

Christmas-  
New Year Edition

# Standard

December 2008-  
January 2009

Northeastern Conference Department of Education  
[www.northeastern.org](http://www.northeastern.org)

TO: PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, BOARD CHAIRS, PASTORS, DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Dear Education Family:

Welcome to our special Christmas-New Year's edition of the "**Northeastern Standard.**" The "**Standard**" needs your ideas, your vibrancy and your support. We share the best wishes of this season of cheer and this new year of hope. What an opportunity for us to share the good news of Northeastern's schools.

I was so pleased to have seen so many excellent year-end program performances from our schools. It occurred to me that for the next Christmas season, we should have excerpts of these programs videotaped and then given to our constituents in return for a donation in the New Year. It is not too late to assist a child at this season of the year. We've still got a few spaces left. Call today!

*Sylvan Lashley*



Dr. Sylvan Lashley  
Supt. Of Schools

## Window on Our Upcoming issues

**Volume 2, 1, our Winter edition** (February-March 2009) is our Albany Edition. It will highlight recruitment and promotional and fund-raising measures.

**Volume 2, 2, our Spring edition** (April-May) brings school pictorial snapshots.

**Volume 2, 3, our Summer edition** focuses on graduation and summer school.

## Comments from Our Readers

Do you think that Adventist schools should engage in competitive sports? Write me back at

[slashley@northeastern.org](mailto:slashley@northeastern.org)

<http://www.whiteestate.org/vez/oct08/podcast/podcast.htm>

## "Come Before Winter" 2 Timothy 4:21-22

In the field of education, we daily balance the urgent with the important. The clash of schedules and students and the din of the classroom belie the urgency of the present. Some things which are urgent, but not important become crises when not dealt with in a timely fashion, and some things which are inherently important but ignored until they appear to be urgent also become crises.

What is the Christian leader to do? Paul requests Timothy to “come before winter” and to bring along his coat and his scrolls. The months of November to March are the colder months and fewer ships normally sailed at that time. Paul’s call is urgent: he is in the Roman dungeon; Demas has forsaken him and Alexander has betrayed him. Timothy is back ‘there’ in Ephesus, at his church, ship miles away, busy with the church board meeting, perhaps. Paul is already old and retired, and so Timothy needs to weigh the urgent and important. Should he go to tend an expiring Paul who was already over the hill or should he visit his members? No doubt, Timothy has urgent business, but Paul’s dire call is more important and strategic—he needs Timothy before Nero gets to him.

What about us—are we overcome by the urgent, so that we neglect the important, the tactical at the expense of the strategic, the sleek-toned leadership volume at the expense of Bible study and prayer? If there is anything Adventist leaders need today is to keep close to the Lord constantly. Today, we in education urge you to “come before winter”, and place the important before the urgent, lest that which appears to be urgent but is not really important, achieves its own false importance.

## THE NORTHEASTERN SAFE PRODUCT

**Some months ago, we spoke to you about our SAFE Product—A SPIRITUALITY that is strong and pervasive; ACADEMICS that is rigorous; FINANCE that is responsible and EXCELLENT Service.**

The Department of Education is formally launching its marketing and recruitment drive this coming February 2009 at the Albany Department training meeting. An enrollment marketing-template with instructions is being prepared and mailed to each school for completion pursuant to discussions with our in-house enrollment-marketing team and our Board sub-committee in this area. At the Albany meeting, we are inviting school principals, church education secretaries, home and school leaders and board chairs to come together on the afternoon of February 18 from noon until 4:30 pm for a special marketing seminar at which each school will complete a marketing plan as a walk away product. In the days of the Convention, before the Wednesday meeting, the Education Department will hold general seminars that will equip lay leaders to work along with the school recruitment teams and the churches at large.

*Our strategy is simple: strengthen academics and spirituality to improve the core education product and differentiate the offerings of each school; improve teachers and institute supporting administrative systems, then tell everyone, deliberately and intentionally from February to August 2009, offering them the best and unique value possible in the Christian education arena. Then work assiduously to market, market, and promote, promote.*

### **When Challenges Become Opportunities**

The Education business in Northeastern Conference is a \$6 million matter. We invest in education because we believe that Christian Seventh-day Adventist education is an arm of evangelism, supplies the church with young members and makes a difference for the future. We are unabashedly outspoken and non-apologetic about this belief. If this were not so, we could close all of our schools and have our students attend the public schools. Many of our people falsely think that Sabbath school will take the place of good, Christian teachers during the week. Christian teachers must model

exemplary behaviors, and the atmosphere of our schools must lead our students to God. Our schools must mix good teaching with discipline, must be well led and managed and must achieve success at the highest levels. Foremost, there must be credible places where we can secure our children's eternal future, and that is why Seventh-day Adventist schools should make a difference. We are to lead the world.

If I were to select challenges that continually face the Northeastern Conference schools now, they would be finances, enrollment, technology, spirituality, legal issues, and services. These challenges will never totally disappear—we must work at them continuously. They are put there to keep us humble.

These challenges present themselves as opportune launch pads for initiatives, and we have built on the work of former leaders to institute systems that will minimize these challenges. The entire conference of leaders, pastors, and members must work together, putting our shoulders to the wheel. The education team will be fanning out across the constituent churches from February to August to achieve this.

**Finances--A new approach to handling resources is needed.** We are eighteen schools, like eighteen ships sailing in the same direction. The ships need to work together and collaborate like one navy with a singular objective, but with different functions for each ship. Some ships are bigger than others; some ships carry flour and some carry oil, and some carry beans. Each ship should select what it carries best and determine how that commodity fits into the overall plan of the Navy. Then when we have gathered in port, we shall all have a mix of the products we need—a little oil there, a little rice here and perhaps some cornbread in the corner. If all of our ships carry rice, then we'll tire of the fare. Not all the passengers can afford to pay the full fare and not all passengers who promise to pay when they climb aboard do so. We need discounted seats from rich patrons. We can't very well throw our own folks overboard, although we can put them off at the next port. Ultimately, then I believe that the role of the superintendency must and will change. Whereas superintendents and principals only dealt with the improvement of instruction and teaching, the role of the superintendent must now be one of resource identifier and gatherer. It is because of this that we have re-defined the role of the superintendent's office. Some of us are working at academics, some with spirituality, and others with personnel matters, and I will work specifically with finances, fund-raising, marketing and enrollment. It is only through this multi-pronged approach that we can successfully shape our army. For this purpose, we have sought the support of our pastors. I will be talking to you about houses, and lands and endowments in collaboration with the relevant conference departments.

**Tuition Driven--Because our schools are very tuition-driven, enrollment that can return tuition counts and schools need a critical mass of students to exist** in a manner that is viable. This is why we are launching our enrollment drive. But to launch a drive, one must have an identifiable product that delivers benefits through several features, and that people believe is credible and which will allow them value-added benefits. Enrollment and finance are first cousins in this process. Every principal's duty is to grow his/her own school and to improve the academics exponentially.

**Another challenge is technology**—how to equip our schools and students with the required technology in a responsible financial manner that allows them to be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We need technology that equips us and protects—we need to be able to demonstrate the use of technology applied to teaching and learning. We need technology that will make all of Northeastern a seamless platform reaching out beyond students in schools to parents in homes, through online web measures. We are currently exploring those options for all of us.

**Yet another challenge is that of spirituality and deportment.** I believe that conduct and deportment in our schools for students and teachers must indicate our own level of spiritual formation. There is no room in our schools for hoodlums and bad behavior. I believe that such persons must be expelled from our systems, after we have tried with them for a reasonable time. We must never feel captive to numbers and lower our standards. I believe that every pastoral district must maintain a link back to the school and not merely depend on the school chaplain to do so. Pastors and laity are integral parts of the school system.

**Another challenge is our lack of a counseling and intervention system.** A few weeks ago, the associate superintendent and I visited Andrews University to see how we could talk with the University Departments of Education and Social Work and to determine whether there might be ways of collaboration to develop intervention services in Northeastern schools. We are still in the process of defining and digesting this all. Accordingly, the provost of Andrews University will pay a “state visit” to Northeastern this February and address all the teachers. We are reaching out beyond the Atlantic Union to Oakwood University and Columbia Union College—of course we have our own Atlantic Union College. We need to institute within the conference an intervention system in ALL of our schools where our pastors with graduate training in counseling, youth leadership, social work and community development can partner with professionals in the church and with interns from Andrews University, and other Adventist institutions of higher education, to deliver social work and counseling to our schools. We have far too many children that need those types of services.

**Immigration and other legal matters have become another issue**—we live in a very litigious age and schools are not exempt. Our schools and organizations are required to be knowledgeable and to be informed about state and federal regulations that pertain to private schools. We continue to carefully review all employees ensuring that they are all practicing Seventh-day Adventists, that their health records, and any other required records are current, that certifications are current and that transcripts are of valued relevance. We need to espouse diversity in action—our schools must be staffed and populated by African-Americans, Afro-Caribbean, Hispanic, Haitian, White and all ethnicities, because that is where our country has headed and that is what we desire our students to learn.

No stone can be left unturned to make our schools the very best. This letter is a clarion call to members, teachers, parents, leaders and students that by God’s grace, we intend to pursue these paths very vigorously and we pray for God’s guidance and your support. It is so very easy to talk, but much harder to act, and actions do speak louder than words.

# NORTHEASTERN NEWSY BITS

## Spiritual Emphasis and Deportment

How do we get our students to incorporate the specific and unique Biblical truths into their own individual lifestyles? I have had members and education staffers observe that some of the students in our schools do not reach our own high standards of deportment. I would think that these incidents are in the minority. One school that has gotten previous bad press is the Northeastern Academy. If that was true in the past, it is no longer. The Northeastern Academy is a great place to be—the students are well-mannered, well-dressed and their deportment is exemplary.

Under Chaplain Alcock, the department is bringing the matter of spirituality and deportment home to students.

Through Weeks of Prayer, worships, visits to the schools and baptismal classes, we are keeping the message of the truth ever in the forefront. Our [big baptism and music day](#), will be held on [April 10, 2009 Rally Day](#).

Another high-point is the union wide [Pastors-teachers Convention](#) to be held from [August 2-5, 2009](#) in Rhode Island. At this meeting, through seminars, pastors and teachers will learn how to work together to advance Christian education and receive a special Manual to assist them in school-church operations. Conferences will receive \$100.00 per each teacher and pastor to offset housing, transportation and meal arrangements.

## ACADEMIC NEWS ROUNDUP

### Excelsior & Northeastern Academy Exploring Partnership

Excelsior Junior Academy and Northeastern Academy are entering into a relationship with each other for the purpose of offering the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades at Excelsior Junior Academy. A proposal is on the table and is to be reviewed by both Boards before being approved at the K-12 Board, the Atlantic Union Conference and the North American Division.

### Cognitive Genesis

Years ago the Seventh-day Adventist church in North America produced “ValueGenesis”, a study on the spiritual formation, attitudes and values of Seventh-day Adventists K-12 students. Now, Northeastern Conference schools are in the midst of Cognitive Genesis, a study that compares the academic performance of Seventh-day Adventist K-12 students with their public school counterparts. The Department of Education will be releasing to each school its performance on the Cognitive Genesis via the Iowa Tests in a few weeks. The results are intended to identify gaps in learning and help schools plan strategies to fill those gaps.

## **Andrews University Provost to Address Northeastern Educators**

The Provost of Andrews University, Dr. Heather Knight, will be the keynote speaker at the **February 19** all-day seminar for Northeastern teachers to be held at the **Linden Church** from **9:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm**. Later that evening, the provost will talk with Northeastern Conference administrators and principals at a special function, as Northeastern Department forges links with university-level higher education across the North American Division. The remainder of the day features special seminars on the workshop teaching method of instruction.

## **Textbooks & Library Books**

The Department of Education has requested each school to set up a textbook and library sub-committee to review and monitor the books that are purchased and used for use in our schools. Each book purchased will be examined for its adherence to Seventh-day Adventist and to North American Division standards and the superintendent's office will have final approval on the recommended texts.

## **Accreditation**

Northeastern Conference schools are accredited by the Seventh-day Adventist Accrediting Association of the General Conference headquartered in Silver, Spring, Maryland through the examination by Visiting Teams of a self-study that has been prepared. Schools are then given certain periods of accredited time based on their performance and the reports of the accreditors are available for review. If you would like to view a report on a particular school, please send an e-mail to [bmanie@northeastern.org](mailto:bmanie@northeastern.org), [gwesley@northeastern.org](mailto:gwesley@northeastern.org), or [slashley@northeastern.org](mailto:slashley@northeastern.org).

## **Annual Evaluations--Principals—**

Northeastern principals will be evaluated in 2009 in three-hundred sixty, all-round form. Boards, teachers and parents will evaluate principals, and so will the superintendent. Principals will evaluate themselves. The major areas for evaluation are spirituality, academics, finance and administrative systems, and service excellence to others.

Spirituality and student life will focus on spiritual tone, provision for weeks of prayer, baptismal classes and student deportment and effective discipline. Academics will ask the questions as to whether students are passing the required examinations, whether the school is implementing the methodologies proposed by the Education department, as well as other academic features. Finance and administrative systems focus on the success of remittances, collection of tuition and fees, and enrollment. Each school has been required to file an improvement plan to demonstrate how Spirituality, Academics, Finance/ Administrative systems, and Excellence in Service are being accomplished in each school.

# FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

## **K-12 Board to Lead through Sub-Committees**

The K-12 Board will now work more effectively and efficiently through its several sub-committees of academics, student and spiritual life, enrollment, finance, personnel and executive administration. These sub-committees consist of Board members who serve as chairs, education office staffers who are secretaries and a mix of teachers and Board members as other members. This procedure expands the input of the Board and allows the careful study and review of recommendations before they come before the full Board for consideration.

## **Education Team Puts Out Financial Statements**

The Education team created financial history when the first financial statements were produced at the K-12 Board meeting in collaboration with conference treasury officials. The financial statements allow the Board to monitor finances, and review the financial performance of schools in the area of remittances to the conference.

## **K-12 Board Moves to Regularize All School Employees**

For several years, there have been two tiers of employees working at the schools, those employed and partially paid by the conference and designated as conference employees and other employees employed solely and only through the various local school Boards. In an effort to systematize and equalize the treatment of all employees, the K-12 Board is moving to ensure that ALL employees, whether employed by the Conference or not receive the same treatment with regards to health and retirement benefits, and overall compensation. The Business Managers of the various schools are now reviewing Health Insurance policies to ensure that all employees are health-covered whether employed by the conference or not.

## **Three Way Scholarship Plan Under Study**

The Finance Committee of the K-12 Board will be studying a three-way scholarship plan for the K-12 system. When fully instituted, the Plan calls for a scholarship sharing by the local church, the conference and the school. The Plan is being designed to assist parents who will need that type of support.

## **Enrollment, Marketing and Fund-Raising**

The big question in Northeastern schools has always been enrollment. Everyone is concerned about 'enrollment'—Do we have it? The Department of Education recently formed an enrollment management team whose role is to help develop an enrollment marketing plan for each school. The high point of the discussion will be when the school recruitment teams meet on the Wednesday afternoon of February 18 in Albany. The educational secretary, home and school leader, the pastor, the principal and Board chair of each school that is associated with a church or churches has/have been invited to help formulate the Plan for their particular school. With such a Plan, a massive enrollment drive will launch across the conference to push enrollment for the new school year.

Marketing an institution has to do with portraying its special features and benefits as a product that is desirable to parents, students, and the general church population. To market well, we must have an excellent product on hand. An excellent product and a good marketing strategy ultimately lead to friendship development and then fund-raising. My special target is the build-up of the Education Endowment Fund which was started at the 2008 Camp Meeting. Accordingly, we will be visiting members, friends and well-wishers and working the relevant conference departments in this regard.

### **Board Chairs Meet Over Supper**

Chairs of local boards recently met at the Coral House in Baldwin, Long Island to review the duties of Board chairs. At the end of a successful session, Board chairs expressed the desire to have a joint meeting with principals and Board chairs. A healthy working relationship between the Board and the principal is required for the ongoing success of a school.

### **Chief Personnel Officer**

In addition to his regular duties of field supervision, Mr. Laurent Servius is serving the functions of chief personnel officer. He is the liaison between the schools and the superintendent for the purpose of teacher certification, registrar and records. In this latter role, Mr. Servius is responsible for ensuring immigration eligibility in all the schools through I-9 compliance, the status of health records, service records, workmen's compensation and all human resource matters and/or any record that is required by the state, the conference or the union.

## **Excellence in Service**

### **Counseling Services**

A few months ago, the Department of Education assembled all the pastors and a few laypersons in the New York city area who have degrees in youth development, family life, social work, counseling, mental health, and clinical psychology. This Group has formed a think-tank to advise the department on how to plan for intervention services in Northeastern schools. This meeting preceded the superintendents' trip to Andrews University and the proposal laid out to work with University departments in bringing counseling services to Northeastern schools.

### **K-12 Board Reaffirms Employment Policies for Non-SDA's**

At its November 2008 meeting the K-12 Board reaffirmed its policies for the hiring of Seventh-day Adventists in good and regular standing. The Board action calls for the cessation of employment of any non-SDA employees who are teachers or other workers by the end of the current school year. This does not apply to independent contractors, or workers in specialist areas who are present for a temporary period.

## Education Department Developing Sexual Harassment Statement

The Northeastern Department of Education is developing an extension on the Northeastern Employees Handbook to fashion a sexual harassment statement policy to which local school board members can sign. The statement and its follow-through will serve as an affirmative defense for Boards if needed in the future. The most recent copy of the Employee Handbook has been ordered for all education employees.

### Counseling and Social Services to Students and Parents

We have formed a Counseling Panel of pastors, social workers, youth leaders, counselors and family life educators, who are trained in counseling services based on our identification of dire needs among the children which we will support with school surveys. The role of that group is to advise the superintendent on the establishment of counseling and social work interventionist services in the schools. We will train and prepare the staffs to work along with such professionals through the utilization of trained Adventist professionals in conjunction with Adventist universities and colleges. This group has already met.

## Month of February, Recruitment/Marketing & Constituent Training

2-4	M-W	Union Curriculum Committee
6-8	F-Su	Clerks/Treasurers' Seminar—Camp Victory Lake
3	Tues	K-12 Board
14	Sab	Brockton Temple SDA Church—Education Day
15-18	Su-W	Departmental Training in Albany , NY
16-20	M-F	Mid-Winter Break Recess & Staff Professional Days
15-17	Su-T	Association of SDA School Administrators, Portland, OR
18-19	W-Th	NADOE Marketing Summit in Portland, OR
18	W	<b>Education School Enrollment Summit--Educational Secretaries &amp; Home &amp; School Leaders—Albany along with teachers &amp; principals</b>
19	Th	Teachers Convention—Linden Church Banquet Hall
23	M	Schools Resume

### Save these Dates!

March 3, Spelling Bee  
 April 4, Rally Day  
 June 15, Graduation  
 Aug 2-5, Pastor-Teachers' Convention, Rhode Island