NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Registration is open for the 2014 ECS Winter Commissioners’ Meeting!
Join the discussion on these issues and more!

- **Standards Beyond the Schoolhouse Doors**: What role can you play to help implement new standards and assessments in your state by forging partnerships with key stakeholders - teachers, higher education and business?
- **Common Core in the Twitterverse**: How is social media influencing education policy?
- **After the Votes Are Counted**: With more than 35 governors’ races and many changes in state legislatures, what impact will November’s elections have on education policy?
- **Actions to Boost College and Career Readiness**: What approaches can states take to make meaningful improvements to prepare students for college and careers?
- **Short Takes**: A quick look at emerging trends across the education spectrum, from school finance to English language learners.

Commissioners, check your email for a link to register. If you no longer have the email, or if you are a former commissioner, contact Heidi Normandin at hnormandin@ecs.org.

Don’t forget to send in your nominations for three ECS awards by Nov. 14! For more information, click here.

COMMISSIONER SPOTLIGHT

Melody Schopp
Secretary
South Dakota Department of Education
2013-15 ECS Treasurer

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1) **How did you become interested in education issues?**

I taught elementary school for 23 years in a small rural, remote district in South Dakota. When technology became available, I saw the opportunity to open the world to my students through the Internet. My passion for technology brought me to the Department of Education in 2000, where I saw an opportunity to advocate for education statewide in multiple roles and eventually was appointed secretary of education.

2) **What ECS resources do you use the most?**

I use the ECS research and databases extensively. Additionally, Mike Griffith is a wonderful resource for thinking through legislative issues and compiling data in a useful format. ECS provides a broad look at both policy and data, boiling it down in whatever form needed. Additionally, ECS forums bring together groups which rarely, if ever, join together to discuss education alongside policy with a large scale vision.

3) **What is the top education issue you are working on right now?**

We are excited about the efforts made to provide a menu of options to prepare students for life after high school. We have a rich student portal which provides career planning. The state offers advanced placement courses online at no cost, reduced costs for dual credit ($40/hour) and college readiness courses which replace the need for remediation at post-secondary. We also offer the National Career Readiness Certificate assessment to all students at no cost and have built this into our school performance indicator for college and career readiness. We are moving forward to provide a strong start to post-secondary for all students.

4) **What do you remember most about your K-12 years or college?**

I was fortunate to have attended an excellent high school in Greeley, Colo. It was a lab school on the campus of the University of Northern Colorado. It provided excellent teachers and innovative methods that were not common during the early 70s. I had a science teacher who inspired me and I keep in touch with him (continued on next page)