

Superintendent foresees exciting school year

Significant improvements in programs and facilities will greet approximately 23,000 students who begin classes Aug. 18 at public schools in Sioux Falls.

“The 2014-15 school year promises to be a year of innovation and success for students,” says Superintendent Pam Homan. She is excited about the potential that new and expanding programs have to help students and their families. New programs include:

- The addition of about 10 student success coordinators at elementary schools with the greatest need. The coordinators will provide an added level of counseling support to help students who might be burdened by non-school issues.
- Teachers, administrators and other professional staff members are being trained to approach students using a “growth mindset” rather than a “fixed mindset.” The growth-minded approach puts more emphasis on developing a student’s potential and what can be done rather than on merely documenting attributes.
- Another new program is a website feature designed to help keep district residents up to date with what is happening in the school system. It’s called “Let’s Talk.”

The “Let’s Talk” feature, which is operational, is monitored by school district executives. They welcome questions, comments, concerns and compliments. The feature can be accessed at the district website, www.sf.k12.sd.us.



Superintendent Pam Homan

Participants may offer suggestions to the superintendent, for example, or ask another official a question about open enrollment. They may request a response or remain anonymous.

“We just want to be present and accessible,” Homan says.

The 2014-15 school year will be the second one for the district’s Student Technology Initiative. Last year, every third-grader through 12th-grader received a Chromebook.

This year, iPads will be distributed to every kindergarten through second-grade classroom.

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Superintendent Pam Homan interacts with students.

McGovern Middle School opens; Axtell has new role

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The objective of the Student Technology Initiative is to increase student engagement, further involve students in active learning, and equip students with 21st Century skills.

Several noteworthy changes in facilities also are taking hold and reshaping the district. The changes include:

- The opening of George McGovern Middle School at 6221 W. Maple St.
- The consolidation of several programs for at-risk students at Axtell Park at 201 N. West Ave. The school will provide opportunities to help students complete their high school educations in a nontraditional setting.
- The closing of Joe Foss School at 1200 E. Third St. The final graduation at the alternative school was held last May. The building is for sale.
- The expansion of Eugene Field Elementary School at 501 S. Highland Ave. It is the only arts plus academics school in the district.

Foundation Board

The Education Foundation Board has 17 members who serve as volunteers. Members are:

- * Vernon Brown
- * Catherine Dekkenga
- * Diane Dietsch (Vice Chair)
- * Doug Erickson
- * Twaine Fink
- * Stephanie Gongopoulos
- * David Heflin
- * Steve Herman
- * Teresa Jackson
- * DeeAnn Konrad
- * Mike Moore
- * Anne Powers
- * Cathy Regas (Secretary)
- * Justin L. Reilly (Treasurer)
- * Carly Reiter (Ex Officio)
- * Amy Scott-Stoltz (Chair)
- * Jamie Simko

The Board is assisted by two part-time staff members: Foundation Coordinator Angie Kuiper and Newsletter Editor Rob Swenson.

Our mission

It is the mission of the Sioux Falls Public Schools Education Foundation to enhance educational opportunities and promote achievement among all students by supporting academic projects and activities not funded by tax dollars. It is our belief that the good life we share here is a reflection of the quality education our students receive in our local public schools.

Donations welcome

The Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization that operates entirely on donations. Tax-deductible contributions are needed and welcome.

Questions about donations may be directed to the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation, phone (605) 336-7055.



Grants buy books that take students around world

A series of books acquired by three teachers at Cleveland Elementary School helps take students to 21 countries.

Students can read about the language, history, education and issues in countries such as China, Russia and Mexico as well as the United States.

Considering that students from more than a dozen countries attend Cleveland, the area of study has special relevance.

Lindsey Olson, Shari Kvistero and Krista Friesner worked together to seek and earn three grants. They each received \$1,500 for a total of \$4,500. They pooled the grant money to buy more than 750 books in the WorldScapes series.

The books were acquired with funding from the Education Foundation's Cash for Classrooms grant program, which encourages innovation in education.

Olson, Kvistero and Friesner were among 40 grant winners who received a total of \$38,638 from the Education Foundation during the 2013-2014 school year.

Olson and Kvistero teach in the English Language Learner program, and Friesner teaches the fourth grade.

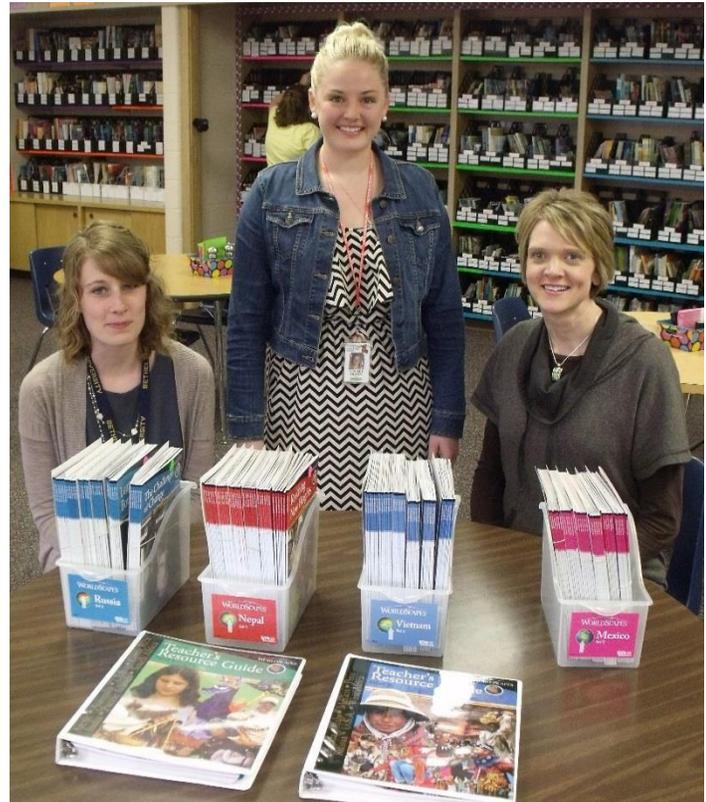
The books didn't become available for widespread student use until late in the past school year. The three teachers and their colleagues at Cleveland will be able to make better use of the book series during the 2014-2015 school year, Olson says.

"Our next step is just implementing them into daily use in the classroom," Olson says.

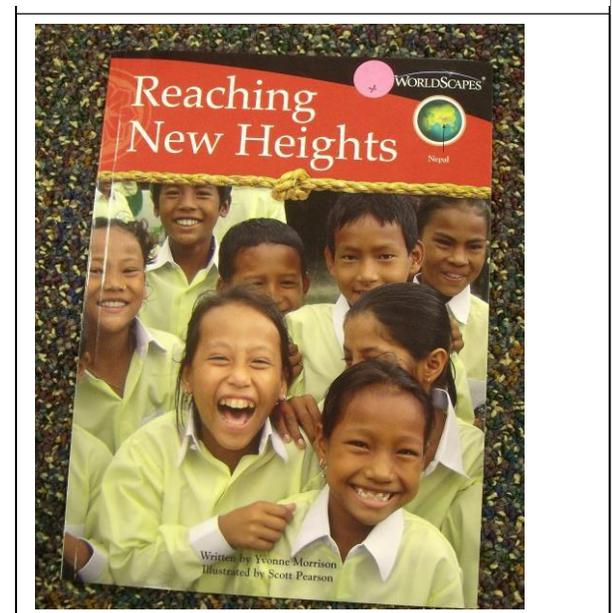
The books are kept in a bookroom to provide access to all of the teachers and students at the Cleveland.

Friesner says the books reflect the cultures of many of the students who attend school. "I feel like it kind of builds camaraderie and acceptance among kids," she says.

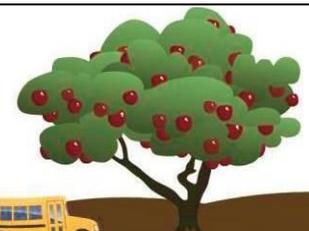
Kvistero says style of the books helps teachers reach out and involve students in the learning process. "The books are so engaging. They really capture the countries and their environment," she says.



Krista Friesner, Lindsey Olson and Shari Kvistero used grant money to buy special books for use in classes.



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Diane Dietsch has ‘a heart for innovation in education’

A car accident more than 30 years ago changed the course of Diane Dietsch’s career.

She was a passenger in a car stopped at an intersection that was hit by another vehicle. She suffered neck and back injuries that prevented her from immediately returning to her nursing job in Thief River Falls, Minn.

So, the Hoven, S.D. native moved to Sioux Falls and started working in the credit card and banking industry.

She recovered from her physical injuries within a few years and could have returned to nursing. However, by then she was enjoying - and succeeding - in financial services.

Today, Dietsch is the vice president of risk management for First PREMIER Bank. She is also the vice chair of the Education Foundation’s Board of Directors and a member of the Board’s Finance Committee.

She brings organizational and leadership skills to the Foundation Board.

Dietsch was recruited to serve on the Board about two years ago by representatives of the Foundation and her bank.

Dave Rozenboom, president of First PREMIER Bank, says the bank is a longtime supporter of the Education Foundation. The company encourages employees to be involved in civic organizations that line up with bank’s financial support.

“Diane is a leader within our organization,” Rozenboom says. “She has a heart for innovation in education, and this opportunity allows her to support that interest.”

Dietsch recently was asked to serve as vice chair by Amy Scott-Stoltz, who chairs the Board. Dietsch is hard-working, creative and committed to education, Scott-Stoltz says.

“Through her role on the Finance Committee, she’s shown her ability to get things done. She follows through with her commitments, and she is a pleasure to be around,” Scott-Stoltz says.



Diane Dietsch is an executive with First PREMIER Bank.

The Board is comprised of 17 volunteers with experience in areas such as business, education and parenting.

“I’m pleasantly surprised by how involved some of the people are. It’s not like one or two people are doing all the work to make it successful,” Dietsch says.

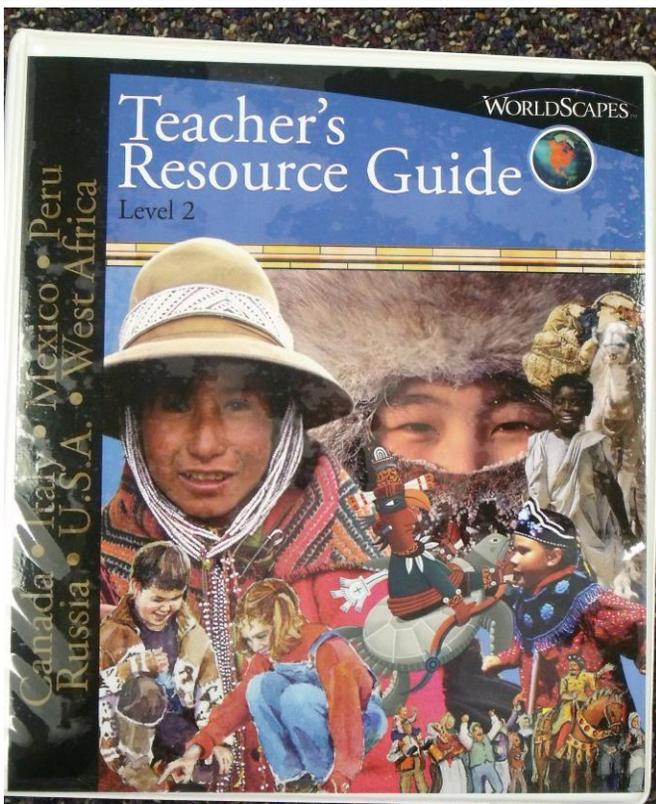
She would like to help the Board raise the community visibility of the Education Foundation and its helpful programs.

“Then we need to take that presence and turn it into dollars for grants from the organization,” Dietsch says. “Not only do we want to be visible, we need to be visible in a way that connects with people.”

She’d like to see the Education Foundation grow to the point that it could offer college scholarships to local graduates.

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Books take students around world

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Getting the books was a blessing, Kvistero says. "We wouldn't have been able to do it without a grant," she says.

The grants are part of an ongoing Education Foundation program funded by contributions from leading businesses. The goal is to creatively enhance educational opportunities in the Sioux Falls School District through efforts not covered by tax dollars.

Teachers have until Sept. 30, 2014 to apply for the next rounded of innovation grants under the Education Foundation's Cash for Classrooms program.

The Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation offers a similar grant program.

Classroom teachers from all grade levels employed by the Sioux Falls Public School District are eligible to apply for Education Foundation grants. Application forms are available at the website at www.sfeducationfoundation.org.

Knowledge is power, Dietsch says

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As a risk management executive at First PREMIER, she oversees six staff members. She loves the work, she says, because she's constantly learning as banking regulations change.

She began her banking career at Citibank, where she worked for 13 years. She's been at First PREMIER for 18 years, the last 17 as part of the risk management staff.

In addition to her background in banking, Dietsch brings the perspective of a parent to the Board.

She and her husband Byron have three college-aged children – two sons and a daughter. All three are graduates of Roosevelt High School.

It's important to continue learning throughout life, Dietsch says, either on one's own or by taking classes.

"I'm passionate about education," she says. "Knowledge is power."

Planning a class reunion?

The Education Foundation would like to help high school graduating classes plan significant reunions, such as their fifth, 10th or the celebration of any other five-year increment.

Class reunion contacts will be listed in the newsletter to help alumni track down event information for their class events. So far, we two contacts to list:

- Lincoln High School class of 1974. Ann (Griffin) Schiltz. Asch129@gmail.com
- Lincoln High School Class of 2005. Zach Baumgartner. Zach.Baumgartner@gmail.com

Send you class contact information to: sfeducationfoundation@gmail.com. Please include a phone number to help us verify the listing.

