

Issue
THREE

October/November 2013

November is Native American Month. Resources on page 7

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Fifth-grader Alyx has trouble naming the “absolute coolest” thing about Wilson Focus School, part of an innovative educational model called the Learning Community that provides students opportunities to attend diverse schools in highly segregated areas.

Alyx says it’s not just the snakes and other reptiles, not just the “totally amazing and beautiful” Australian blue-tongued skink caged in her classroom. It’s not just her teacher, Mr. Mitchell, “who is so great, who is the best.” And it’s not just her friend Nolan who is “funny and kind.” But Alyx, who is white and lives in the suburbs, and Nolan, who is African American and lives in Omaha, agree that one of the “coolest” things is as Alyx says, “There are kids from all over. Everywhere.”



Fifth graders Alyx and Nolan survey the after-school offerings at the diverse, dynamic Wilson Focus School in Omaha, Nebraska.

Well, not quite everywhere. But unlike the typical school in this highly segregated region, or the typical school in many still-segregated communities across the country, Wilson Focus School reaches across two counties to bring

together students from a mix of racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds. Yet, even with its well-documented successes, the Learning Community is being threatened by public officials who question the value of the diversity it brings.

Wilson offers the standard diet of mandatory reading time, science reports and oral presentations. However the schools’ specialized leadership, communication and technology curriculum nudges kids into constant negotiations with each other. Each day, students must solve problems collectively, acknowledge and negotiate differences and learn how to balance individual desires with community needs.

In Alyx and Nolan’s fifth grade classroom, students hone these skills within their own “micro-society” they named “DiverseCity.” Nolan explains: “Students have jobs, like cops or lawyers or secretaries and there are rules and you sure can bet there are disagreements that you need to resolve.”

Fifth-grader Nicholas Vollmer notes that in DiverseCity, “you can sue people,” adding, “But you don’t want to overdo that because . . .usually the goal is to get to some peaceful kind of resolution.” continue page 2

Innovative Nebraska Program Brings Diversity to Some highly Segregated Public Schools

American’s Wire, Susan Eaton

Read entire article at America’s Wire <http://americaswire.org/drupal7/?q=content/innovative-nebraska-program-brings-diversity-to-some-highly-segregated-public-schools-0>



What’s on the NDE homepage

- 2013 State of the School’s Report
- First Five: Nebraska Early Childhood
- 2013 Teacher of the Year Named

<http://www.education.ne.gov/>

Diversity is not just an add-on feature, here, teachers say, but integral to the mission of the school.

“The students,” teacher Glenn Mitchell says, “Really get,” that “diversity—be it racial socioeconomic, cultural, in learning style...is a reality of life and that our diversity is going to help them learn how to leaders. They can’t really be leaders if they can’t communicate and interact successfully in a diverse setting. Isn’t that obvious? I mean, it seems pretty obvious to me.”

The FocusSchool is but one element in metropolitan Omaha’s regional education model known as the Learning Community. Created by Nebraska’s legislature in 2007, the Learning Community is designed to reduce funding disparities between Omaha and its suburbs and to create more socioeconomic diversity in schools.

Eleven school districts pool money that the Learning Community then redistributes via a needs-based formula. The money also provides free transportation to certain students who wish to attend schools not located in the districts where they live.

Finally, Learning Community dollars pay for an array of education-related services, including high-quality preschool, to young people and their families who live in Omaha’s poorest neighborhoods.

The Learning Community emerged following anguished debate over the kinds of messy issues most elected leaders, even in ostensibly more progressive states, prefer to avoid discussing – segregation, economic inequality, social cohesion and righting past wrongs of discrimination. There is still a lot of hopefulness surrounding the Learning Community, both locally and nationally, among civil rights advocates, educational leaders and scholars. But it is not clear that the program will survive the political threats that it faces.

This month, a group of state legislators introduced a bill that would dismantle the Learning Community, although it’s unclear whether the bill will reach Nebraska Gov. David Heineman’s desk. Five years ago, Gov. Heineman signed the legislation to create the Learning Community, but in recent years he has questioned whether the program is still needed. “I don’t know what purpose it really serves,” Gov. Heineman recently told a local reporter. However, the Learning Community still has strong support among the state legislature’s education committee and certainly among parents and children who have benefitted from it.

READ MORE <http://americaswire.org/drupal7/?q=content/innovative-nebraska-program-brings-diversity-some-highly-segregated-public-schools->

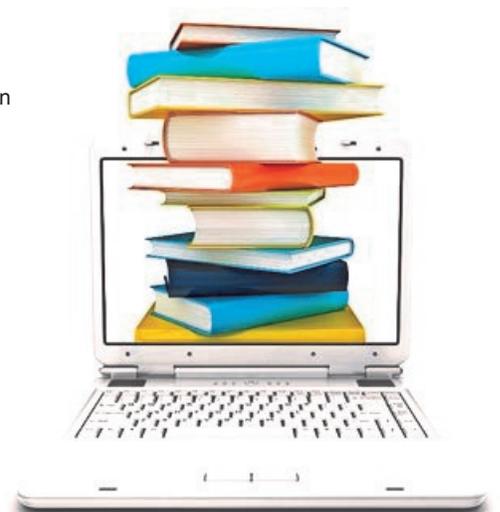
Online K-12 Schools’ Underwhelming Results Could Threaten Industry

<http://www.educationnews.org/online-schools/online-schools-underwhelming-results-could-threaten-industry/>

It’s flexible learning. The article states “it’s on an upswing; their numbers, the enrollment, the advertising.” In reality they are failing in academics and getting an “A+ “ for marketing.

“...Yet when researchers from the National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado Boulder evaluated academic achievement at every one of the more than 300 online schools in the U.S., they found “serious and systemic” problems throughout the industry.”

Is the way education is going?



E-Readers Can Make Reading Easier for Those With Dyslexia



As e-readers grow in popularity as convenient alternatives to traditional books, researchers at the Smithsonian have found that convenience may not be their only benefit. The team discovered that when e-readers are set up to display only a few words per line, some people with dyslexia can read more easily, quickly and with greater comprehension. Their findings are published in the Sept. 18 issue of the journal *PLOS ONE*.

An element in many cases of dyslexia is called a visual attention deficit. It is marked by an inability to concentrate on letters within words

or words within lines of text. Another element is known as visual crowding--the failure to recognize letters when they are cluttered within the word. Using short lines on an e-reader can alleviate these issues and promote reading by reducing visual distractions within the text. "At least a third of those with dyslexia we tested have these issues with visual attention and are helped by reading on the e-reader," said Matthew H. Schneps, director of the Laboratory for Visual Learning at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and lead author of the research.

"For those who don't have these issues, the study showed that the traditional ways of displaying text are better."

An earlier study by Schneps tracked eye movements of dyslexic students while they read, and it showed the use of short lines facilitated reading by improving the efficiency of the eye movements. This second study examined the role the small hand-held reader had on comprehension, and found that in many cases the device not only improved speed and efficiency, but improved abilities for the dyslexic reader to grasp the meaning of the text.

The team tested the reading comprehension and speed of 103 students with dyslexia who attend Landmark High School in

Boston. Reading on paper was compared with reading on small hand-held e-reader devices, configured to lines of text that were two-to-three words long. The use of an e-reader significantly improved speed and comprehension in many of the students. Those students with a pronounced visual attention deficit benefited most from reading text on a handheld device versus on paper, while the reverse was true for those who did not exhibit these issues. The small screen on a handheld device displaying few words (versus a full sheet of paper) is believed to narrow and concentrate the reader's focus, which controls visual distraction."

The high school students we tested at Landmark had the benefit of many years of exceptional remediation, but even so, if they have visual attention deficits they will eventually hit a plateau, and traditional approaches can no longer help," said Schneps. "Our research showed that the e-readers help these students reach beyond those limits."

These findings suggest that this reading method can be an effective intervention for struggling readers and that e-readers may be more than new technological gadgets: They also may be educational resources and solutions for those with dyslexia.

Taken from ScienceDaily
<http://www.sciencedaily.com>

The Proficiency Gap. Is Nebraska the same as the nation?

Lower Grades Progress Negated in High School; New Approaches Needed

By Teresa Wiltz

America's Wire <http://americaswire.org/drupal7/?q=content/educators-alarmed-black-latino-high-school-students-perform-levels-30-years-ago>

WASHINGTON—Educators are expressing alarm that the performance gap between minority and white high school students continues to expand across the United States, with minority teenagers performing at academic levels equal to or lower than those of 30 years ago.

Despite the hope that improving education for children of color would propel them to better life outcomes, Latino and African-American students are not being prepared in high school classrooms for brighter futures. While achievement levels have improved considerably for minority elementary and middle school students, educators say their academic performance drops during high school years.

How prevalent is the achievement gap at the high school level? On average, African-American and Latino high school seniors perform math and read at the same level as 13-year-old white students.

"We take kids that start [high school] a little behind and by the time they finish high school, they're way behind," says Amy Wilkins, vice president for government affairs and communications at the Education Trust, a Washington-based educational advocacy group. "That's the opposite of what American values say education is about. Education is supposed to level the playing field. And it does the opposite. . . . While many people are celebrating our postracial society . . . there is still a significant hangover in our schools."

The Education Trust says African-American and Latino students have made little to no progress in 12th-grade reading scores since 1994, continuing to lag behind white students. Math achievement has also remained flat, with the gap between white students and those of color widening.

Educators cite these causes for the disparity in performance:

- Lowered expectations for students of color
- Growing income inequality and lack of resources in low-income school districts
- Unequal access to experienced teachers
- An increased number of "out of field" teachers instructing minority students in subjects outside their area of expertise
- Unconscious bias" by teachers and administrators.

These factors, experts say, produce an opportunity gap for students of color.

"A 12th-grade education in a more affluent neighborhood is not the same as the education in a less affluent neighborhood," says Dominique Apollon, research director of the Applied Research Center, a national nonprofit with offices in New York, Chicago and Oakland, Calif. "Top students in low-income schools don't have the opportunity to be pushed further and further."

Wilkins adds that "school is their best chance of escaping horrible circumstances. To cut them some slack in school is not the appropriate response to racism and poverty in American culture. It is a response that ends up being deadly to the students."

School advocates say students of color, regardless of class, are frequently met with lowered expectations from teachers and administrators. With such expectations come lowered requirements in the classroom, they say. Students in low-income schools are more likely to be given an "A" for work that would receive a "C" in a more affluent school, according to "Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps

Between Groups: Lessons from Schools and Districts on the Performance Frontier," an Education Trust study released last November.

Students of color are also less likely to be given advanced-level coursework. John Capozzi, principal of Elmont (N.Y.) Memorial Junior-Senior High School, is among educators who call that a civil rights issue. Capozzi says he frequently battles those coursework perceptions, even from fellow educators and accreditation officials evaluating his school.

"They have preconceived notions about minority kids," says Capozzi, whose students are primarily African-American and Latino. "A large part of my job . . . [is] dispelling the stereotypes of our kids. It's long been embedded in society."

"African Americans and Hispanics have been denied access to the more rigorous courses," Capozzi says. All students, he says, "should be thrown into vigorous classes" and be given proper academic support to ensure their success. If they don't have access to those classes, he says, they won't be adequately prepared for college. [READ MORE online.](#)

Nebraska 2013 Report Card

<http://reportcard.education.ne.gov/>

Student Groups	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
All	79%	73%	69%	70%
Hispanic	66%	59%	60%	47%
American Indian	50%	43%	48%	41%
Asian	78%	78%	77%	65%
Black/African American	59%	45%	53%	37%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	78%	69%	75%	56%
White	84%	80%	73%	79%
Two or More Races	78%	70%	70%	65%



An Apology to Young Men of Color: Mentorship Matters, Part I

Gyasi Ross, September 26, 2013

"Cultures are learned means of survival in an environment. Our cultures...transmit those learned means of survival from generation to generation."

"...we instructed people to walk straight while blindfolded, thus removing the effects of vision. Most of the participants in the study walked in circles, sometimes in extremely small ones... Small random errors in the various sensory signals that provide information about walking direction add up over time, making what a person perceives to be straight ahead drift away from the true straight ahead direction..."—Dr. Jan Souman

Weird statement: I've known that I wanted to have kids since I was 13 years old. I remember when my little brother, Sutah Gyiyo was born, and I laid in bed with him talking to him. "I'm going to teach you all the things that nobody taught me." It wasn't a sad statement—I just knew that there was a lot that I didn't know, but I had no clue what it was. Like many young boys of color who grew up with a single mom, no one ever had the "birds and bees" talk with me, taught me about getting a job, how to change the oil in my car or how I was supposed to behave on a date.

I didn't know what I didn't know. Just like many young men don't know what they don't know. How could we?

Therefore, one of my goals became teaching/mentoring—not just my little brother, but also the slew of nephews—the things that I never learned. More broadly, I became involved with working with Native youth to try to extend these mentorship principles. And I was doing that, but then got away from that—got more focused on career, and family, and self. "I'll get back to it soon. Soon. Soon."

And before I knew it, I was damn near 40 (ok, mid-30s, but still, I'm saying tho...!!!)

Like many men my age, I simply don't "get" the younger generation—the so-called "millennials." Alright, you guys play a lot of video games, get on-line and text a whole bunch, and don't have a whole lot of hope that things will get better.

I found myself watching my little brother (the same baby who made me want kids when I was 13), who is now 24, and thinking C'mon man...you have more opportunities than we ever had. Do something great.

It took some time to realize that I have a role in this: MY generation of Native men is doing exactly what the previous generation of Native men did for us. They didn't understand the 90's model, coming-of-age Native guys, who dressed and talked like rappers. They didn't "get it."

So they left us alone. And so we didn't know what we didn't know. And now we're leaving this generation alone to figure

things out for themselves.

That's curious and unfortunate because our small communities never just left young folks alone; they couldn't afford to. No, our communities had a vested interest in ensuring that every single person could be a contributing member to the larger group. There was no space or food for those who couldn't pull their own weight. We had societies that taught specific skills and made sure that "I don't know what I don't know" wasn't a valid excuse. The survival of the community depended upon it. But for some reason, we don't think like that now—in fact, none of the large Native organizations, with all of their successful, educated and fancy members are dedicated to meaningfully mentoring Native young people. That is in direct conflict with Native people's historical approach to survival, an approach that worked wonderfully.

How do we know that it worked?

Because we're still here. For 50 thousand years, the survival of Native people on this continent speaks to the effectiveness of our mentorship systems. If it didn't work, Native people and our lifeways, languages, clan systems and religious practices would have gone the way of the dodo. Now, there are serious threats to those ways: Our languages are dying off, suicide is rampant (whether instant, or slow by alcohol, drugs and obesity), and under-supervised kids are all over within our communities (only African Americans had more single parent households in 2010).

In a 2011 paper for the National Bureau of Economic Research, "Fathers and Youth's Delinquent Behavior," Deborah A. Cobb-Clark and Erdal Tekin stated it plainly: "Adolescent boys engage in more delinquent behavior if there is no father figure in their lives."

But note: the study does not say "if there is no father in their lives." Father figures do not have to be biological. What that means is that we cannot simply point our fingers at biological dads and say, "deadbeat dads, you are bad people." That may be true, but it's not quite that simple. We also have some responsibility here. Unfortunately, most of the "successful" Native men don't really make time to make sure that there's a younger generation of Native men who are at least as successful as they are.

But we have an obligation to, even if we're not doing it.

I apologize for losing track of this important priority; I promise to be a better mentor.

We can make a difference in the lives of young men even if we're not their biological fathers. In fact, just as our ancestors had a responsibility to groom and help mentor young men coming up under us, so we do too.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/09/26/apology-young-men-color-mentorship-matters-part-i-151469>



courtesy of Safety 24/7

Older Adult Falls

Falls are the cause of injury deaths and hospitalization for Nebraska Adults age 65 and older. Over 10,300 visited an emergency department due to a fall. An average of 158 Nebraska age 65 and older die from falls each year.

As part of the Native American Heritage month, this is an excellent program and one that can be adopted in all cultures.

Adopt-a-Native Elder might fit your community.

<http://www.anelder.org/index.php?ID=879&XID=879:0:0:0>

The weather outside is frightful, the snow appears delightful. Well not really but soon the white flakes will come.

Along with the closed in feeling of winter, depression can set in. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) most commonly occurs during the winter months. Severe SAD cases can cause interruption in your daily life.

Symptoms:
Changes in mood
Lack of enjoyment/interest
Low energy
Changes in sleep
Eating changes
Difficulty concentrating

Read more <http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/sad.html>



Inhalers—they are all too common

Fewer adults actually know how to use an inhaler correctly. More and more youth are using them in schools, putting inhalers in their pockets on the playground. But are they using them for the maximum benefit.

A recent study of 169 families with children ages 2-9, showed Hispanic youth at 3/4s and 23% black as having inhalers. Only one parent used the inhaler correctly.

Have you pharmacy or pediatrician instruct you in the proper way.

US NEWS World Report



November is National Diabetes Month

Whether or not you have diabetes, this is a good month to take control of your health. Here are some tips to help you. Have a wonderful month! Download a calendar of tips that are inactive about diabetes.

http://www.teachakidtofish.org/file_download/b0009c1e-5840-4099-ba9f-29480b7ccfd0



Just because you have the sweet itch doesn't mean you have to scratch it! Eat healthy this winter season.

Pop, POP... FIZZ

When you bored this winter, grab a glass of water, add some lemon. The rise of minority youth consuming soda pop is 65% between the ages of 12-17 years. For younger youth, the consumption has dropped significantly.

Most schools now are taking the pop out and putting in non-sugar fruit drinks or flavored water.

African American reported drinking one can a day (74%) while Latino teens were a close at 73%. Asian students rose from 48% to 63%, drinking one sugary can a day.

Most marketing agencies target the teen generation. With the high percentage of youth becoming obese and/ or diabetic, official are concerned to set a healthy example of choices in early years.

Remember this winter, with less movement= more weight. One day a day can add 15 pounds a year.



Resources

Library of Congress

<http://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/about/>

- Exhibits and collections
- Images
- Audio and Video
- Special area for teachers
- National Museum of the American Indian YouTube Channel
<http://www.youtube.com/user/SmithsonianNMAI>
- National Parks Travel
- Native American Veteran's History Project
<http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-nativeamericans.html>
- Teacher Resources
 - Ancient Native American Art
 - White Cloud
 - Immigration of native Americans

President's Proclamation Claiming November as National Native American Heritage Month

http://www.einnews.com/pr_news/174621457/presidential-proclamation-national-native-american-heritage-month-2013

Visit these sites

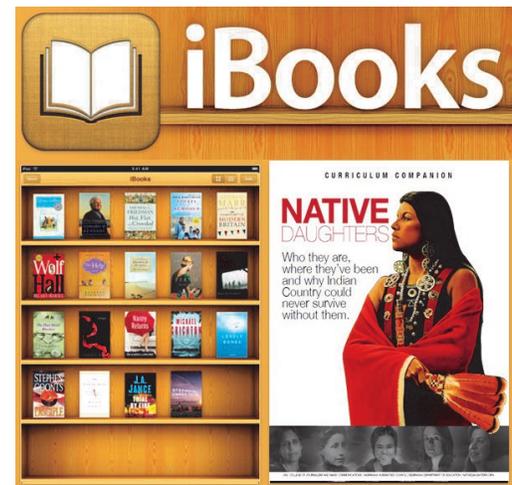
Nebraska State Historical Society
The Great Platter River Archway
Bureau of Indian Affairs
[University of Nebraska Native Daughters](#)

NU Press to again publish "Black Elk Speaks"

Written by Kevin Abourez/Lincoln Journal Star

Black Elk Speaks originally written by poet John G. Neihardt has sold nearly 900,000 copies from 1961 to 2008. The 1932 book is about the life of Lakota holy man Nicholas Black Elk.

Read more at http://journalstar.com/news/local/education/nu-press-to-again-publish-black-elk-speaks/article_120dbefd-cca0-5b6c-94b5-2148dae275ed.html



Interactive videos, handouts and weblinks. All updated with new resources.

iBook and interact active PDF both available.

iBook

www.education.ne.gov/nebooks/ebooks/nativedaughters.ibooks

PDF

www.education.ne.gov/mce



In Our Own Image: Artifacts from The Great Plains Black History Museum

www.gblackmuseum.org

LESSON PLANS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THIS BOOK

The Great Plains Black History Museum is proud to announce the publication of *In Our Own Image: Artifacts from The Great Plains Black History Museum*.

This stunning 8.5" x 11" limited-edition volume will contain 160 four-color pages of fascinating text with approximately 325 historical and current photographs that depict the heritage of African Americans in THE GREAT PLAINS.

This book will act as a tool to educate all people especially youth in Omaha and throughout Nebraska about the treasured history of African Americans and inspire all to follow great leaders from the past, authored by Patrick D. Jones Ph.D. and Jared Leighton Ph.D.

Must Order by **December 30, 2013** to receive the price of \$40.00 and become a part of this historic endeavor.

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Recognition on the museum's website

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and receive all of the above plus (2) tickets to the book launch celebration

*Regular retail cost will be \$45.00 after book publication February 1, 2014



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Omaha, NE 68131

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Quantity _____

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**Special Billing Options for Qualified Organizations
Call: 402-216-3852 for more information
terrisanders@gblackmuseum.org



More videos, more education,
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<http://www.pbs.org>

JFK 50th Anniversary

A complete website and video
presentation that won Peabody
Awards.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/jfk/player/>



NEW 2013-14 Annual Schedule

Download the **NEW**
2013/2014 Annual Schedule

Register today!

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or graduate credit!

Explore over 40 facilitated and self-paced courses
that range from science, reading, STEM, social
studies, math, to instructional
strategies/technology. And experience for
yourself what all the buzz is about!

Teachers across America can attest to the quality
of PBS TeacherLine.

...best organized and
comprehensive online course
that I have ever taken!

Liz S. Math Educator,
North Andover, MA

...accommodating to
my personal
schedule!

Tonya T. Elementary Teacher
Miami, FL

"met" a great group of
teachers who shared
lots of wisdom and
resources...

Carla M. Math Educator
Selinsgrove, PA

Because of PBS courses
I became a better
special education teacher
and touched the lives of
so many young children!

Judy D. Special Education
Norfolk, VA

WEBINARS

RECLAIMING YOUTH FALL SERIES

NOV. 20 1 PM ET
My Brain Made Me Do It! How the Brain Impacts Behavior
Dr. Meredith White McMahon

DEC. 11 1 PM ET
Enchanted with Chemicals
Dr. Jamie C. Chambers

Registration: \$50
<http://store.reclaimingjournal.com/events/webinars-july-december-2013.html>

26th Annual At-Risk Youth National Forum
“Providing Hope and Support in and Beyond the Classroom”

February 16-20, 2014
Myrtle Beach, SC

Dr. Mark Wilson and Donna Tyson
Featured Speakers

SPONSORED BY:
National Dropout Prevention Center/Network

<http://www.dropoutprevention.org/>

AAPT: Barbara Lotze Scholarships for Future Teachers

The American Association of Physics Teachers Barbara Lotze Scholarships offer funds for future high school physics teachers. Maximum award: \$2,000. Eligibility: U.S. citizens attending U.S. schools as undergraduates enrolled, or planning to enroll, in physics teacher preparation curricula, and U.S. high school seniors entering such programs. Deadline: December 1, 2013.

REMINDER

State offices will be closed November 28-29.

Join the DIVERSITY mailing list

- Special events
- Monthly newsletters
- Scholarship information
- Educator opportunities
- AND THERE IS MORE, when we get



Email us today so we can add you.



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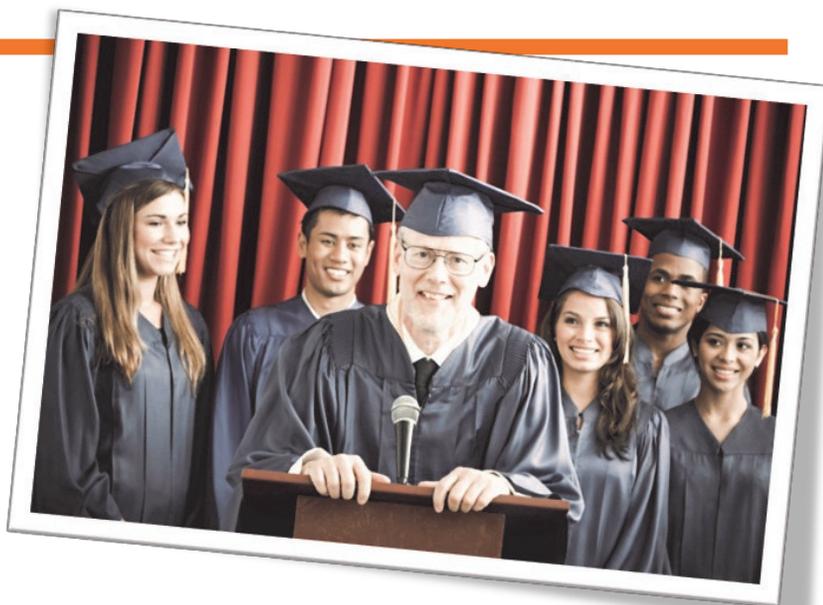
The Scholarship Guide 2014



October through April is Scholarship Season

Some of the most frustrating calls to get are those in May, June and July looking for scholarship information for the coming school year. According to the Catching the Dream annual report 90% of scholarships have deadlines in this seven month period. A few have deadlines in May and June and very few have July or August deadlines for Fall scholarships. This begs the question—have your Seniors started their scholarship searches? And, are you encouraging to Sophomores and Juniors to be thinking about scholarships so they are ready to go when school starts their Senior year.

Catching the Dream advises that by September you should know which scholarships are available, what the deadlines are, and have your materials organized so you are ready to apply when the deadlines are coming up. One note, however, is that if a scholarship is due in April, do



not send an application in September and expect to get a response. They noted that many scholarship programs operate only a portion of the year and are often operated by volunteer staff. The best time to request information is eight weeks prior to the deadline. If you do not receive a response within three weeks, contact them again with five weeks to the deadline. If you get to the three weeks to go before the deadline and you still have not heard from them, go into overdrive and start calling, emailing, writing, whatever it takes to contact them.

Other hints to remember when searching for scholarships.

There are many, many resources available for FREE. Do not pay an organization to do a scholarship search. They do not have access to any more scholarships than you do so save your money. Catching the Dream is one organization that can provide you with free assistance. In Nebraska, EducationQuest provides numerous free resources both in person and on-line.

HOW TO FIND SCHOLARSHIPS

- ✓ On the internet
- ✓ Scholarship directories
- ✓ In your local community
- ✓ From your intended college



Articles and ideas written /researched by Carol Rempp
Multicultural Education
Nebraska Department of Education



The Internet

Google “college scholarships” and get “About 118,000,000 results.” That is a lot of information. Conquer this information strategically. Catching the Dream very highly recommends www.fastweb.com. They also recommend scholarships.com and Sallie Mae. I recommend www.educationquest.org as an excellent place to start. They have a lot of information about what you need for your applications and links to many good sites.

If you are from an ethnically diverse group or underserved population DO NOT look for scholarships for just your “group.” Look for all scholarships. For example, you may be a Native American female. There may not be a Native American scholarship that you qualify for but there could be a scholarship for women that you qualify for. If you limit yourself to specific categories, you limit the number of scholarships. On the other hand, do not forget to look for scholarships that *are specific*. For example, if you are interested in education, look for scholarships for future teachers. Or maybe there are scholarships specific to students from a rural area or Irish descent. The key is to have a broad search. Use all the keywords that apply to you and think about your hobbies, work experience, clubs, awards, future major, and family history (i.e.—parent who is a veteran, religious affiliations, etc.)

Scholarship Directories

There are over 700 different scholarship directories published in the United States. Most of them are highly specialized. Check at a local college or with your high school counselor for copies. You may also want to go to a college library or public library. To most effectively use these books, because they can be quite large, start with the index. Do a key word search through the index just as you would on-line. This will help you narrow down if that particular directory will be helpful to you. Just as with an internet search, look under every possible category of scholarship for which you are eligible.

Your Community

Think civic clubs and local companies. The Elks, the Lions, VFW, Wal-Mart, local churches, and 4-H are just a few places to start. For Native American students don't forget your tribe, even if you do not live on your home reservation. Finding scholarships locally may not be easy. You may have to talk to a lot of different people to find out but it can be worth all the effort. If you live in an very small town that does not have many civic organizations or local companies, you may want to broaden your search to the county or region. For example, your town may not have a VFW but there may be one in the next town over that represents your county or your community.

Your College

The college world of scholarships can be difficult as they may not easily publish their offerings. However, more and more colleges are doing so and have a scholarship officer. Find out who this person is and contact him. He may or may not be in the Financial Aid office so be prepared to look around to find the scholarship officer for your college of choice. This may be a good thing to do as a Sophomore or Junior so that you can get the information early to assist you with your application process. If your college of choice does not offer any scholarships for your major, this may affect your application decision. Also, remember that not all programs are created equal. For example, education students may have fewer scholarship opportunities than medical, business or engineering students. The decision about which scholarships to apply for is yours, not the scholarship officers. However, the scholarship officer should be able to supply you with a complete list of what is available.

Key Factors



NOW is Scholarship season so get busy! Do not wait for your guidance counselor to bring you the information. You **MUST** be proactive in your scholarship search.



Apply for EVERYTHING. One, two or ten scholarships may not be enough. You may have to apply for 50+ scholarships to get a few thousand dollars. Remember every little bit helps.



Be prepared to put an extensive amount of work into this process. Sure you *might* get a Pell Grant or full ride offer. Yes, student loans are available-but do you really want ½ your first paychecks going to pay off loans? Do the **WORK** to get the scholarships.



Request letters of recommendation now. Who are the teachers, employers, or club sponsors/coaches that think highly of you? Ask them to write you a letter of recommendation. These can be generically addressed to "Scholarship review committee," and used for multiple scholarships unless otherwise noted on the application form. Also make sure if the scholarship



Make copies of transcripts, award certificates, letters of recommendation, etc. and have a good filing system to organize this information. Also, scan and save all these items for those applications that will need to have digital materials submitted.



Create a new folder for each scholarship you are applying for and then save the variations of your original essay and/or answers to application questions into the appropriate folder. Also keep digital copies of what you have submitted in each folder for future reference.



Your **ESSAY** is key.



Use the EducationQuest website to organize your information into a Activities Resume, find out information about colleges, follow the junior/senior timeline, and find out additional information about the FAFSA form.



If you are a tribal member, make sure to have your tribal enrollment information handy. Most scholarships specific for Native Americans require this information. You will need to know your tribal enrollment number at the very least and may be asked to send a copy of your enrollment papers. If you are not yet enrolled in your tribe, get this done ASAP. Each tribe has different requirements for enrollment and varying timelines for both submitting information and receiving your enrollment paperwork.



Get your FAFSA forms turned in as soon as possible. Many needs based scholarships will ask for information from these forms. Some scholarships sources also require that you be Pell Grant eligible to apply. You won't know this unless you have submitted the FAFSA.

ESSAY is key

Mechanics: Create a standard 4-5 page essay with 11 point type and 1 inch margins. Single space the writing within the paragraphs and double space between paragraphs.

What to include—the basics: Describe your hobbies, interests, courses you have taken, work experience, clubs you were in and offices held, volunteer experiences, your strengths *and* weaknesses, likes and dislikes, and goals for the future, to start with. The main thing is make sure this essay gives a good story about who you are. **Must do:** SAVE this essay. This will serve as the basis for all essays that you have to submit for each scholarship. Always keep this original essay saved. You may be asked to have a 2 page essay or 1 page essay for some scholarships. Look carefully at what they are asking for and then be prepared to pare down this longer essay to fit the length and topic you are being asked to write.

Editing: Ask someone to review your essay. They should be looking for grammar and punctuation errors, be able to hear your voice, and tell you if your story comes through in your writing. You want to score an A+ on this essay. Average is not good enough in the competitive world of scholarship applications.

Getting the money: Make them cry! Be emotional in your writing. When you tell your story be specific, paint a picture, make an emotional connection. Most importantly tell the what you are going to do to change the world before you die. Students who tell an honest story from the heart get the money. And it is all about getting the money.

Catching the Dream has an essay outline on their website.

Resource Links

EducationQuest www.educationquest.org
Catching the Dream www.catchingthedream.org
Scholarships.com <http://www.scholarships.com>
Fast Aid <http://www.fastaid.com>
Scholarship Experts <http://www.scholarshipexperts.com/>
The College Board <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>
Federal Student Loan <https://studentloans.gov/myDirectLoan/index.action>
FinAid: The Smart student guide to financial aid <http://www.finaid.org/>
US Department of Education, Federal Student Aid (FAFSA assistance) <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>