



320-762-6574

P.O. Box 155, Brandon, MN 56315-0155

www.mnrea.org

POSITIVE RESPONSE TO 2011 MREA CONFERENCE

Ninety-six percent of the educators who attended the 2011 MREA Conference “will recommend to my friends/colleagues to attend this conference in 2012.” Specifically, this is what individuals who attended the conference at Cragun’s Resort had to say about the conference:

This content-rich, practitioner-led event takes full advantage of MREA's broad membership with presentations from teachers, administrators, board members, parents, consultants, researchers and students. Despite notable differences, MREA's fall forum is a smaller, more intimate version of the [TIES annual conference](#), a "must do" event for education leaders, technologists, teachers and integrationists.

Paul Brinkman, Executive Director, Northeast Service Cooperative.

“Very relevant sessions for our district, met the needs of administrators, school board members and teachers that attended.”

Renaë Tostenson, in-coming Superintendent, Lac qui Parle Valley School District

“Dynamic guest speakers and presenters.”

Michele Green, teacher, Bemidji Public Schools.

Whether you attended the conference or not, the speaker handouts and information are available on the [MREA website](#).

VERY IMPORTANT -- YOUR FEEDBACK IS NEEDED

If you did NOT attend the 2011 fall conference, you can help MREA have the premier rural education conference in 2012 by responding to this four question survey on what prevented you from attending the MREA conference 2011. Your feedback is critical to MREA creating a conference that will appeal to you. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/X3CXMCC>

OPEN ENROLLMENT

You probably know the net open enrollment data for your districts, but have you ever wondered where your open enrollment students are coming from and where your resident district students are open enrolling to? A new Excel spreadsheet from House Research allows users to track student movement by district for the 2009-10 school year:

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/issinfo/MovementByDistrict10.xlsx>

The instructions are pretty easy and the results are of interest.

SO WHAT DOES A VIKING STADIUM HAVE TO DO WITH THE SCHOOL PAYMENT SHIFTS?

This may be one of the interesting questions in the upcoming 2012 legislative session. MREA's platform calls for the state to, "Find additional state revenue and establish a schedule to repay the \$2.1 billion loan and return to the 90/10 payment schedule." Minnesota Senator Claire Robling and Representative Bob Gunther make the connection in their Op Ed piece "It's Obvious: Fund Stadiums with Racinos" (Minneapolis Star Tribune, Nov. 21, 2011. A13). The fifth reason they advocate for racinos is, "with the remaining state revenue, we can repay our local school districts the money borrowed from them to balance the budget last July."

Is this a good idea? Is there a better way to begin paying back the shift? I'm sure MREA will be asked if we have a position on this. These and other questions will come up now that the 2012 is around the corner. Expect an MREA update every other Monday between now and the beginning of the session, January 24, 2012, to keep you up-to-speed.

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT – DATA INFORMED INSTRUCTIONAL DECISION MAKING

On September 13, the Regional Educational Laboratory Rural Working Group presented a 90-minute webinar to more than 200 participants across the country. *Achievement Data and Instructional Decision Making in Rural Schools and Districts* featured Ellen Mandinach, Ph.D., coauthor of the IES Practice Guide *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making*. Among the panelists who provided their personal experience with implementing the guide's recommendations was Gary DePatis, superintendent of Greenview Community Unit School District 200 in Illinois. REL Northeast & Islands hosted the webinar, which is archived on their [website](#). *EdWeek* contributor Diette Courrege covered the webinar in her [September 14 blog](#)