

## Papio-LV school district launches 'Be There' campaign

BY RICHARD EGAN  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

"Be There" is here.

Gov. Dave Heineman on Monday helped the Papillion-La Vista school district launch "Be There," a national campaign urging parents to get involved in their children's education.

The Papillion-La Vista school district is the state's pilot site for the program, and parents who attend the district's parent-teacher conferences during the next two weeks will be invited to "be there" for their children.

"I've challenged our education community to find better, more creative ways to get parents more actively involved in their child's education," Heineman said. "This community is already a great example for others in our state."

The objective is to drum the "be there" concept into the public's consciousness through billboards, posters and public service announcements that emphasize the importance of attending school events as a family, participating in extracurricular activities and staying in contact with teachers.

"Be There" is an effort to change behavior, much like the "Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk" campaign. That campaign, according to statistics compiled by the Ad Council, was seen by 84 percent of Americans, 80 percent of whom said they took action to prevent a friend or loved one from driving drunk.

Parents are reminded that even though they might miss school events, they still can be a part of their children's education. "Be There" moments can involve such seemingly mundane tasks as grocery shopping, cooking or chores around the house, with an educational twist.

"It can be something like having kids clip coupons for shopping, then receiving the money saved and putting it into a savings account," said Annette Eyman, district spokeswoman.

The governor also attended the luncheon Monday at the Papillion-La Vista schools administrative offices to recognize the district for winning the state's inaugural Education Initiative Award for Parental Involvement Programs, which it received in November.

"Finding ways to improve parental involvement is one of the most important challenges we can tackle in education," Heineman said.

Papillion-La Vista was chosen from districts with 1,000 students or more. The Loup City and Madison districts also were recognized for small- and medium-sized districts, respectively.

The Nebraska Association of School Boards joined with the governor to create the awards program to recognize school districts that encourage parents to get engaged. Each district received \$500, courtesy of Aramark, a food services company.

Papillion-La Vista will hold its first Statewide Parent Involvement Conference on March 29 at Papillion-La Vista South High.

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