong educational system for my children and grandchildren drives many of my choices and actions.

As your Vice-President, I would continue to serve our members and support the strength and growth of not only our profession, but education as a whole, both here in North Dakota and in the national arena.
I want to thank you all for the opportunity to hopefully represent the organization of NDAESP. While I am new to the organization and the culture of elementary school, I am not new to the position of leadership. It is time for me to take on a larger role and work with my peers across the state more closely than I have in the past.

I am a born and raised North Dakotan. I graduated from Red River High School in 1982 and have attended the University of North Dakota and Mayville State in earning my degrees. I earned my Bachelor’s Degree from Mayville State in the summer of 1988 and my Masters Degree in Ed. Leadership from UND in the spring of 2004.

My teaching and coaching career include stints at Fertile-Beltrami (MN) High School for 3 years from 1988-89 to 90-91. In 1991, I entered graduate school at UND and worked as a graduate assistant for Gene Roebuck and the Women’s Basketball team for 2 years. In 1994 I moved on to become a teacher and a coach in the Lakota School District, teaching P.E. (K-3 and 7-12) and Health. In 1997, I accepted the Head Men’s Basketball position at Lake Region State College in Devils Lake. I coached the Men’s team for 4 years and taught in the HPER department as well. In the summer of 2001, I accepted a position with the Larimore School District. I taught a variety of Social Studies and Physical Education courses for 6 years and was the Head Boy’s coach for those 6 years as well. In the fall of 2008 I began my career as the High School Principal at Larimore High School. In the spring of 2014 I was fortunate to be named ND High School Principal of the year. After 13 years in Larimore I moved on this fall to Thompson Public School and became the Elementary Principal.

As I stated earlier, while I am new in the role of leading an elementary school I am not new to being a leader. I chose the path of the elementary school environment last spring because I have fallen in love with the idea of teaching and learning being the driving force behind what we do in the classroom. I understand that grades are a part of school but at the high school they tend to drive what we do and I found that less fun and, at times, a bit frustrating. At the elementary level, while we still assess how our students are doing, I believe the emphasis can be on how we teach and what we do if/when our students don’t get it. The idea that each student gets limited opportunities to define themselves as a success is somehow wrong to me. At the elementary school we don’t have to rush to the end of the book, we work in small groups, we re-teach without a second thought, we support our struggling students in the classroom as well as out of the classroom and strive to share success with every one of them. I didn’t always see that in the high school and, therefore, I needed to follow my heart, and make the move. I’m at a point in my career where I want to be more involved at the state level. I know I will bring enthusiasm to this position and an openness to learn from all of you. I love to learn and be taught!!

My wife Carol and I have been married for 29 years. She is a high school Science teacher at Grand Forks Red River. We have 3 daughters; Jamie is 29 and lives in Williston. Jamie has a 2 year old daughter, Wren. Andra is 24 and enrolled in Graduate School at NDSU. She is working on a Master’s degree in Counseling. JoDee is 20 and a junior at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD. She is majoring in Accounting and Business Administration and also competing in the golf program there.
My name is Susie Atkinson and I am running for the office of NDAESP Secretary/Treasurer. I am currently the elementary principal at Lewis & Clark Elementary in Mandan. I have been in education for 36 years, with this being my 22nd year as a principal.

I have been a member of NDAESP and NAESP since I became a principal. Before becoming a principal I belonged to NDEA. To be able to belong to an organization such as NDAESP has always been one of the saving graces of my profession. I always come back from conferences reaffirmed in what I have chosen to do for my life long career. It is for this reason that I am running for this office - so I can give back to the organization that has given so much to me.

It would be a privilege and an honor to be given the opportunity to do the best job I can as your NDAESP secretary/treasurer.
Greetings and salutations fellow elementary principal colleagues! My name is Matt Fricke and I am running for the office of NDAESP Secretary/Treasurer. Currently, I serve as a principal at Murphy Elementary School in Bismarck. This is my 5th year serving as the principal at Murphy Elementary and in my 21 years in the education field, I thoroughly enjoy the challenges and celebrations each school day brings!

Prior to moving into an administrative role, I served students, staff and families for 15 years as a special education teacher working with children with Intellectual Disabilities, Other Health Impairment, Emotional Disturbance and additional individualized learning needs. Although it was a difficult decision to move from a teaching position into an administrative role, I am grateful for the opportunity each day to serve as an advocate for ALL students! As my staff has heard me say often, “Each day we need to make sure that we do what’s best for kids, not adults.”

I am a STRONG supporter of being a member of professional organizations. An African proverb states: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together!” I have been a long-time member of NDEA and NEA (now ND United) as well as a member of NDAESP, NDCEL and NAESP since entering the administrative field. As a member of NDAESP it is critical that we support and sustain our mission to “Assist, Support, and Serve Elementary and Middle School Principals in Order to Provide Quality Education for All Children.” As members, each of us has a responsibility to serve our organization and colleagues to ensure that we sustain this mission and our organizational goals. I have chosen to become a candidate to serve in a leadership role as the NDAESP Secretary/Treasurer position as further evidence of my career and philosophical commitment to students and our organization’s mission statement of ensuring a quality education for ALL children.

I would be honored to serve our organization and more importantly, each of you in the role of NDAESP Secretary/Treasurer. Thank you for taking the time to read my biography and considering me for this position!
My name is Derek Gackle and I’m running for the office of NDAESP Secretary/Treasurer. I am currently in my sixth year as the administrator of Yellowstone School District in East Fairview. I graduated from Minot State and I have been in education since 1997 with a short 3 year hiatus as an Assistant Director of Residence Life while I completed my master’s degree. Prior to beginning my administrative career in North Dakota, I spent four years in the classroom at Columbus, MT, and two years at Hardin, MT, plus two years as dean of students at Hardin High School.

I have been a member of NDAESP, NAESP, NDCEL, and ASCD since beginning my journey in North Dakota. I was also a member of MCEL and SAM (School Administrators of Montana) for two years. My first mid-winter conference for the association was in Aberdeen, SD. I was a little quizzical but made the journey anyway and I’m very glad I did. Being able to experience the joint conference strengthened my belief in the importance of not only belonging to such a great organization but also being an active member. I feel that now is the time to take on the responsibility of a leadership role within the organization to help maintain the support and guidance that I have received as a member. It is for this reason that I am seeking the position of secretary/treasurer.

I feel I am a viable candidate for this position for two main reasons. I am the only administrator in my District so I am responsible for all duties associated with the Superintendent as well as Principal positions. In addition to maintaining the budget for the District, I also participate in all School Board meetings. The second reason focuses on the support I have at home. My wife is a high school math teacher so not only has our household always been about education, she will ensure the numbers are always right! It would be a privilege and honor to serve as your NDAESP Secretary/Treasurer.
Our Zone 7 State Representative conference calls these past months have focused on preparing for the Zone 7 Director elections process. This year’s process will consist of the candidates sending their candidate information to the national office. The national office will do their part in getting the information out to all members. From there the current Zone 7 Director, Dr. Steven Geis, will follow the agreed upon process that was developed to get the information out to each state prior to the voting window.

The State Representatives continue to have a discussion on a Zone 7 Conference in a central location. Specifics of the conference, such as, location, who attends and date continues to be discussed.

Registration is currently open for the NAESP National Conference in Long Beach, California from June 30-July 2, 2015. Housing will open on December 8. The Westin Long Beach is the headquarter hotel. You can also reserve rooms at Hilton Long Beach, Hyatt Regency Long Beach and the Renaissance Long Beach Hotels. More information will be coming out as the conference nears about the Zone 7 Reception and other conference information.

In closing, I would like to wish all of you a wonderful Christmas Holiday and Happy New Year! I hope the holidays bring you much joy and relaxation with family.

http://www.naesp-conference.org
Season's Greetings from the State Editor. I would like to begin by thanking the six people who are running for two NDAESP offices. In my many years as a NDAESP member I do not recall that there has ever been such a full ballot. I appreciate their willingness to serve NDAESP and its members. Please read through the candidate bio information included in this publication and of course VOTE when the on-line voting opens on the Friday of the NDAESP Mid-Winter conference.

I feel a little funny encouraging you to attend the Mid-Winter conference this year. The NDAESP mid-winter conference is the single most important conference I attend each year. Unfortunately my oldest son did not check my schedule before setting a date to be married. I will miss the opportunity to learn and spend important time with my peers. You never have enough time to be out of your school. Make time this year to attend the NDAESP mid-winter conference. You won’t be disappointed.

NDAESP Mid-Winter Conference 2015- Bismarck (Feb. 4-5-6, 2015) 
Best Western Ramada Bismarck (Block of Rooms-NDAESP Conference) 
1-701-258-7000

REGISTRATION LINK (http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NDAESPCnf)
Season’s Greetings to all of our members! If you are like I am, you are behind in getting ready for Christmas. Oh well, the date is on the calendar and it will be here whether I’m ready or not!

The election season is over and it is time to get to work! At least, that is what I am hoping and praying our legislators are thinking – both at the federal and state levels. This week the state legislators are in Bismarck getting ready for the session. Our federal legislators are back in Washington getting reorganized as well. It will be interesting to watch as the congress will be controlled by one party and the executive branch by the other party. A question remains – Will there be more of the same? Gridlock? We can only hope the two parties will decide it is time to work together for the good of the country.

In late February, the NDAESP leaders will be attending the NAESP Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. One of the activities for the state leaders is to visit the congressional offices of our senators and representative and share with them the stories we have to tell about our schools. It is important for them to understand the needs our students have in our schools. Do you have stories we can share with our senators and representative? Please let us know. Send an email or call any of the group that will be attending the meeting: Audrey Faul, Stacy Murschel, Dave Steckler, David Hanson, and me.

In an email to the Federal Relations Coordinators this week, the NAESP national office indicated there will be a push on in the congress for the reauthorizing ESEA (the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) this year. I will be happy to see the reauthorization happen during the next session of congress – it has been seven years since the act was supposed to be reauthorized! It’s time.

The NDAESP Mid-Winter Conference is scheduled to be in Bismarck February 4-6 at the Ramada located at 1400 E Interchange Avenue in Bismarck. We look forward to seeing all the elementary principals at the conference. “Be a Game Changer” is the theme of the conference which promises to be an excellent conference with great speakers and a great time to network with your colleagues from across the state. We have three outstanding presenters for the conference this year – Annette Breaux, Jill Jackson, and Steve Barkley. The presenters are entertaining and thought provoking. We look forward to seeing you!
Article II. Other Official Positions

Section 1. NDAESP Presidential Responsibilities

6. Represent NDAESP at the NAESP National Convention.
   Assume the position of NDAESP President on June 1st.
   Attend the NAESP National Convention held later that month.
   Reimbursement will be based on current NDAESP protocols.

7. Attend the annual National Leaders’ Conference in Washington, DC.
   Reimbursement will be based on current NDAESP protocols.

Section 2. NDAESP President-Elect Responsibilities

4. Represent NDAESP at the NAESP Convention.
   Assume the position of NDAESP President-Elect on June 1st.
   Attend the NAESP National Convention held later that month.
   Reimbursement will be based on current NDAESP protocols.

5. Attend the annual State Leaders’ Conference in Washington, DC.
   Reimbursement will be based on current NDAESP protocols.

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Section 3.  **NDAESP Vice Presidential Responsibilities**

4.  Attend the NAESP Convention if the budget allows.
(To be determined at February Exec Board Meeting)

Section 4.  **NDAESP Secretary/Treasurer Responsibilities**

11.  Attend NAESP National Convention during the second-first year of their second two-year term.
Reimbursement will be based on current NDAESP protocols.

Section 6.  **NDAESP State Representative Responsibilities**

5.  Represent NDAESP at the NAESP Convention.
Reimbursement will be based on current NDAESP protocols.

6.  Attend the State Leadership Conference in Washington, DC.
(NAESP REIMBURSEMENT)
Reimbursement will be based on current NAESP protocols.

Section 7.  **NDAESP “The Voice” Editor Responsibilities**

Reimbursement will be based on current NDAESP protocols.

Section 9.  **Federal Relations Office Responsibilities**

3.  Represent NDAESP at the NAESP National Convention.
Assume the position of NDAESP Federal Relations Office on June 1st.
Attend the NAESP National Convention held later that month.
Reimbursement will be based on current NDAESP protocols.

4.  Attend the annual National Leaders’ Conference in Washington, DC.
Reimbursement will be based on current NAESP protocols.

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Section 7. Service to Children

This award is given to individuals who are leaving the education profession.

Criteria Include:

1. Membership in NDAESP
2. Membership in NDAESP during the year prior to retirement.

This award is designed to honor individuals who are retiring or leaving the principalship for their years of service to education of children in our state and for their professional involvement in NDAESP.

New Website for New Principals

Thanks to the National Panel of New Principals (NPNP), new principals can now find support and contribute to the profession at the same time.

The panel is the first and only national program dedicated to gathering and sharing the experiences of new principals in rural, urban, and suburban schools across the country. By joining the NPNP, elementary and middle-level administrators in their first or second year on the job can contribute to a dynamic knowledge base about what it’s really like to be a new principal today.

Get the latest input and ideas from new principals, plus information about how to participate in this exciting and prestigious national program by visiting the new website at newprincipal.org. The site features the most popular resources from the panel, as well as the monthly Rise & Shine brief, which summarizes new principals’ thinking on select topic areas.

—Dateline NAESP