EDUCATION

STRAIGHT 'A'S

The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about students from and in our community.

Call the Journal at 285-7411

What if ... We get surprised in our schools with a disaster?

Nordy NELSON

ISD 361 SUPERINTENDENT

What if … We get surprised in our schools with a disaster? We are in a century that has become a new age of serious and complex threats. Besides the natural disasters most of us are familiar with, we can't say that the "unthinkable" won't happen.

What if, for example, an avian-flue pandemic sweeps across the country? What if a bioterrorism attack silently spreads virulent biological agents, such as bacteria, viruses, toxins and other pathogens through our schools or communities?

It can happen here! Our school district is not invulnerable. With this in mind as a possibility, preparations need to be addressed for the emergencies.

The first thing we need to accept is that a wide range of emergencies can happen. Since there are so many severe possibilities, prioritizing them as to how vulnerable we are to each, gives us some direction in preparing ourselves to handle an appropriate response. We also need to follow some of the lessons learned in previous or past experiences in other locations and utilize those responses to fit what might work here.

If a bioterrorist attack occurs, the aftermath presents very complex problems for all of us. One of the more major problems we would face is that, at this time, we don't have an appropriate response plan. Since chemical attacks are a real unknown to the general population and response plans are practically non-existant or just being worked on, the school needs to work with all local response groups. Most likely, an attack such as this would include a good portion of the entire community.

If we can keep this in mind that disasters can occur within our school buildings, on the school campuses or in and around the school district area, an effective hazard response plan needs to be in place where all will work with an appropriate response.

We can plan for things to happen, but they hardly ever happen the way you planned. So it will be very important for us to be flexible in our thinking and response plans.

We will continue this discussion in the next article and hit on some possibilities in addressing a response procedure for some of the unknowns that we may be faced with.

Source:

Disaster Preparedness and Response for Schools

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities

Franken, Minnnesota business owner discuss workforce training to fill open, high-skills jobs

SEN. AL FRANKEN STAFF REPORT

U.S. Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., and Erick Ajax, vice president and co-owner of E.J. Ajax and Sons, a family-owned company for three generations providing innovative metal forming solutions, recently held a conference call to discuss Franken's new legislation to help close the "skills gap" that has left jobs unfilled because businesses cannot find workers with the right skills. Franken's bill would foster partnerships between community and technical colleges and businesses to train students to fill high-demand jobs in Minnesota and across the country.

Franken's Community College to Career Fund Act will create partnerships between two-year colleges and businesses to train two million Americans for jobs in high-demand industries, such as health care, advanced manufacturing, clean energy, and information technology.

"Over the last few years as I've traveled around Minnesota, I have continually heard from business owners that they are dealing with something called the skills gap … about a third of manufactures in our state say that they can't fill jobs that they have waiting to be filled because they can't find workers with the skills that they need, and that it's affecting their bottom line," Franken said on the call. "So I've introduced a bill that would help address this. It's based on a number of successful partnerships I've seen between businesses and community and technical colleges in Minnesota."

"My company invests 5.5 percent of our payroll in internships, apprenticeships, education, and professional development. I can say the lion share of that is done with our MNSCU public education system," Ajax said on the call. "Our two-year community and technical colleges have been wonderful partners, and I can say everything we have been doing over the last decade at E.J. Ajax is almost exactly what you are suggesting in your bill. From a firsthand employer standpoint, it really works."

The Community College to Career Fund Act will create a competitive grant program that will fund partnerships between businesses and two-year colleges to address the skills gap. These partnerships will focus on valuable job training-related efforts, such as registered apprenticeships, on-the-job training opportunities, and paid internships for low-income students that allow them simultaneously to earn credit for work-based learning in a high-skill field. The Fund will encourage businesses to locate and invest in the U.S. because the training available will help provide a skilled workforce. And by training local workers in the skills businesses need it will also help communities, especially rural communities, keep local talent in their community. U.S. Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., introduced the legislation in the House last month.

In Minnesota, the legislation is supported by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Dunwoody College of Technology, Hennepin Technical College, South Central College, the Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association, and the Central Minnesota Manufacturing Association. Nationally, the legislation is supported by the National Skills Coalition, the American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community Colleges Trustees, and the Center for Law & Social Policy.

Blais graduates from Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Cloquet, announced the graduation of 43 students who successfully completed program requirements in the Law Enforcement Skills Training Program in June 2013.

A ceremony took place June 29 at the college with more than 300 people in attendance.

This is the 13th group of students to participate in the Law Enforcement Skills Training Program at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

Travis Blais, of International Falls, successfully completed the Law Enforcement Skills Program at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

Students completed the intensive hands-on training June 28. The 500 hours of skill training is required of all individuals seeking careers as peace officers in Minnesota. Students complete classroom training in addition to participating in the skills training program. After classroom and skills training, students are required to pass the Minnesota Peace Officer Standards and Training Board exam to become eligible for employment as a peace officer in Minnesota.

Skills training topics include: accident investigation, bombs and explosives, civil disturbance calls, mobile field force, crimes in progress response, domestic violence investigation and intervention, drug interdiction, DWI detection and standardized field sobriety testing, emergency vehicle operations, radar enforcement, traffic stops, crime scene investigation, gang education, drug and controlled substance investigations, report writing, aerosol chemical weapons and chemical agents, pressure point control tactics, and firearm training.

More veterans now eligible for MN GI Bill benefits

GOV. MARK DAYTON STAFF REPORT

As Minnesota's "Hire a Veteran Month" continues, Gov. Mark Dayton announced recently that July also marks the new expansion of eligibility for Minnesota GI Bill benefits.

This session Dayton signed a measure designed to give more Minnesota veterans access to the financial aid resources they need to pursue a higher education. For many Minnesota veterans who were previously ineligible for GI Bill benefits, that could mean up to $10,000 to help pay for college or other post-secondary studies.

Previously, only veterans who served after Sept. 11, 2001, were eligible for this benefit. Under the new law, any veteran under the age of 62 who has served honorably in any branch of the armed forces during any time period may be eligible for Minnesota GI Bill benefits.

"Minnesota veterans have served our state and nation with courage and dedication," said Dayton. "It is our duty to ensure they have the support they need to get back to work when their service ends. Expanding the GI Bill to all Minnesota veterans will help veterans get the education and training they need to find good jobs."

"These enhancements to the Minnesota GI Bill provide a much broader audience the opportunity to gain an education and get back to work," said Larry Shellito, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner.

Under the new law, benefit amounts from the enhanced Minnesota GI Bill remain the same. A full-time student may receive up to $1,000 per semester or term of enrollment, $3,000 per state fiscal year, and $10,000 in a lifetime (up to age 62). Part-time students may receive $500 per semester or term of enrollment, and a minimum award of $50 per term.

Apart from the expansion, previous eligibility requirements remain the same. Those eligibility requirements are as follows:

Veterans must be Minnesota residents attending any approved public or private university, college, or career school in Minnesota as undergraduate or graduate students.

Military members who do not meet the state veteran statute requirements must have served honorably for a total of five or more years (cumulatively) as a member of the National Guard or Reserve component. Any part of their service must have occurred on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

Surviving spouses and children of a veteran who has died in military service, or has a total or permanent disability as a direct result of military service, may also be eligible.

The Federal GI Bill and the Minnesota GI Bill are different. The Federal GI Bill has many complex chapters for individuals who enlisted in the military. Some benefits require active duty members to pay, while other benefits are earned by cumulative or consecutive active duty periods of service.

EDUCATION BRIEF

LOCAL STUDENTS NAMED TO BSU DEAN'S LIST

Area students were named to the Bemidji State University 2013 spring semester dean's list.

Students carrying 12 or more semester hours during any one term and earning at least 3.25 (B-plus) grade point average are included on the dean's list.

International Falls — Monica Hasbargen, Danika Stelton, Kelly Blair, Judah Chezick, Hannah Hell and Chanin Smith.

Littlefork — Kelly Millerbernd.

Ranier — Hanna Heibel.

Ray — Tyler House.

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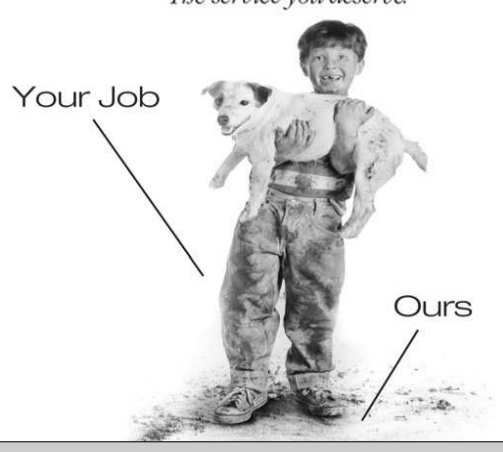

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YEAR 2014 BUDGET REQUESTS CITY OF INTERNATIONAL FALLS

The City of International Falls is starting its budget process for the year 2014. If you would like to be considered in the 2014 budget, you must submit a request in writing to:

City Administrator
City of International Falls
600 Fourth Street
International Falls, Minnesota 56649

Requests must be received no later than August 1, 2013 to be considered.

By order of Councilor Cynthia Jaksa
Chairman of Budget and Finance Committee