

Fall conference covers education in state 1951 to 2010

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Education has played a significant role in the development of North Dakota, and over the last 140 years, has undergone many changes to create the system today. At the 22nd Annual Governor's Conference on North Dakota History, *The 3 Rs in North Dakota: Education from 1951 to 2010*, scholars, residents and educators will examine how education has evolved and impacted the state in the last 60 years. Sponsored by the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND), the conference is scheduled for October 29 and 30 at the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck.

The event builds on last year's conference which explored changes in education from 1870 to 1950. It also examines the impact education had in shaping the state over the last half of the 20th century and the early part of the new millennium. Topics range from federal legislation and alternative methods of education to school development on a community level, changes in the school lunch program and extracurricular activities.

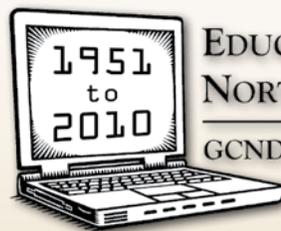
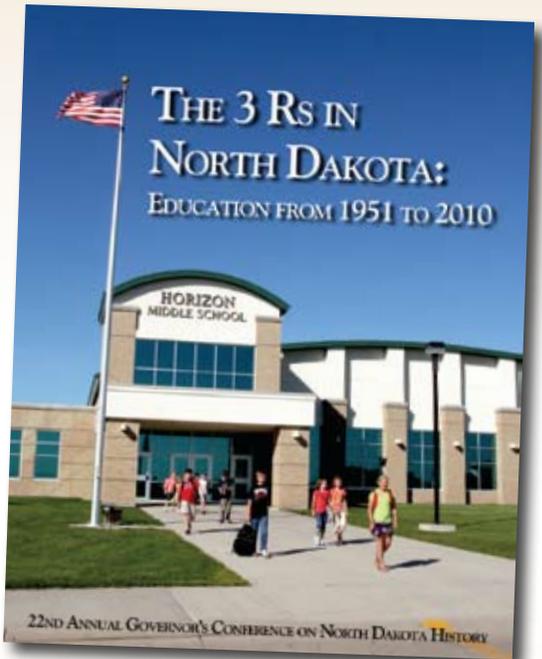
"This year we are going to study part two of educa-

tion in North Dakota," says Marilyn Snyder, conference coordinator and recently retired SHSND curator of education. "There have been many changes in North Dakota education because of factors with federal aid and federal legislation."

Snyder says the conference will cover trends in education from 1951 to 2010 including alternative methods of education. "Some of the biggest changes are the choices in how you want to be educated," she notes. "In the 1950s, there was no home schooling or federal rules and regulations tied to funding."

In the 1950s, explains Snyder, many students only received an eighth grade education, but that has since changed significantly. "Now North Dakota is second in the nation for the number of students going on to college," she says.

Conference sessions begin Friday, October 29, and include keynote speaker Mary Harris, Meadows Chair for Excellence in Education at the University of North Texas and former dean of education at the University of North Dakota. Her presentation, *Excellence and Community in North Dakota Education: 1951 to 2010*, will highlight major legislation and changes that affected the state's educational system over the last 60 years.



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community. Schools are what preserve community identity, especially in rural areas," she notes.

On Saturday, October 30, Harris will cover specific events that shaped the state's educational system in her presentation *Notable Events in North Dakota Education: 1951 to 2010*. Events include the 1969 Minot teachers' strike, the New School for Behavioral Studies

at the University of North Dakota from 1968 to 1972, the 1980 legislation requiring all North Dakota teachers to take a course on the American Indians of North Dakota, and the 1990s movement to transition the state's junior high schools to middle schools. "Those are all unique to North Dakota and the way they were carried out is special," says Harris.

Harvey Schilling, retired assistant superintendent for Bismarck Public Schools and head of the district's school lunch program from 1972 to 1999, will make a presentation titled *The Hot Lunch Program: Its Beginnings to Now*. "I will cover some of the big changes made in the school lunch program and how the changes affected the well-being of the children," he says.

School lunch began as "just a meal," notes Schilling, and has evolved to a means of providing key nutrition to students. "There was never such a thing as dietary needs, the program served two main purposes: to help the farming community and feed the children," he says, noting since the program's beginning surplus food was purchased as a result of over-production from U.S. farmers.

Schilling says he will also share humorous events that took place in the development of today's school lunch program. "The combinations of foods they used to put together were atrocious," he notes. "We used to expect kids to eat no matter what."

He highlights how staff creatively camouflaged canned beef, prepared over 50 frozen turkeys to feed the entire school district, and discovered how to operate a 60-quart mixer to make bread. "There was a big white tornado in the kitchen," Schilling recalls. "We had a lot of learning to do to feed 7,000 kids."

As society has changed, the school lunch program has filled an important need, he notes. "I hope people will better understand the great things we are doing for children today and to clear up any misunderstandings about the program," says Schilling.

Additional conference topics include the role and impact of the federal government on state education systems, Indian schools in North Dakota, the changes in classroom technology, and extracurricular activities.

An *Update of the Historic Country Schoolhouse Survey Project*, launched at the 2009 history conference as a volunteer-based project to document potentially historic school buildings across the state, will also be given by SHSND Research Archaeologist Amy Bleier and SHSND Review and Compliance Officer Susan Quinnell. "Education has been a key factor in North Dakota. Some of the first institutions put in place after people settled were schools," says Snyder, noting at one time there were over 10,000 schools in the state.

Snyder says the conference creates a common ground between par-



The Ingersoll School, about 10 miles north of Washburn, was built in 1885 and operated as a one-room school until 1910. It has been documented as part of the countryhouse schoolhouse project spearheaded by the State Historical Society of North Dakota in conjunction with its annual history conference.

Participants through educational experiences. "Education is something everyone has in common. What we don't understand is how it has changed," she notes. "Education has made North Dakota what it is today."

For more information, contact SHSND Communications and Educator Director Rick Collin at 701-328-1476, email rcollin@nd.gov or SHSND Administrative Assistant Kiri Stone at 701-328-2799 or kstone@nd.gov. Pre-registration is required. Student rates are available. The registration form and schedule, along with online registration (credit cards only) are available at www.history.nd.gov as well as through the mail.

The topic for the 2011 Governor's Conference on North Dakota History will be *Too Much or Too Little: The Story of Water in North Dakota*, set for October 28-29 at the North Dakota Heritage Center.

The State Historical Society of North Dakota preserves and interprets treasures past and present, and works to share them with residents and visitors through a variety of services. For more information about the state's history agency and its programs, call 701-328-2666 or visit www.history.nd.gov.