

About the Authors



ALICE SEAGREN was appointed by Governor Tim Pawlenty as the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education in July 2004. As Commissioner, she is responsible for MDE operations and policymaking for all aspects of K-12 education, implementing the No Child Left Behind Act in Minnesota, early learning, libraries, and adult, career and technical education.

Prior to her appointment, she served six terms in the Minnesota House of Representatives. During her legislative career she was Chair of the House Education Finance Committee and a member of the Education Policy, Education Finance, Ways and Means, and Transportation Policy committees. Before winning election to the Legislature, she served on the Bloomington School Board; she has also been a volunteer in her church and in the community. She is currently a board member of the Normandale Community College Foundation Board and Fraser Community Services, an organization providing services to the disabled. On the national level, Seagren chaired the Education Committee of the National Council of State Legislatures, Assembly of State Issues, reflecting her commitment to education and helping people become self-sufficient.

A graduate of Southeast Missouri State University with a B.S. in marketing, Commissioner Seagren is married to Fred and has two children, Christina and Greg.

MARTHA MCMURRY is a senior research analyst with the State Demographic Center at the Minnesota Department of Administration in St. Paul. Her responsibilities include preparing population, household and labor force projections and tracking demographic trends. She received a Ph.D. in sociology from Indiana University.

BARBARA J. RONNINGEN has worked in the State Demographic Center for more than 15 years. During that time, she has written a number of papers and reports, including *Ahead at Halftime: Minnesota at Mid-Decade* (1996). Most recently, she developed estimates of immigrant populations in Minnesota in 2004. She has also worked on and written reports for the Governor's Task Force on Sports Facilities (1998) and the budget study project, *Within Our Means*. Areas of special interest in the Demographer's office include international immigration, local area population trends, labor shortage, federal spending, fertility, income, agriculture, housing and children. Before coming to the Demographic Center, Barbara worked in the Department of Economic Security, primarily in the area of unemployment insurance. Barbara received her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Chicago and an additional master's degree from UCLA, all in anthropology, with special emphasis on the Middle East and North Africa.



JULIE TESCH is executive director of the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC), a legislative council created to improve agricultural education across the state. She works closely with legislators, state departments and teachers to implement innovative and effective programs related to agricultural education.

A native of Waldorf, MN, she received both her master's degree in agricultural education and her bachelor of science degree in applied economics from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She also recently completed her tenure as a Hubert H. Humphrey Policy Fellow. She has studied agriculture in both Russia and Switzerland. Prior to MAELC, she worked as an Extension educator for 4-H youth development in Waseca and Steele counties. As a volunteer, she devotes much of her time to FFA and 4-H activities across the state.

GREGORY R. THORSON is an associate professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, Morris. His current work focuses on a variety of rural issues, including rural education, rural access to healthcare insurance, and rural housing. Prof. Thorson has previously published two papers with the Center for Rural Policy and Development: *Small Schools Under Siege: Evidence of Resource Inequality in Minnesota Schools* (2002), and *Making Difficult Times Worse: The Impact of Per Pupil Funding Formulas on Rural Minnesota Schools* (2000).



Prof. Thorson has published more than twenty articles in a wide variety of publications, including the *Journal of Politics*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Congress and the Presidency*, *Educational Leadership*, and the *International Journal of Forecasting*.

JESSICA L. ANDERSON is a junior at the University of Minnesota, Morris. She has worked on a variety of rural issues at the Center for Small Towns. She is majoring in Psychology.



MARTHA FARRELL ERICKSON, having served as the first Director of the University of Minnesota's Children, Youth & Family Consortium (1991 to 2003), now directs the Harris Programs in the U of M's Center for Early Education and Development and co-chairs the President's Initiative on Children, Youth & Families. Marti specializes in linking research, practice and policy in the areas of parent-child attachment, child abuse

prevention, and children's mental health. Her publications include many scholarly articles and books, as well as a syndicated parenting column, "Growing Concerns." Since 1995, Marti has also appeared regularly on NBC's Today Show and KARE-TV's Sunrise Show, and with her daughter, hosts a weekly radio show, "Good Enough Moms," on FM 107.

Marti holds a Ph.D. and has been honored by numerous state and national organizations, including the Minnesota Psychological Association (Outstanding Contribution to Psychology Award, 2003) and the Minnesota School Psychologists Association (Distinguished Best Practices Award, 2003).



MICHELE FALLON is a licensed clinical social worker and has worked with young children and their families in a variety of settings for the last thirty years. Her primary interests include training, consultation, and reflective supervision promoting infant and preschool mental health with parents, caregivers and early intervention providers; working with high-risk families to promote healthy parent-child relationships; and working with special

needs children and their families. Currently, she works with the Harris Programs of the Center for Early Education and Development at the University of Minnesota as the clinical director of the Baby's Space Partnership, integrating family support services into childcare, and A Circle of Women, which promotes sober parenting for mothers with chemical health issues.

DARIA PAUL DONA, Ph.D., holds an appointment as associate professor in the College of Education at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She earned her doctoral degree in educational psychology from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 1990 and has practiced as a school psychologist in the public schools in both North Carolina and Minnesota. She is past president of the Minnesota School Psychology Association and former editor of *School Psychology Minnesota*.

Dr. Paul Dona conducts research on policies and procedures that influence achievement gap trends and the disproportionate representation of minority students in special education programs. She has recently produced a series of professional development training modules aimed at promoting intercultural competence for designing responsive instruction and behavioral support systems. Her work has been published in professional journals and books and presented at national and international conferences.

PATRICIA HOFFMAN is an associate professor of Educational Studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in Curriculum and Instruction: Second Languages and Cultures and her M.S in special education from St. Cloud State University. She has taught ESL, special education and foreign language in public schools and overseas. Her research interests



include multicultural education, professional learning communities, disproportionality and assessment of English language learners.



LORETTA DELONG holds a doctorate in education from the University of North Dakota and is currently a professor in the Educational Leadership Department at Minnesota State University, Mankato. She is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians located in very north central North Dakota. She has worked as a teacher, Bilingual Director, Vice President of United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, former Post Doctoral

Bush Fellow, superintendent of schools, Education Line Officer for 9 schools in North Dakota, manager/editor for the Turtle Mountain Community College NSF Project, *Telling the Story*.

Loretta is a mother, wife, grandmother, sister, aunt. Traditional teachings of her people guide her and teach her, ceremonies weave her with her spirit always and her vision in life enables her.

KATHRYN PETERS is currently a junior at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Kathryn grew up in a rural area near Goodhue, MN, with her father, mother and three sisters. After attending school in Goodhue, she graduated in 2003 as valedictorian of her class. Following high school, she enrolled in the dietetics program at Mankato and will be graduating in the spring of 2007 with a bachelor's of science in dietetics. After college, she plans on completing her internship and R.D. board and becoming a registered dietician. Once certified, she plans to work as a clinical dietician in Minnesota and someday raise a family here.



DOUG THOMAS is executive director of EdVisions Cooperative in Henderson, MN, a public educator professional practice serving 15 public charter schools and more than 200 individual members. A former teacher and business owner, Doug served as the founding president of EdVisions Cooperative and was also a founder of the Minnesota New Country School, a nationally recognized innovative charter school located in Henderson. He spent ten years

as the Southern Minnesota representative for the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute and was a four-term member on the board of the LeSueur-Henderson Public Schools. In 2000, EdVisions was awarded a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for small-high schools replication, and Doug has since led the effort to create 35 new small secondary schools using the New Country/EdVisions model. He is a strong advocate for small and rural schools, teacher leadership and innovative learning strategies and has a special interest in rural community development.



Doug earned a bachelor of science degree in secondary education from Bemidji State University and a master's degree in educational leadership from Minnesota State University, Mankato, where he has taught a graduate course in educational reform and leadership for ten years.

For the past 25 years, he has also been co-owner of New Leaf Development Inc., a small historic preservation and management company located in Henderson.