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Minnesota Department of Education Launches New Website

New site provides improved access and outreach to teachers, families, and Minnesotans

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) launched a new website today designed to provide educators, parents and the public with an intuitive, easy-to-navigate tool to learn about Minnesota public schools. According to Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius, the new site provides users with accurate, accessible information on a wealth of education topics.

"This website brings the Department of Education into the 21st century with a one-stop shop where parents, educators and the public can get the information they need to make good decisions for children," said Commissioner Cassellius. "It contains all of the useful information that's always been there – from teaching license forms to information about school finance, student assessment and enrollment data and more – but in a way that is far more user-friendly and accessible."

Visitors to the website will find several new features, including a "Just for Parents" section full of easy to understand information, resources and tools. A new feature is the live Data Center, which provides a centralized location for files, reports, and interactive maps, and gives users the capability of generating "real-time" reports.

"Access to reliable and easy-to-understand data is critical in our quest to improve student achievement and provide meaningful accountability," said Cassellius. "The new Data Center gives educators useful information to help them meet the unique needs of every learner, and provides parents and the public a clearer picture of how our students and schools are doing."

As part of the redesign process, MDE solicited input from a wide variety of stakeholders including teachers, district administrators, policymakers, parents, business leaders and community groups. The department also conducted an online survey of listserv subscribers and MDE staff that yielded nearly 1,000 responses. Using that feedback, MDE's IT and communications staff worked with local website designer The Design Company to create an intuitive site for all audiences.

One of the unique challenges of the project was to ensure more than 10,000 individual pieces of content met state mandated accessibility standards. According to experts, the website's new design and accessibility compliance will make it one of the best state education agency sites in the nation. Cassellius predicted the changes will be welcomed by those looking for clear, objective and easy-to-access information about Minnesota public schools.

"As I travel to schools across the state, I often hear parents and teachers tell me that the information they need is just not available or easy to find," said Cassellius. "Now the information they need is just a click away. The website redesign is part of our overall effort to offer better support for teaching and learning to ensure every Minnesota student has the opportunity to succeed in a global economy. Just as important, it reflects the great work being done every day by MDE staff committed to Governor Dayton's vision of providing government service as good as the Minnesotans we serve."

Visit the Minnesota Department of Education website at www.education.state.mn.us

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