

Education Plan For Wards Of Neb. Implemented

LINCOLN, Neb. — Several initiatives addressing the educational needs of state wards have begun as part of a five-year plan recently completed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), said Children and Family Services (CFS) Director Thomas Pristow.

The plan calls for ongoing collaboration and coordination between CFS and the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) to improve the educational outcomes and well-being of students in the child welfare system, he said.

"State wards face numerous challenges in their education that are brought on by their situation," Pristow said. "It's incumbent on CFS to identify and reduce the issues that block their path to a good education. This plan addresses their needs so CFS and our schools work more closely together to meet their needs so they have a better chance to become successful."

The plan includes strategies to address positive outcomes for state wards, including: education stability, education advocacy, prompt enrollment in school and expedited transfer of records.

"A child involved in the child welfare system who is experiencing a traumatic family situation is naturally distracted and unlikely to perform well in school," Pristow said. "That's why it's necessary for us to make sure we work closely with schools so the educational side of their lives are positive with as little disruption as possible."

Pristow said that already four strategies have been implemented:

- An Education Court Report prepared by case managers, aids judges in making inquiries pertinent to the student's education.
- Case managers have increased communication with schools on changes in wards' living situation, legal status, and identification of the level of parental involvement in the child's educational services.
- Development of an Education Guide for CFS workers and providers that offers helpful hints and definitions for case managers, trainings related to education and a comprehensive overview of special education.
- Created an education program specialist position to provide consultation and technical assistance statewide.



IMAGE: METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS

The need for the 2015-2019 plan was reinforced by the results of research commissioned by DHHS and conducted by NDE. Pristow pointed to the difference in graduation rates that showed while 84.1 percent of non-ward students graduated in 2012-13, only 43.5 percent of wards received a diploma.

"As Nebraska educators and policymakers continue to work to fulfill their goal of focusing on every child every day to better

ensure student success, sound and reliable data are critical," said NDE Commissioner Matthew L. Blomstedt. "Equally important is the cooperation and collaboration among agencies to better ensure a successful future for all students and especially students who struggle with significant challenges. This report will provide ongoing needed guidance as we further develop and refine a system of support for the education of state wards."

Other findings of the study included state wards absent from school 11.7 days compared to 7.2 days for other students. State wards also are more likely to change schools. The study found that 23.6 percent of state wards enroll in two or more schools during the academic year, but only 4.1 percent of non-ward students face that number of school changes.

A greater percentage of state wards, 35.1 percent, are identified for special education compared to 15.8 percent of non-wards.

Additional indications of the challenges facing state wards were apparent as they consistently perform below their non-ward counterparts on the Nebraska State

Accountability (NeSA) Tests. On the 2012-2013 NeSA math test, 64.9 percent of state wards performed below standards compared to 30.3 percent of non-wards. In reading, 52 percent performed below standards compared to 22.8 percent of non-wards. In science, 61.5 percent performed below the standards compared to 29.2 percent of non-wards. The writing test showed that 65.3 percent performed below the standards compared to 30 percent of non-wards.

Pristow said he has appreciated NDE's collaboration to build systems that enable CFS and the schools to work together to provide for the educational needs of state wards.

"NDE is a critical partner in our plan," Pristow said. "Thanks to their commitment and the work of CFS staff for the benefit of state wards, inroads can be made in providing them a more positive educational experience."

The 2015-19 Education Operations Plan and the Nebraska State Ward Statistical Snapshot Project are available on the DHHS website at: <http://tinyurl.com/NEBwards>.

Avera Specialist Advises Preventive Measures Against The Flu

SIoux FALLS — In the midst of widespread influenza activity, an Avera specialist advises people to use preventive measures to prevent its spread, and to get a flu vaccine if they have not already.

"We're seeing far more flu cases in the clinics and hospital," said Jeremy Storm, DO, Infectious Disease specialist on staff at Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center. "It's clear that this is one of the worst years we've had for influenza."

To date, the South Dakota Department of Health is reporting 281 lab-confirmed cases of the flu, 121 flu-related hospitalizations and three flu-related deaths. Dr. Storm said the numbers may actually be higher as many people cope with flu symptoms at home, and these cases go unreported.

If you or a family member have not yet gotten a flu vaccine, it's not too late. According to Dr. Storm, influenza numbers generally peak in mid-February. The number of flu cases is expected to increase as the year progresses.

"It's ramping up," Dr. Storm said. "We are entering the height of flu season, so for anyone who has not gotten vaccinated, it is still a good idea."

The vaccine takes about two weeks to become effective. The flu vaccine is formulated each year to protect against the most common strains, and it is usually made up of two or three types of influenza A and one or two strains of influenza B. However, this year, the subtype H3N2 of influenza A mutated slightly from the antigens in the current vaccine, resulting in more flu cases.

Yet the current vaccine still protects against other common strains and lessens the severity of the flu for people who still catch the flu after getting vaccinated.

"The vaccine is still effective against most strains, and we still recommend that people get it," Dr. Storm said.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot, and children under 2 years old, or children with health problems like asthma, diabetes or chronic conditions of the brain are at the highest risk of severe complications.

It is important to remember that influenza should not be taken lightly as it can result in serious complications such as pneumonia, dehydration or worsening of chronic health conditions.

"People often say 'it's just the flu,' but in health care we're talking about influenza. It can look like a lot of different things, but generally makes people sicker," Dr. Storm said.

Symptoms include cough, high fever, fatigue, body aches and occasionally upset stomach, vomiting and loose stool.

Rest and hydration are two of the best ways to recover from a bout of the flu, but it's important to talk to your health care provider.

"Just call your provider's office for recommendations if you or a family member get sick," Dr. Storm said.

If your case is diagnosed as influenza, the medication Tamiflu might be prescribed to decrease the severity of symptoms and speed recovery.

Get medical attention immediately in case of any of these warning signs:

- High or prolonged fever
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest

Additionally, do your part to prevent the spread of influenza. Cover a cough with a tissue or your elbow and wash your hands regularly. Most importantly, stay home from work or school when you feel sick, and know that you might be contagious for seven to 10 days.

Ibarolle

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Mount Marty (College)," he said. "We worked together after school. By the time she was a senior, she might have been in her fifth season of pole vaulting."

Ibarolle literally reached new heights when it came to pole vaulting, Miner said.

"She was pretty dedicated, which got her to that 11-foot mark," he said. "She just gritted her teeth and made it happen."

Miner recalled that the young girl took heed of his coaching advice and blended it with her own determination.

"Khrista would do whatever I said. She believed what I told her, and then she would try it even if I didn't know what I was talking about," he said with a laugh.

And what if the advice didn't work? "We would try something else and see whatever worked," he added with a chuckle.

Miner recruited her to remain in Yankton and compete for MMC track. However, she was already looking at new horizons. "Khrista told me that she was past that (athletic) phase of her life. She was ready to explore the world," he said.

Ibarolle approached all aspects of her life with the same spirit of adventure and embracing whatever awaited her, Miner said. Her passions included jewelry design.

"Khrista was a pure individual. She always marched to the beat of a different drummer. She was totally independent," he said. "She had her own way of seeing the world that was very different than other people. She loved to talk about things, and she had her own viewpoint on just about everything."

Miner admitted he remained shocked by the randomness of Ibarolle's death. However, he will always remember her spirit.

"I loved working with her, and she always made me smile," he said. "She was a pretty special young woman."

Ibarolle excelled in pole vaulting at a time when it was

still new territory for high school girls, said track coach Deb Lillie.

"When you look at it, she pole vaulted at a time when it was still pretty rare for female vaulters. And pole vaulters don't do it just for the heck of it," Lillie said. "You really have to be committed to be successful."

Ibarolle's pole vaulting record continues to inspire today's YHS tracksters, Lillie said. The coach noted Ibarolle's photo following her runner-up finish at the state meet remains on the South Dakota Public Broadcasting website.

"All of our girl pole vaulters have Khrista's record circled as the benchmark for the height they want to reach," Lillie said.

TAKING TO THE FIELD

Besides track, Ibarolle excelled in soccer in the late 1990s and early 2000s, said Rick Anderson who coached her in high school.

"Khrista and my daughter, Nickie, played all four years of high school together," he said. "Khrista was one of the outstanding players on the team. She was a starter and played outside wing. She was one of the most dynamic players, especially with her flip throws. It was the one of the first (flip throws) I had ever seen."

Ibarolle also brought a great deal to the team chemistry, Rick Anderson said. "She kept the team light and loose," he said. "She made you feel good about what you were doing and at making you do your best. She was very easy to communicate with, and she kept me wanting to stay in coaching."

Ibarolle and Nickie Anderson graduated together in 2002 from Yankton High School, participating together in soccer, track and band. Ibarolle also was selected a member of the YHS homecoming royal court.

Ibarolle held a variety of interests in life, Rick Anderson said. "She was very outgoing, very passionate. She was a very outspoken young person," he said. "She was interested in a lot of different things and had a unique outlook."

Ibarolle saw great opportunities awaiting her at every bend, he said. "She very much wanted to get out there and explore the world. She wanted to try a lot of things," he said. "I remember Khrista for her energy, her positive attitude. I had a lot of fun with her. We had great back-and-forth banter. I thought the world of her."

AN ARTISTIC FLAIR

Besides her athletic prowess, Ibarolle excelled in the fine arts, said former YHS band director Ted Powell. She played percussion during her four years with the marching band and concert band.

"Khrista was very much a free spirit. She was strong in all the fine arts," Powell said. "She was extremely artistic in music and art. She was very creative, as seen in the jewelry she designed."

Ibarolle showed a fearless approach to life, Powell said. "She wasn't afraid. She was really independent," he said. "She was just curious about a lot of things. She was very outgoing and wasn't afraid to tell you what she thought."

Ibarolle was also very loyal and would fight for those in need, Powell said. "Khrista would stick up for the underdog. And if she was your friend, she was your friend for life," he said.

Meghan Powell, daughter of the former YHS band director, remained friends with Ibarolle throughout middle school and high school.

"I first met Khrista in seventh grade and immediately knew I wanted to be friends with this girl. She was so full of life and excited about everything," Meghan Powell said.

"She was also talented and successful at whatever she put her mind to. Normally, in my self-conscious awkward middle school and high school years, I would have been insanely jealous of someone with so many gifts, but she was humble and excited (when) you would try (something). She always reveled in your successes or failures, whichever they be."

Like her father, Meghan Powell - who now teaches in Sioux Center, Iowa - also saw Ibarolle's creative side in many different ways.

"Khrista was extremely

artistic and was always decorating her room, drawing, creating crafts, playing the marimba in band, playing the piano, dressing in unique ways, listening to all kinds of music and sharing it with anyone that would listen! It is no wonder she was so artistic in her career," Meghan Powell said.

Ibarolle also showed a sense of humor and self-confidence not always found among teenagers.

"Khrista was always coming up with creative and fun things to do," Powell said. "One of my favorite memories was in freshman year they had a 'Gong Show' at YHS, and Khrista decided that we needed to be a part of it. So we choreographed a whole dance and lip-synced to Nancy Sinatra's 'These Boots are Made for Walking.'"

"I can tell you with 100 percent certainty I would never have had the confidence to dance in front of 1,000 peers as a freshman, but she had this ability to get you as excited as she was in all things!"

Ibarolle will continue to make an impact long after her passing, Meghan Powell said.

"I think about how much I cherish our friendship and can't help but think of all the people she affected wherever she went," Powell said. "It didn't matter who your friends were or what clique you fit into, chances were you considered Khrista a friend."

Ibarolle and Powell rekindled that bond whenever they met, even when the two women were separated over the years by time and distance.

"As we got older and drifted apart, every time I would run into her, she would give me the biggest, tightest, longest, world-engulfing bear hugs that made you feel so special and loved," Powell said.

"I'm going to miss those hugs."

Funeral services for Ibarolle, the daughter of Wayne and Lori Ibarolle, are pending with the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton.

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf. Discuss this story at www.yankton.net.

OBITUARIES

Pauline Sternhagen

Memorial Services are 10:30 a.m., Saturday, January 10, 2015 at the First Presbyterian Church in Avon for Pauline K. "Polly" Sternhagen, 88, of Avon. Inurnment will be in Kasson, MN, next to her grandson. Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Chapel in Avon is in charge of arrangements.

Pauline Katherine "Polly" Sternhagen was born January 20, 1926 at Tyndall, SD, the daughter of Andrew and Anna (Bujer) Schmidt. She died Tuesday, January 6, 2015 at the Good Samaritan Society in Tyndall.

Polly graduated from Tyndall High School. She married Leo V. Marek in 1949. A daughter, Vicky was born to their union. She later married Thomas Sternhagen in Avon on December 17, 1966.

Polly worked for Northwestern Bell Telephone as a phone operator following her high school graduation. She then became Deputy Bon Homme Co. Treasurer followed by Deputy Bon Homme Co. Register of Deeds until 1949. Polly then worked as secretary and bookkeeper for Farmers Elevator in Avon for 25 years. During part of that time she



Sternhagen

also worked for the US Post Office in Avon for 32 years before retiring in 1991.

Polly was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church where she served as a Sunday School teacher, superintendent, treasurer, elder, clerk of session, trustee and belonged to the United Presbyterian Women. She also belonged to the American Legion Auxiliary, VFW Auxiliary and the Avon Flower Club.

Polly enjoyed gardening, traveling, dancing, snowmobiling, motorcycling, fishing, reading, playing cards, the Minnesota Twins, pro football, especially watching Riley Rieff with the Detroit Lions, crossword puzzles and spending time with family and friends.

Thankful for having shared her life are her daughter Vicky (Tom) Pileggi of Rochester, MN; stepdaughter Margo Nedved of Rapid City, SD; stepdaughter-in-law Marie Sternhagen of Groton, SD; two grandchildren; seven step grandchild-

dren; 12 step great grandchildren; brother Julius (Linda) Schmidt of Tyndall, SD; brother-in-law Don (Jan) Sternhagen of Dante, SD; sisters-in-law: Eve Soukup of Tyndall, SD, Ione Karolevitz of Tabor, SD; Pearl Sternhagen of Adams, MN and DeLores Sternhagen of Albert Lea, MN; and several nieces and nephews.

Polly was preceded in death by her parents, husband Tom on July 16, 2004; stepson Clayton Sternhagen; grandson John Michael Pileggi; brothers: Jacob Schmidt and Elmer Schmidt; sisters: Dorothy Burnett, DeLores Isaak, Ruby Sandau and Hattie Sandau; nephews Richard Schmidt and Troy Sternhagen; niece Sue Jayne Sternhagen; and brothers-in-law: Joe Sternhagen, Leo Sternhagen and Ray Sternhagen.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
January 9, 2014

Khrista Ibarolle

Khrista Noelle Ibarolle, 31, of El Dorado Hills, CA and formerly of Yankton died Jan. 6, 2015, suddenly from a random act of violence shortly after celebrating her 31st birthday with a friend.

Khrista will be remembered for her love, hugs and desires of peace.

Funeral services are pending with the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton.

Gladys Lindblad

Gladys Swenson Lindblad, 95, of Yankton, South Dakota, formerly of Willmar, Minnesota, passed away Wednesday, January 7, 2015 at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton after a very short illness.

Family graveside services will be held at 3:00 p.m., on Friday, January 9, 2015 at Cloverleaf Memorial Park Cemetery in Willmar, Minnesota with Rev. Dean Johnson presiding.

Gladys was born on the family farm in Dovre Township, September 19, 1919, to John and Aastha (Emberland) Swenson. She grew and went to school in the county schools on the Little Crow Trail.

Gladys was baptized and

confirmed in Calvary Lutheran Church. She remained a member of the church and Dovre Circle all her life. She was united in marriage to Lorentz Manley Lindblad December 16, 1939 at Calvary. They made their home in Willmar. Gladys was as a homemaker, and later in life, she worked at the Bethesda Nursing Home.

She is survived by her two daughters, Gloria (Ernest) Keller, of The Dalles, Oregon, and Karen (Wayne) Hesper of Yankton, South Dakota; her four grandchildren, her four great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandson, Carson Synder.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Lorentz Lindblad;

her three brothers, Arthur, Kenneth, Selmer Swenson, and her three sisters: Josie Soderberg, Christine Hoglund, and Marie Wilke.

Kober Funeral Home of Vermillion, South Dakota has been entrusted with the services.

Condolences may be posted online to www.koberfuneralhome.com

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January 9, 2014

Charles Kennedy

Charles Kennedy, 65 of Yankton passed away on Thursday, Jan. 8, 2015 at his residence. Arrangements are under the care of the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Dennis Edwin Huber
2:00 PM, Friday
Vangen Lutheran Church
Mission Hill

Vernon R. Dickes
10:30 AM, Monday
Trinity Lutheran Church
Hartington

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