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“A desk is a dangerous place from which to view the world.”

-John LeCarre-

MEETINGS and EVENTS:

Links will provide additional information. Dates for recent additions are in **bold**.

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
BCEDC Annual Meeting	May 12 th	10:00 – noon	TBA
Green Communities Conference	May 20 th	All Day	UW-River Falls
Manufacturing Advantage 2008	May 21	All Day	UW-Stout
Introduction to Biodiesel Fuel	June 3-5	All Day	Madison Area Technical College
Green By Design Conference	June 12-13	All Day	Washington DC area
Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility Field Days	June 12–13	All Day	Red Cliff / Bayfield
Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference	June 19 & 20	All Day	Cable, Telemark

A Nation at Risk?

A report with the title “A Nation at Risk” was published ([archived document](#)) in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Hand-wringing continues 25 years later. A proliferation of tests and new curricula and more tests and more measurements raise the stakes. Making the management of education more consistent with principles of management of our corporations is made to seem a critical path to reform. **Kathleen Kennedy Manzo** and **Sean Cavenagh** write in *Education Week* [A Nation at Risk – Twenty-five Years Later](#) to reflect backward and encourage us to look forward.

Our Nation has become so concerned over educating our students in STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, that we may well risk overlooking the integration of these skills with ability to make connections and channel concepts and theory into creative solutions. Bottlenecks and barriers continue to challenge individuals, communities and corporations when synthesis and creativity take back seats.

Social and economic (poverty) factors undoubtedly influence how well individual kids are able to make their way in the system we call education. Poverty combined with a community that, doesn't care about kids can make it a steep stairway for a family to support any semblance of quality in education. When a parent doesn't have a clue about the economic advantage of education, a kid is just lucky to encounter another adult that sets an example. Trying to manage our schools to make these magic moments happen is dicey. Small classes help, skilled, knowledgeable, empathetic teachers help, textbooks and libraries help, technologies help, decent buildings help, good lunches help, but good luck, yes, including genetics, a caring community and loving parents, is hard to dismiss.

Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#) is quoted by Manzo and Cavanagh, “We are now members of a global community, and like it or not, we are not among the top-performing countries in the world.” Wilhoit recognizes that regional and state-by-state comparisons begin to take on a new significance as performance is measured against Chinese and Indian schools. However, linkage between economic growth and educational practices in China and India is troubled by considerations for causes and effects. To suggest that economic growth in China and India is independent of the intellectual capital provided by US and European firms that are expanding in China and India is fatuous at best and most likely just plain thickheaded. Yet such comparison constantly drives more hand-wringing and more STEM. More and better engineers may not be a critical path to avoid a new round of risk.

States and regions are responding to global economic pressures that have flattened our world. Education, it is argued, needs to be managed and management requires measurement. Benchmarking regional and national performance against other nation-states that ostensibly represent our global “competition” is considered a way to assess potential economic risk.

Perhaps until we are better able to identify and measure the intangibles contributing to an individual's learning, our goals of excellence will remain at risk. We probably will not have the luxury of waiting another quarter century to figure out why high pressure, high stakes testing is not enough.

LIGHTER SIDE:

As with most jokes the original author is unknown. Whoever you are; “Thanks!” Names, when added, are intended to tease the innocent.

Ever wonder . . .

Why the time of day with the slowest traffic is called the rush hour?

Why it is that doctors call what they do “practice”?

Why you don't ever see the headline, “Psychic Wins Lottery!”

If con is the opposite of pro, is Congress the opposite of progress?

Why Noah didn't swat those two mosquitoes?

Take care and enjoy a great weekend!

/BRUCE

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Bruce Lindgren is Principal of [B.Lindgren CONSULTING](#). The consulting practice serves small business, local government, school districts and non-profits providing support for research, grant development, technical writing, marketing support and project management. Bruce brings his background in biological sciences, education, small business and media technology to generate and implement ideas contributing solutions to mission critical challenges.

In addition Bruce maintains the following affiliations:

[Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation](#), (BCEDC) Director

[Bayfield CountyLakes Forum](#), Board Secretary

[Chequamegon Institute, Inc.](#) Initial Registered Agent

[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), (CEID) Acting President & CEO

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), Owner

[Inland Sea Society](#), (ISS) Director

[Lake Superior Binational Forum](#), (LSBF) US Co-Chair

[Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board](#), (WIB) Member

[Raindrop Garden Gallery](#), (RGG) Co-owner

The encircled fractal triangle represents an integrated cluster of seven ideas – economics, ecology, equity, ethics, experience, education and energy – that may be considered a core for sustainability studies. Bruce is available to present illustrated lectures and facilitate discussions about role of education in Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.