

The Beat Goes On, But the Heat is On!

**By Kathy Leedom,
MASA President and
Superintendent, Willmar Schools**

The school year is off and running and we find ourselves up to our megaphones in the typical demands of ensuring another successful school year for the children in our schools. It seems that everyone wants a piece of our attention or a listening ear as we collaborate to make decisions that will benefit our stakeholders. In fact, the non-stop demands and opportunities signify loud and clear that we are indeed needed as we recognize the familiar rhythm of a new school year while humming that familiar tune (at least to some of us), "The Beat Goes On."

While that catchy and familiar beat is a cadence that gives us a sense of stability and routine, we also are acutely aware that we are embarking on major changes in the world that affect us in every school district in the state of Minnesota. The world has become smaller and flatter, and we are preparing our students for an acutely different world than we could ever imagine when most of us began our careers as educators. Indeed, "the heat is on" for us to reform, revitalize, refine, and ready our schools to deliver what it is our students need to compete and succeed in their world. As we collaborate, commiserate, and connect to make sure that we are addressing the academic needs of all of our students, it is very clear that the clock is indeed ticking as

never before in demanding that we step up to the plate and meet the challenges of world changes that we continue to understand. Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Reading, Assessments, Relationships, Personalization, and a host of other subjects and topics give us our marching orders as we shepherd our students to an exciting future. The heat is on as our young people, our state, and our nation depend on us to deliver people who are able to compete, succeed, and thrive in this new world.

So, we are in step with the familiar and are trying to learn the steps to the new dance to which we have been invited. We are probably sensing that there is no time to stand on the sidelines waiting to feel comfortable on this new dance floor as we did during our junior high sock hop days. As superintendents, central office leaders, retired leaders, and business partners, we are not only in the center of the dance floor, but we are also leading the dance as we maneuver our way to successes and accomplishments. Clearly, it's stressful out there as people watch our every move and wonder if we can deliver the goods that are being demanded. Never before have we needed the collegiality of our profession more than we need it now to teach us the new steps, practice together, and roll out the product that will allow us to do what is right for our students. MASA is our organization to assist us in positioning ourselves to do a job of which we are proud. MASA fills up our dance cards with the

partners we need to meet these challenges and turn them into opportunities. Our dance partners come in the form of conferences, committee involvement, regional meetings, other educational organizations, networking, and skill-developing workshops to name a few of the ways where we can learn about the new dance and how to maneuver it well so that we respond to the beat even when the heat is on!

My wish for you this year is to take advantage of all that MASA has to offer this year so that you are indeed on the dance floor, with a card full of partners, and navigating both familiar and unfamiliar steps that will help us glide from the past to the future! •



Kathy Leedom

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Increasing the Use of Technology by Students and Teachers



Charlie Kyte

**By Charlie Kyte,
MASA Executive
Director**

When the American West was settled, the settlers coming across the Great Plains didn't have GPS Systems in their covered wagons. They didn't have cell phones to call the other wagon

trains to see how they were doing. They didn't have the Internet to use to talk to their kids in the evenings. They had the skill set that was necessary to survive in that day.

In today's world, a different skill set is necessary. The students of today and tomorrow are going to learn, communicate and work using technology. It becomes incumbent on school administrators and teachers to become adept at technology use so we can help our children to learn.

The State of Michigan is undergoing an interesting initiative beginning with this new school year. The state has decreed that every student graduating from a Michigan high school take at least one year of credit in an "on-line" environment. They know that many of these students will take on-line courses during college and/or on-line continuing education credits for their chosen occupation.

There are two ways in which school districts can provide on-line instruction. One, have it taught by the existing teachers in the school by substituting on-line instruction for regularly delivered classes. A second option is to "farm out" the on-line instruction to some type of

cyber academy. On-line instruction does not mean easy credits. Good on-line courses for high school and middle school students will have expectations for work to be done and can be paced on a weekly basis. Students may come together on occasion, such as once a week or once every two weeks, as they learn on-line.

Minnesota is not moving fast enough in terms of adopting technology driven instruction for our students. While there are a number of positive and notable examples across the state, we have allowed state investments in technology to dry up. We need to move along faster and more assertively. Michigan's example is one way in which state policy makers can encourage a change of behavior that still allows quality instruction to take place, but helps to change the environment in which it is presented.

For administrators it is important to not only look for strategies which will help students and teachers utilize technology to a greater degree, but to become skilled yourself in using technology. There are a couple of easy things administrators can do to conduct their own work while they learn to use their computers and technology more efficiently.

One strategy is to begin the use of voice recognition as a way of communicating. There are two good voice recognition packages

available, one being Via Voice and the other Dragon. The software costs about \$200 and you can immediately begin speaking to your computer and having your voice translated into words. The second is to begin communicating in your community using podcasts (BLOGS), which is a simple technology once you learn how to use it.

Those folks that traveled in covered wagons over the western geography of the USA needed to have a certain skill set to be successful. Our students also need to have a specific set of skills for them to be successful now and in the future. Those skills revolve strongly around the use of technology. •

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On the Road with Charlie... My Adventure in Becoming a BLOGGER

**By Charlie Kyte,
MASA Executive Director**

The new Internet phenomenon of BLOGGING is the technological way of creating public relationships in our society. An extension of BLOGGING is to add an audio portion, which is frequently called a podcast. Over the past year, I have been experimenting with using this communication medium. It has slowly evolved into a weekly broadcast called "On the Road with Charlie" to the Members of MASA.

In bygone days, our society moved much slower and people were less mobile. Essential communications were carried out in person. Community leaders saw other members of the community before and after church on Sunday mornings, in the coffee shops and as they did their business in "town." Public relationships flourished.

As our world moved faster and people became more mobile, we found people living in larger communities. Slick brochures, newsletters and other impersonal means of communication became the norm. While public relations are effective at one level, the art of "public

relationships" was largely lost.

The use of BLOGS and podcasts allows leaders to use the power of technology to regain public relationships with our citizens. By writing a BLOG with a conversational audio podcast attached to it, leaders can again create a connection with the public. Once you get by the initial setup of the BLOGGING process, it is quite easy. The "On the Road with Charlie" audio portions are done by talking on a cell phone on my way to work. I send the cell phone message to a website. When I get to work, I open the website, type in the title, the text and a few pictures. It takes about thirty minutes and once I hit the save button the BLOG is published to the MASA website.

I find this all pretty cool. I call the MASA BLOG and podcast "On the Road with Charlie" because I record it driving to work and I listen to it as I drive home.

To listen to "On the Road with Charlie" – a report to the members of MASA go to the MASA website (www.mnasa.org) and click BLOG.

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Discipline Under the New Federal Regulations to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: What School Administrators Need to Know



Charles E. Long

By Charles E. Long
Attorney
The School District
Law Group of Ken-
nedey & Graven

Nearly two years after it was signed, the last piece of the Individuals with Disabilities Act Reauthorization of 2004 is almost in place. On

August 14, the final regulations to the IDEA were published in the Federal Register. They will take effect on October 13. This article will discuss some of the primary changes that school administrators should know about student discipline as the new school year begins.

The test for determining whether a series of removals totaling more than 10 days constitutes a change in placement has been revised. Under the draft regulations, the team was to consider whether the student's behavior resulting in the removal was a manifestation of the student's disability. That requirement was deleted. Thus, it appears that manifestation does not factor into the analysis. A series of removals constitutes a "pattern" and, therefore, a change in placement if: a) the series of removals total more than 10 days in a school year; b) the student's behavior is "substantially similar" to behaviors in previous incidents that resulted in removal; and c) other factors such as the length of each removal, the total time the student is removed, and the proximity of the removals suggest that the student's placement was, in fact, changed.

If a school district determines that removing the student will result in a

change in placement, it must notify the parents of the decision and provide them with notice of their procedural safeguards. The IEP team must determine appropriate services for the student. The services must enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum — although in another setting or location — and to progress toward meeting the IEP goals.

The IDEA gives parents the right to challenge a school district's decision regarding disciplinary changes in placement through an "expedited" due process hearing. An expedited hearing must occur within 20 days of the request (as opposed to 45 days for a regular hearing) and result in a decision within 10 school days of the hearing. The new regulations clarify that unless the parents and district agree in writing to waive it or use mediation, a resolution meeting must occur within seven days of the expedited hearing request.

In the past, when parents made such a challenge, they were entitled to invoke the student's "stay put," meaning the student stayed in the "pre-discipline" placement. This often meant school districts had to return the student to school while waiting to see if they could proceed with an expulsion. The new regulations change this. Now, when a parent requests a hearing to challenge a disciplinary act, instead of returning to school, the student remains in the interim alternative educational setting until the hearing is completed or the disciplinary placement expires, whichever is first. This significant change will be of great benefit to schools.

er a disabled student's conduct is a manifestation of his or her disability remains the same. However, in situations where a team determines that a student's behavior was a manifestation of disability because the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP, the new regulations require the district to take immediate steps to remedy the deficiencies. This does not represent a radical change. It merely reflects what any school district should do after determining that an IEP is not being properly implemented.

Although the regulations will go into effect in less than two months, their real impact will not be fully known until after the next legislative session. State special education statute and rules almost certainly will be revised to resolve the conflicts between the current state and federal laws. Whether Minnesota continues to place obligations on school districts that exceed federal law or adopts new standards that are more consistent with the IDEA remains to be seen.

This article is intended to provide general information with commentary. It should not be relied upon as legal advice. If required, legal advice regarding this topic should be obtained from district legal counsel. •

The method for determining wheth-

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Looking In, Seeing Beyond and Reaching Out



Shari Prest

By Shari Prest
Ark Associates

School communications need to be better than ever before. The abundance of misinformation and the speed with which it travels requires that school leaders multiply their communication efforts and pathways.

The challenge is for educators to tap into the same resources the rest of the world is using and to do it in a selective and professional manner. Electronic newsletters, expanded district/school web sites, interactive surveys, and blog sites can be low cost ways to supplement traditional communications. Educators no longer control the topics or timelines for dispersing information, but they can ensure timely responses, anticipate issues and maintain a steady stream of correct information.

Ensure timely responses

- Respond to every relevant phone call, e-mail or letter within one working day, even if only to give a timeline for a thorough response. One Minnesota school district has even turned that expectation into a policy for all staff.
- Address emerging issues as quickly as possible. Test scores, anticipated program or boundary changes, incidents involving violence or injury, policy adjustments, taxes and referenda, learning gaps, school status, changes in personnel, etc., are issues of interest around which stories will be created in the absence

of accurate information.

- Determine and publish a

process for constituents to use when questions or concerns arise.

- Get the good news out fast. Whenever there is something to celebrate, have it posted on websites, included in newsletters, sent to staff and submitted to local media while the information is still relevant.

- Structure talking points about significant issues and distribute them to the appropriate people as soon as possible.

Anticipate issues

- Schedule regular time to research and review relevant topics.
- Acknowledge and address the November elections as a prevailing issue for the future of education.
- Share information with your stakeholders about the impact of elections on a quality system of public education.
- Examine candidates' history, affiliations and objectives related to public education, taxes, local control, and federal and state intrusion.
- Encourage your stakeholders to be active citizens, and suggest some nonpartisan criteria they might employ to identify the candidates they will support.

- Build communication bridges to all candidates in your area, as you may be working together in the future. Focus on vision, issues and objectives rather than on

individual personalities.

- Congratulate the elected officials immediately after they are chosen, and indicate your desire to visit regularly and to work together on creative solutions to complex challenges.

Maintain a steady stream of correct information

- Demonstrate that you value stakeholder relationships through the use of interactive communications; surveys; focus groups; frequent visits to school sites and/or classrooms; regularly scheduled coffees with the principal/superintendent; columns in newsletters/newspapers; personal notes to staff, community members, and students on appropriate occasions; etc.
- Schedule regular and frequent communications on your calendar, just as you would a meeting.
- Formalize communication expectations for yourself, staff and parents.
- Model respectful listening through note-taking, feedback, and clarification.
- Test communication drafts for accuracy and attitude by having someone else review them prior to release. •



Plan to attend the

MASA 2006 Fall Conference

October 1 - 3

Madden's On Gull Lake, Brainerd

School leadership is complex, yet day-to-day, well-operated school districts hum along on the shoulders of teams supported by rafts of carefully constructed policies, procedures, plans, and proposals. Leaders know there is a difference between managing the successful operation of the district and leading a vision of the future, and they know that vision is wider than the "humming along" occurring within district buildings. So where does the spark that ignites the vision come from? Join your colleagues for the MASA Fall Conference and explore leading educational innovation and how to spark the vision!

Conference Highlights ...

- Golfers will enjoy the MASA Foundation Golf Tournament Mixer on Sunday at 12:30 pm. The tournament offers fun, prizes and an afternoon on Madden's beautiful Pine Beach West Course. All conference participants are invited to play.
- Celebrate the service of our honored peers at the Sunday evening Awards Banquet. The prestigious Morris Bye Memorial Award will be presented to Barbara Devlin, Superintendent of the Richfield Schools, and members marking milestones will receive service pins.
- Imagination is what makes all things possible. It can dramatically improve a school district's ability to innovate, transform key practices, and have a profound impact on relationships

within the school district community. In Monday's unique and groundbreaking presentation, Tom Wujec will draw on his experience as a leader of a cutting edge 3-D graphics technology firm to provide administrators with ideas about how to put imagination at the center of their schools.

- Members' partners are invited to get acquainted and gather for golf, nature walks, bridge, shopping or whatever else might sound inviting. The Partner's Coffee Monday morning is just the place to make plans!
- The Exhibit Fair is a convenient way to visit with representatives of companies offering the latest products and services of value to school leaders.
- Smaller group Breakout Sessions offer cutting-edge information on a variety of topics, including innovation/ imagination, data best practices, finance, communications, legal issues, facilities, student wellness, school redesign, and more!
- Monday afternoon, join us for our keynote panel, "World Class Schools, World Class State: A Call to Action." For the past year, a group of superintendents has been meeting with the support of the Minneapolis Foundation to discuss how Minnesota can truly have a world-class education system. Join us to hear about the group's findings and strategies to move the "call to action" forward.

- After a busy Monday, relax before dinner by participating in the Fun Run/Walk, or test your skill on the green at the putting contest.
- Unwind and enjoy Monday evening. Don't miss the "Black and White Ball," featuring the big band sound of the George Maurer Orchestra, and your host for the evening, "Spotlight" Kyte. Black and/or white attire (of any kind—this is a casual event) is encouraged.
- Our Tuesday program features a presentation by our first MASA Richard Green Scholar Diane Rauschenfels, Superintendent of the Proctor Schools. Diane will present her paper, Promoting Ethical Educational Leadership, a discussion of ethical dilemmas, research, solutions, and future considerations.

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LEADER'S toolbox

Minnesota School Districts are Investing in Alternative forms of Energy



Mike Pieper

By Mike Pieper
Johnson Controls, Inc.

Organizations world wide have been investing in wind turbines for years. Wind technology provides great benefits to its investors: environmentally it reduces the country's reliance on Coal & Gas-fired Power Plants and economically, if developed in a high wind resource area, provides great returns. Although greatly beneficial,

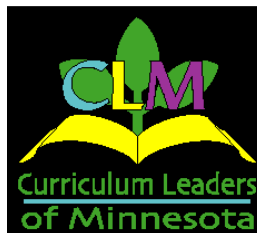
investing in wind technology is an expensive undertaking and requires extensive research and time. While private sector organizations realize tax breaks and other advantages for investing in alternative forms of energy, until now, there has been little incentive for school districts and others in the public sector to do so. As such, the IRS has set aside \$500 million in zero interest Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREBs) to entice the public sector to invest in renewable energy projects. These renewable projects will not only become a valuable energy and revenue source for districts throughout the state, but will also provide significant educational opportunities for students.

Recently, fourteen districts in Minnesota have partnered with Johnson Controls to apply for CREBs and jointly develop and operate a wind farm. This wind farm will be located in Southwest Minnesota in a high wind resource area. Although each participating school district will own its individual wind turbine, all costs associated with developing and owning the turbines on the farm will be shared by all districts, minimizing the total cost of ownership. Through this collaboration, revenues produced by the wind farm are guaranteed to exceed the yearly cost of ownership and may be used at the discretion of the participating districts.

In addition to the environmental and economical benefits,

ties for students. Web cameras and other technology will be installed in the turbines, which will allow teachers and students at any time to access the wind farm's data. Districts will also take advantage of the Academy of Energy Education, a unique joint effort between Johnson Controls and the National Energy Foundation. The Academy combines the study of science, energy and math with real-world, hands on experiences. Its programs are designed for use throughout the school year and include lesson plans, classroom materials, built-in student and teacher recognition, incentives and more.

In the event that funding is made available for next year, Johnson Controls, Inc. is already working with additional districts for the next project. For more information call 763-585-5022. •



Curriculum Leaders of Minnesota (CLM) Fall Conference

Curriculum Leaders of Minnesota (CLM) is a group organized to inform and support curriculum development and instruction in Minnesota public schools. CLM provides a network of your colleagues as a meeting point for the issues and initiatives important to curriculum leaders throughout our state. CLM has begun a number of projects to support and inform, such as:

- **The CLM Fall Conference:**
Curriculum Implementation in Motion
Join us in Brainerd this November 15 - 17 (Wednesday evening - Friday noon) at Cragun's Resort. The Curriculum Implementation in Motion conference is an opportunity for school district curriculum leaders to participate in working sessions that provide a fertile culture for sharing, learning, and creating. Participants will return to their districts recharged and reconnected, with a product of work based on the conference activities. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to get connected! Registration materials will be available soon.

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DIRECTOR'S notes

MSDLAF+ ... A Safe and Profitable Way to Invest Your School District's Money



By **Charles Kyte**
Executive Director, MASA

The Minnesota Liquid Asset Fund was established over 20 years ago as a joint effort of MSBA, MASBO and MASA. The three associations have supplied the trustees to the MSDLAF+ Fund and helped to develop this Fund to become one of the premier investments and money management tools for school districts in the nation.

Charlie Kyte

The MSDLAF+ Fund is a short and long-term money market investment fund for school districts. It includes a low cost banking capability. School districts can have their state gate payments deposited directly into the MSDLAF+ Fund and then on a daily basis draw money as it is needed. All of this can be done electronically and a school district can keep close track of their funds via the Internet.

The trustees of the MSDLAF+ Fund have retained two firms to handle the banking and the accounting/investment advisory functions of the Fund. US Bank is the banker and PFM, Inc. handles the accounting and investment functions. Recently, the Board of Trustees renegotiated five-year agreements with each of these entities. In each case, they significantly reduced the costs of helping to manage the fund.

We often use the acronym **SLY** as our mantra as we manage the school district's money. The "S" stands for Security and is the first consideration. School district's money is always invested in safe solid investments. The "L" stands for Liquidity. School district's are able to move money

in and out of the MSDLAF+ account any time they want to. The "Y" stands for Yield. Once we know money is invested in a secure fashion and that it is liquid, the MSDLAF+ then strives to return to school districts the highest yield possible. The Fund has always taken the stand that they are willing to give up a tiny percentage on the yield side in order to make sure that the school district's money is secure.

A very small amount of the earning of the MSDLAF+'s Fund (less than one-tenth of one percent) flows back to the three associations in return for our sponsorship and oversight of the Fund. In the case of MASA, we use these funds to provide our public advocacy efforts on behalf of public schools.

MASA encourages school districts to utilize services of the MSDLAF+ Fund for their investments. Your money will be safe and secure, you will earn a fair interest rate and you will be helping the public advocacy efforts for public education.

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DISTRICT | leadership

Connections with China Increase Understanding and Opportunities for Students

By John D. Currie
Superintendent, Independent School District 196

During the last week of June, Commissioner Alice Seagren led a delegation of 15 educators to China. We visited five schools in two cities and attended meetings with Chinese educational professionals and leaders. The purpose of the trip was to gain a better understanding of the history, language (Mandarin) and culture of the Chinese people and to establish relationships that will lead to making both educational systems more effective. Part of this process will include the creation of opportunities for our students to learn more about China and the possibility for teachers and students to participate in exchange programs between Minnesota and China.

China is increasingly becoming a major player in the world our students will enter as employees, consumers, leaders and citizens. One in six persons alive in the world today is Chinese. Three-fourths of all concrete being poured and operating construction cranes in the world today are in China. Growing potatoes? China has millions of acres of cultivated potato fields according to the engineer from the North Dakota equipment company sitting next to me on the plane. This Burnsville High School graduate had no idea a few years ago that he would be setting up a subsidiary in western China to meet their increasing need for potato harvesting equipment. On the plane going to China and returning to Minnesota, one sits with engineers, scientists and students who are deeply involved in Sino-American affairs and all describe the potential as virtually unlimited.

The relationship between Minnesota and China is stronger than many of us realize. Governor Pawlenty led a successful trade mission to China last fall because he realizes the role good relations will play in the future. A teacher exchange program was established by former Commissioner of Education and District 196 Superintendent Ruth Randall in the mid-80s. In fact, one of our teachers just returned to District 196 after five years of teaching in Hong Kong. While in China, we met with Mr. Wang Guangfa, a developer and visionary who created the Beijing Royal School. Mr. Wang has developed a strong relationship with the University of Minnesota and helped to host 25 University of Minnesota law students who studied Chinese law and Mandarin in Beijing for six weeks. In his office, we saw pictures of Mr. Wang with Governor Pawlenty, University of Minnesota President Robert Bruininks and a Jesse Ventura action figure!

School systems in China are half-a-world different from

ours in location but also in purpose and results. Seventy students per classroom with one teacher make individual attention virtually impossible. Chinese teachers teach two periods per day as opposed to six periods per day for teachers in District 196. Teachers have a large part of the day to plan lessons and meet with other teachers. The very best of the Chinese high schools have co-curricular opportunities similar to those found in our schools. Their very best students travel the world performing and learning. When a member of a school dance team was asked if she had ever been to the United States, she replied not since January when she performed in St. Paul.

As one Chinese official told me, the Chinese school system is good at educating students who are already clever. Given the enormous K-12 population, their system works at identifying the 10 percent or so of students who will go on to colleges or universities. Their education is highly competitive and great pressure is placed on students to score well on tests that determine their future. A high school student told me that he doesn't have any hobbies or outside interests other than school work. He doesn't spend any weekend time with friends because he studies all day on Saturday and Sunday. When asked about his parents, he replied their only hobby was his education. Chinese educators admit their education is based too heavily on memorization. They want to learn more about our educational systems and how to encourage more creativity and innovation in their own.

Whatever the measure of economic potential or comparative educational system one chooses to use, China is a major and growing factor in today's world. But that alone is not a reason for us to learn more about China. Fundamentally, in order for our students to reach their full potential, the ability to understand other people and cultures is essential. Most colleges and universities require that students have studied a second language while in high school. Students study the cultures of other countries throughout the curriculum and groups of students are continually visiting other parts of the world. In fact, the Rosemount High School band will be visiting China next spring. Given the importance of knowledge of other cultures, it makes sense to offer learning options to our students by including China and its people. It is not essential that our students are fluent in Mandarin; it is essential, however, that our graduates know there are good people in other parts of the world and in our own community who think, act and believe differently than we do. And that is perfectly all right. •

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LEGISLATIVE news

There is A Lot At Stake in the November Elections

By Charles Kyte
Executive Director, MASA

Where are our state and nation heading philosophically?

How will we position ourselves for the changes of a global economy?

How well will our society support the education and future of our children?

These are the big issues at stake in the election this November. We will be electing national, state, and local officials to guide a decision making process that will ultimately help us to be a free and vibrant economy or become a nation slowly slipping to less than first class status.

Minnesota voters have a significant set of decisions to make this fall, including:

- Who will guide us nationally?
 - a. Who will be our United States Senator – Amy Klobuchar or Mark Kennedy?
 - b. Who will be our 1st District congressman –

Representative Gutknecht or his challenger Tim

Walz?

- c. Who will be our 5th District Congressperson?
Who will succeed the retiring Martin Sabo?
- Who will guide us at the state level?
 - a. Who will be our governor for the next four years – Mike Hatch, Tim Pawlenty or Peter Hutchinson?
 - b. Who will be elected to the Minnesota State Legislature, and which party will control the State Senate and the State House of Representatives?
 - c. Who will be our 6th District Congresswoman- Michelle Bachmann or Patty Wetterling?
 - d. Who will be our state attorney general – Jeff Johnson or one of the Democratic contenders (Steve Kelly, Bill Luther or Laurie Swanson)?
- Who will be the school board members of the school districts of Minnesota, the mayors of our cities and the commissioners of our counties?

In each case, as you prepare to make up your mind about who to support, look at the questions posed at the beginning of this article and ask yourself who best will help to position us to be a vibrant nation, state and local community in the future. •

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How I Handled ... Keeping Staff Motivated As Budgets Tighten

By Tom Nelson
Superintendent, South Washington County Schools

I have been very fortunate in the last few years to be on the better end of budget woes. Our district has an adequate fund balance and we find ourselves in the position of being able to add programs and staff. This just didn't happen because I have done such a wonderful job, that's a whole different article. The positive financial turnaround was the result of the district growing in enrollment and budget reductions that were made in earlier years to deal with the lack of state funding.

The pace of change today creates stress in the workplace. Add to this unending change, the realization of budget reductions, you have good formula for low staff morale. I have experienced this downturn as a teacher, business manager, and on several occasions as the superintendent. It is extremely difficult no matter what chair you're sitting in.

It is very problematic to keep staff motivated under these conditions, but I have only found one solution to this problem, real two-way communication. You have to provide your employees with all the information you have. How did we get into this situation? Why did it happen? What are the options available to us? Ask for their opinions and listen, listen, listen!

Our employees need numerous opportunities to be involved in the final decisions to be recommended. If you're honest with your staff, share information, you will find people will be fair and hopefully stay motivated in their work. I have not experienced many teachers or district employees that give less to their students during tough budget times.

By Nan Records
Director of Special Education
Sherburne-N. Wright Special Education Cooperative

There is a point in each of our lives when we realize that if we are going to end up with regrets, they will more likely be about what we didn't do than what we did. I think this holds true in many areas of our lives, but those of us blessed with professional lives in which we serve with our leadership have oh so many chances to miss a "motivational moment." Therefore, my first thought on this topic is how important it is to build a motivational infrastructure.

If we build a strong base of support, staff members will be resilient, optimistic, and willing to participate in creating solutions because they see themselves as valued. If we make it a priority to "catch" staff members doing well, thank and praise all along the way, and seek and listen to staff input, we heighten staff motivation, increase staff commitment and investment, and boost performance. Then, when a challenge occurs, the staff is stronger and in a better position to address the situation.

Change is hard on people, even when it doesn't involve a reduction in resources. But when people are asked to accomplish change resulting from a loss such as with budget cuts, it is especially difficult. The most important thing you

can do is communicate. Be honest and direct. Take the time to plan and make certain that you know your message and that you are getting it to all of the right people. Then listen to their concerns, answer their questions, and seek their opinions.

We know that while fair and adequate compensation is important for employees, a sense of accomplishment, achievement, and being of value are by far the greatest motivators. For the most part, I have not encountered staff doing less for students because they are unhappy about budget issues. If anything, they give more. Where it gets really difficult is when monetary constraints get in the way of accomplishing goals. That is the real morale-killer and that is where it is more important than ever for leaders to be supportive. Even saying, "I know you wish you still had that resource so you could meet that need," can make all the difference.

Finally, be a healthy model. Leaders who are optimistic and energetic, who communicate honestly, clearly, and frequently, and who obviously enjoy their work and appreciate their staff members will reinforce the belief in limitless possibilities ... and what could be better for our students and staff?

By John Landgaard
Superintendent, Worthington Schools

Keeping staff motivated during tight budgets can be a difficult task, if we do not keep a number of things in perspective. The first and most important is two-way communication (listening and speaking to employees of the district). All too often it is easy to get caught up in preparing, planning, and day to day operations of the district. At that point it is easy to forget about making contact with staff in order to model a positive, upbeat and optimistic attitude about educating kids.

Maybe the correct title for this article is, "How do we all work as a team to stay motivated during difficult budget times." I would like to believe that we all need to continue to support, encourage, acknowledge and model skills that allow us to handle stressful times that surround education budgets. This all can be accomplished by taking the time to visit with staff, to allow for input and to answer/ask questions. It is important to your district employees that we take the time and interest in not only their professional lives/opinions/thoughts, but to know them as individuals. Maybe the twelve points of Scout Law have best described our approach to motivating employees; Trustworthy, Loyal, Courteous, Honest, Friendly, Cheerful, Helpful, Kind, Obedient, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent.

Handling difficult budget times in a more positive manner through open two-way communication (listening and speaking) will assist in keeping a motivated staff. Unfortunately, a one size fits all does not exist in the area of motivation. The one thing that may be key is to stay motivated yourself. Everyday when we get out of bed, we have the opportunity to choose our attitude and it is extremely important to assist others in creating that positive and enthusiastic energy in order to succeed at their jobs. Everyday we have the

How I Handled ... Continued on Page 19

Background Checks – Are You Doing Enough? Are You Following the Law

By **Tim Landsberger**
Director, The McDowell Agency, Inc.

In response to coverage of child sexual abuse scandals and the desire of school districts to avoid legal action, screening potential school employees has become routine for most districts. However, no standard protocol has been established. While all states have laws that address this issue, laws and local policies vary by state.

Colorado, for example, requires a background evaluation for all certificated employees of school districts and all other district employees hired after 1992 (when its background check law went into effect). Subsequent arrests are then flagged and districts are notified by state authorities, who ask the district to determine whether the offense merits dismissal or other action. Employees not holding a certificate are required to have a background check and undergo a name check against a state database.

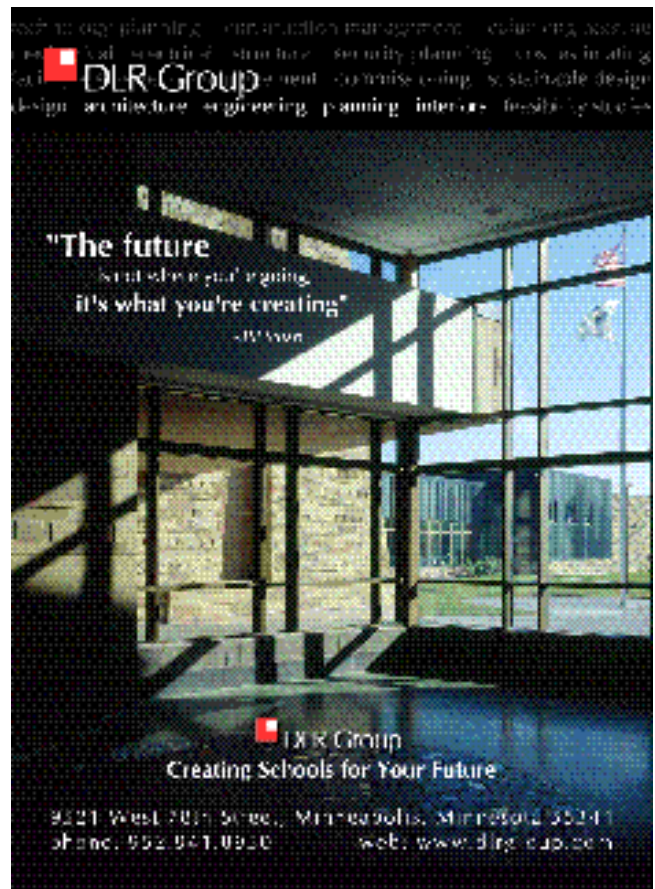
This method was in place in 2001 when auditors discovered 16 Colorado teachers with felony charges on their records, and thousands of others with misdemeanors, traffic offenses and even child abuse charges. Under the procedure used, background checks had been completed through the state and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), but did not look at information from county courts which contained this additional data.

This exemplifies the limitations of a database-only search. To do a true background investigation, a county criminal record search must be included. The most current, accurate criminal record histories are kept directly by the County Clerks' of Court as the majority of inaccurate or incomplete information is detected at this level. A study by the FBI of their own criminal record inventory (NCIC) revealed that, "At least 12,000 invalid or inaccurate reports for arrests are transmitted each day to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies." This is precisely why a true background check requires a trained professional to physically visit each county for criminal conviction information.

In Minnesota, State Statute 123B.03, Subdivision 1, paragraph a, states: "A school hiring authority shall request a criminal history background check from the superintendent of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension on all individuals who are offered employment in the school." The statute requires that this check be completed by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) directly and be paid for by the applicant. Results include all adult convictions, adult arrests less than one year old with no disposition and juvenile adjudications. The BCA has expressed concerns that some private companies are approaching school

districts offering to conduct their BCA checks for a reduced fee. Companies that claim they are conducting a background check through the BCA are checking only the public database which includes adult convictions for 15 years after the subject is discharged from the criminal justice system. One district in particular has discovered multiple applicants convicted of sex offenses as minors that were only uncovered by BCA search in accordance with state law. The public database search would not have disclosed this information.

Ultimately the dilemma is determining what constitutes a thorough background check that is both legal and comprehensive. The first step is complying with the legal requirement of Minnesota Statute 123B.03 by obtaining a direct check through the BCA. The background check should also include, at minimum: a county criminal record check, social security verification and address trace, national sex offender registry search, and a broader national criminal record database search. •



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Successful Referendum Campaigns Begin Now

Tips from PR professionals on what to do now for Nov. 6, 2007

By Karen A. George
Public Information Coordinator,
Anoka-Hennepin School District and
President, Minnesota School Public Relations Association

It's no secret that a majority of Minnesota school districts will be going to voters in 2007 to renew operating levies. What may not be so well known is what district leaders could be doing right now to garner voter support for upcoming ballot measures.

"If you want to win you think about it now," says Bob Noyed, APR, Director of Communications, Wayzata Public Schools and President-Elect of the National School Public Relations Association. "You need to take the time now to go to your community, get people aware of what's happening in their schools, and engage them in the decision." He cautions school districts from adopting the short-term approach of communicating with voters just a couple of months before the election. "You can't tell and sell and expect to be successful."

An ongoing communications program is the foundation of a successful levy campaign. "Make sure the community knows the great job you are doing for kids and that the community is right to support your schools," says Nancy Kracke, Director of Community Relations, District 112 – Chaska and Regional Vice President of the National School Public Relations Association. "Communicating the very good experiences students are having in classrooms can translate to a feeling of pride and that tax dollars are well spent."

Another critical component a district can implement right now is research. Some districts have invested in community surveys over a period of years and therefore have a history of resident attitudes toward the school district and an accounting for which communication media and messages work best with voters. For those districts that are just embarking on research it is an important first step toward winning. "Research is critical to provide a school district an accurate and current assessment of the community and helps shape the referendum proposal," says Noyed. Kracke poses this question: "A referendum is so much work – why go out for something that is not supported in your community?"

The Anoka-Hennepin School District conducts annual community surveys and uses the information to shape the ongoing communication program and integrate the referendum information campaign. "We are planning for 2007 now," says Mary Olson, Director of Communications and Public Relations, Anoka-Hennepin School District. Olson credits successful levy campaigns with communicating often and clearly using strategic key messages. "Information is being printed in the community newsletter back to school issue this fall. The budget article features three key messages for the 2007 referendum campaign and the same three key messages will appear in the accountability report to citizens next month."

These messages are being communicated to Anoka-Hennepin residents 15 months prior to the election because it is impor-

tant for the community to understand the issues and be part of the solution

according to Olson. "The community needs time to mull it over." Olson also understands that public perceptions change over time. Messages implemented this fall will be checked in the annual survey next spring. She also plans for a quick "brush fire" survey in early October 2007 to test that the referendum key messages are understood and to check if there other issues emerging that are affecting the messages. "In our last levy campaign (2002) we discovered a swing voter and adjusted the key messages for the final mailing before the election."

Once you have your researched-based referendum campaign developed and you have integrated that with the ongoing communication program it's time to focus all efforts on implementing the plan. All three PR professionals agree that the entire school district staff is essential to passing a levy. "Make sure staff is involved and informed," advises Kracke. "If staff are on board and understand the issue, they are good ambassadors for the district's referendum."

Some communities have the benefit of a well-organized citizen vote yes effort. And in recent years district elections have had more organized vote no campaigns to contend with. In either case Olson cautions district leaders to be clear on the school district's message to inform voters and aware that people are watching how the school district communicates during a referendum campaign. "One of the things that is most difficult (to discern) is when is it giving information and when is it promoting? You do not want to be challenged on this while in the campaign."

There are many good resources for learning more about crafting and implementing referendum campaigns. Various organizations offer valuable workshops that are inexpensive. Some offer more hands-on techniques while other seminars focus on trends, strategies and philosophy. The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) is a member organization offering access to 2,000 school leaders practiced in strategic communication. NSPRA also boasts a comprehensive catalog of products and services including *Win at the Polls* recommended by Kracke. "This is a great primer to a foundation of planning written by Gay Campbell, APR, one of the most successful referendum strategists in the country." The Minnesota School Public Relations Association is the local NSPRA chapter with a network of 100 PR practitioners willing to share expertise and sample campaign materials. The Minnesota Association of School Administrators offers workshops and recently published the Rapid Referendum Response booklet in dealing with organized referendum opposition.

"You are always in a campaign for public support," says Kracke. "Every day, every thing, impacts the perception of your community. The year you go out with a levy campaign is too late."

Successful Referendum ... Continued on Page 19

Successful Referendum ... Continued from Page 18

Tips from the PR Pros:

- Begin early – NOW
- Be visible in the community and be transparent in communication
- Initiate baseline research and research at several points in the campaign
- Communicate often and clearly
- Engage people in the issues and the discussion
- Clearly communicate the benefits of a yes vote and the consequences of a no vote
- Be open and honest about district activities and decisions
- Minimize distractions
- Enlist help from many people
- Learn more at workshops, seminars and member organizations •

How I Handled ... Continued from Page 15

opportunity to make an impact on others just by sharing a smile and often times this is multiplied many times over the day. So, share it!

I would like to believe that we all love our jobs every day and every minute, but in reality we all need to work hard at motivating ourselves and those around us through clear and quality efforts of communication. Don't let the frustrations of tough budgets dictate your attitudes about educating kids, because we all would have chosen a different occupation if it weren't for the kids! •

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Diane Rauschenfels is MASA 2006 Richard Green Scholar

By Mia Urick,
MASA Director of Communications
and Professional Development

Last year, MASA was fortunate to be able to establish a program to honor the scholarly work and professional development of Minnesota school leaders. The *Richard Green Scholars Program* is an annual recognition of the research, writing, and presentation of a paper reflecting the practice of excellent school leadership.

Our congratulations to **Diane Rauschenfels**, Superintendent of the Proctor Schools, who has been named MASA's first Richard Green Scholar. She will present her paper, *Promoting Ethical Educational Leadership*, at the upcoming MASA Fall Conference.


MASA members love learning, and an important focus for us as professional association is to provide a culture for personal and professional development. Our goal is to support a community that inspires and encourages critical thinking and assessment of professional practice, and to recognize the importance of collegial relationships in professional development. The tradition of the presentation of associates' work at professional conferences is a reflection of those values, and Diane's work is a fitting model of the dedication to scholarship that is at the root of innovation in the intellectual and pedagogical practice of educational leadership. Professionally engaged lifelong learners feed the fires of

innovation and progress. They challenge the status quo and inspire the professional community to experiment, take risks, and change for the better. At MASA, we hear again and again how our members want to hear presentations from colleagues. The voice of the practiced leader inspires, supports, teaches, and challenges. Diane's presentation will focus on the discussion of ethical dilemmas, research, solutions, and future considerations in the practice and promotion of ethical leadership. Fall Conference participants will receive a copy of her research paper.

A subcommittee of the MASA Executive Development Committee selected Diane for this honor. She will receive a recognition plaque, a \$1,000 award, and conference tuition and lodging for the Fall Conference.


The *Richard Green Scholars Program* was named to honor former Minneapolis Superintendent Richard R. Green, who modeled innovation and distinction in the child-centered practice of exemplary school leadership.

The program is sponsored by MASA's business partner member, Cuningham Group Architecture. "Great leaders come from great leadership organizations," says Cuningham Principal Tim Dufault. "The Richard Green Scholarship reflects the value MASA brings as a catalyst for the growth and development of school administrators." •



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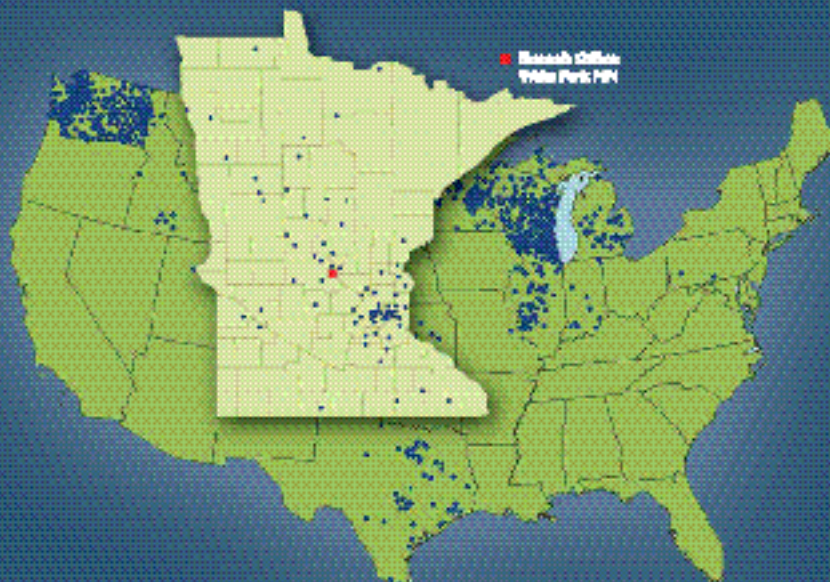
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I Am Passionate About Public Education!



Joann Knuth

**By Joann Knuth
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals**

Last fall, I began my interview for Executive Director with the 16 member MASSP search committee by saying: "I am passionate about public education." It is a passion that grows out of being the grandchild of Henry Backlund, Swedish immigrant coming to America in 1898, at age 17, with one dollar in his pocket and speaking no English.

Grandpa Backlund worked in the Hibbing mines. He eventually earned money to buy a farm near Deer River where he and Anna raised four daughters and two sons. All graduated from Deer River High School, and all, but the oldest who stayed home to help with the farm, got on the train to St. Peter and graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College. Most went into education because that was the most noble of careers — and still is.

I share this personal family story because it is a universal story that has been repeated thousands of times across Minnesota and continues today all over our State and Nation. We see this marvelous story of hope and opportunity in our schools everyday, be they urban, suburban, or greater Minnesota with Hmong, Hispanic, Somali, and others too numerous to name. That is our challenge of leadership today, to continue to focus on the hope and possibilities we bring to our students and their families.

With our State's rapid demographic changes, our collective educational success is more important than ever. Education is the way out of poverty. Education is the way we create wealth individually and collectively. Minnesota is an education State. Tom Gillaspay, State Demographer for the Minnesota Department of Administration says, "Minnesota is known for two important reasons: we have a strong education system and we are a State of workaholics." Further, he maintains, "Our futures, at a very personal level, depend on what we do in public education."

As a teacher, principal and area superintendent in Saint Paul Public School for 36 years, I was consistently and very personally challenged to provide for the success of every student. While I did not succeed in that goal — it remains our collective challenge. It is what NCLB is about at its core. Principal leadership is central to meeting that challenge.

Leadership drives the organization. The clear visionary, positive leadership of the principal is what transforms schools from good to great. Schools' histories are written in the leadership of their principals. Students and parents reminisce about when this woman or that man was the principal. Every principal is building the school's history.

I am honored and humbled to be the Executive Director of MASSP. We, along with MESPA and MASA, are shaping our State's future by the successful education of our public school students, one student at a time.

We are at a time when it is more important than ever to educate all our children at the highest level. I believe in Minnesota we are ready to meet that challenge with strong leadership, hard work, some sacrifice and great passion. •

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The Next Stage[®]



WHAT'S UP AT 1 884 como

Staff Focus: Service, Integrity, Collaboration, Development

By **Mia Urick**,
Director of Communications and
Professional Development

It's late August and curiously quiet within the MASA offices. There is some suspicion that the atmosphere is relative to the chaos going on across the street. It is, after all, State Fair time. But those of us who have been in the school biz for awhile know that the stillness is mostly due to the fact that it is crunch time for our members. Like coaches prepping athletes right before the big competition, school administrators all over Minnesota are running plays, solving problems, advising, cajoling, and boosting spirits.

At MASA, we are also preparing for the new school year. We are fine tuning our fall professional development, planning our legislative initiatives, reviewing member services, and preparing communications. As part of our commitment to bringing you excellent member services, our staff has also taken some time for professional development and team planning.

I am truly proud of our staff, and I feel privileged to work with a team so committed to the goals of our association. I often hear complimentary comments about our ability to "do a lot well" for our members, especially since our staff is small. Of course, we love to hear that, but we don't take that for granted. We can accomplish our objectives because our staff is skilled, committed, and experienced, and because we all feel that it is an honor to support the work of Minnesota's educational leaders.

Last school year, our staff went through a process to identify areas of focus for us as a team. They are: service, integrity, collaboration, and development. We committed to those qualities in all of our work, and as we begin a new year, we renew our promise to continue to offer our best to you.

We have a few new members this year (about 35), and we thought that it might be good to take a little newsletter real estate and introduce your MASA staff:

Stephanie Kastanos (schaefe@mnasa.org) is our Associate for Accounting and Events. Steph manages the Association's accounting

processes, facilitates the exhibit fairs at conferences, and supports member recognition programs. We also count on Steph for fashion advice, low calorie recipes, restaurant reviews, and really good baby stories (well, most of them are courtesy of her daughter Tia).

Mary Law (mrlaw@mnasa.org) is MASA's Associate for Leadership Support. She provides administrative assistance for Executive Director Charlie Kyte, the MASA Board and MASA's Committees. Mary also coordinates MASA's e-communications and web site and publishes the MASA newsletter. In addition, she knows current sports stats, has an amazing knowledge of Minnesota geography, and spiffs up the office with a very fine collection of artwork by her daughter Maggie.

Jeanna Quinn, Associate for Office and Data Management, (members@mnasa.org) provides MASA's version of "Data Central," and is responsible for managing membership and conference registration. She also provides administrative support for MASA's Jobsite Online and for conferences and workshops. Jeanna is also our in-house interior designer and super-shopper. Conference decor is often supported by her knowledge of dollar-store inventory and quality garage sale location.

MASA's Office Assistant **Shannon Kallas** works part time to provide support that keeps us functioning smoothly. She is a talented professional, is an expert at deciphering any handwriting, and is a wicked crock-pot chef.

Dennis Rens and **Fred Kunze** manage MASA's Jobsite Online, the most comprehensive and widely-used job posting site for Minnesota school districts. Dennis and Fred are directly responsible for staff morale, a responsibility they take



Some members of the MASA team: Stephanie Kastanos (seated), Mia Urick, Jeanna Quinn, and Mary Law

seriously (and humorously).

MASA Executive Director **Charlie Kyte** (ckyte@mnasa.org) supports MASA's mission, goals, and strategies with his leadership and relationship-building expertise. Charlie is committed to being consistently available to MASA's members to provide support and assistance whenever and wherever. In addition to his leadership and example, Charlie brings us comic relief, travelogues of the many bicycle journeys none of us would ever undertake, and the permission to be goofy when necessary.

My name is **Mia Urick**, and I am MASA's Director of Communications and Professional Development (urickm@mnasa.org). I plan and direct our communication projects, conferences/workshops, and other member service initiatives. It is my privilege to provide operational leadership for our outstanding team.

All of us at MASA wish you an excellent school year. Contact us any time if we can assist you to make that happen. Or, if you are in the neighborhood before Labor Day, stop by for a pronto-pup! •



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- > 4 laboratories and what it means for students and educators – Dr. Milton Rosenberg, an educational top-50 tech-savvy superintendent and Apple Distinguished Educator
- > U.S. views on technology in education compared with those of other countries – Billi Dwyer, Commissioner for School Networking
- > The Minnesota-China Connection – Commissioner Alice Steyer, Minnesota Department of Education
- > 60 minutes on classroom best practices, 40 hours on professional workshops and 100 sessions

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The Minnesota's Principals Academy: Adding A Missing Piece to the States' Educational Puzzle

By Kent Pekel
Executive Director
Consortium for Post-Secondary Academic Success

Over the past decade, there have been many attempts – some successful, some much less so – to apply organizational strategies from the world of business to the task of improving public education. From Total Quality Management (TQM) to creating "learning organizations" to formulas for going from "good to great," educators in Minnesota and elsewhere have been introduced to systems and approaches that have helped to dramatically improve U.S. corporate productivity over the past two decades.

But very few Minnesota schools and districts have been able to adopt one of the most effective and most transferable tools in corporate America's toolbox: sustained executive development for key leaders. In fact, it has been through high-quality leadership development programs that companies such as Xerox, Motorola, GE and 3M have driven their "quality" and "good to great" efforts throughout their entire organizations.

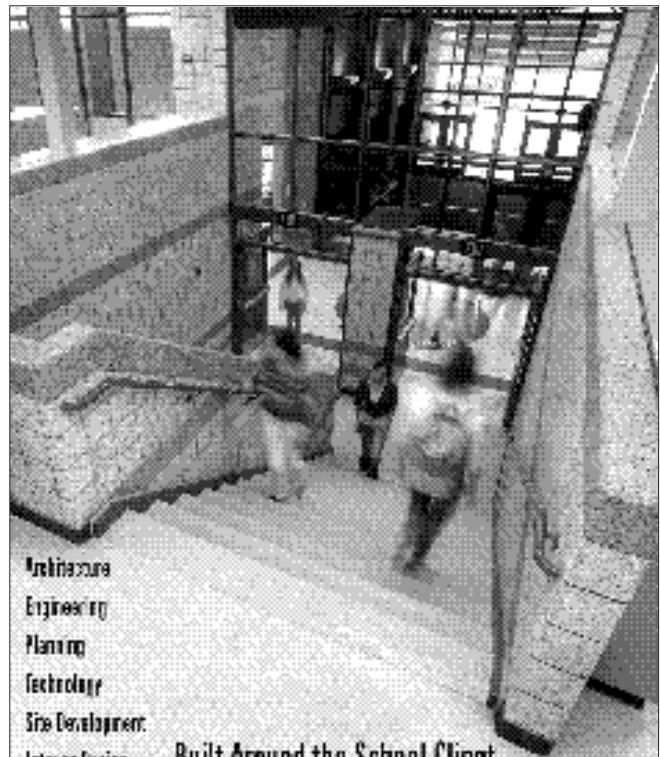
In recent years, U.S. schools have become much more focused on providing sustained and intensive professional development for practicing teachers, but much less attention has been paid to continually upgrading the capacity of principals to do their jobs. In order to add this missing piece to Minnesota's educational puzzle, this month a partnership of state organizations is launching the Minnesota Principals Academy, which will begin next spring to provide executive development training for currently serving principals and other school leaders. The Academy is being organized by a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Elementary Principals Association, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, the Minnesota Association of School Administrators and the University of Minnesota.

The Academy's curriculum will be the research-based program of the Washington, D.C.-based National Institute for School Leadership (NISL). NISL was developed over six years with major support from national foundations and is being used to provide leadership development for school principals in Massachusetts, Florida and other states. It brings together leadership best practices not only from leading U.S. schools and businesses, but also from the U.S. military and from educational systems in other countries. It combines face-to-face instruction in workshops, seminars and study groups with state-of-the-art instruction over the Web.

This summer, a team from the University of Minnesota selected 50 educators – almost all of whom are current or recently retired principals – to serve as the trainers who will deliver the NISL curriculum to cohorts of principals across the state. Competition for the trainer positions was keen and we are fortunate to have been able to select a group of

leaders who are talented, diverse and very enthusiastic. The cost of the training is being supported through legislation authored by Senator Steve Kelley and passed during the 2005 legislative session.

The Academy's organizers are extremely grateful to the many superintendents across the state who agreed to support the participation of one or more of their principals in the program, which will require them to be away from their schools or offices for approximately 30 days over the course of the program. That's a very significant individual and organizational commitment, but the experience of U.S. business in the 1980's and '90's suggests that it is a good investment in the future. It was when American corporations got serious about using leadership development to drive toward results that they began not only to compete with their Japanese and German competitors but to beat them here at home and around the world. Through the Minnesota Principals Academy, participating schools and districts will be able to put the same successful leadership development strategy to work as they undertake the even more challenging task of preparing all students to succeed in the global Information Age. •



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Education Organizations

Unite to Address State's K-12 Needs

P.S. Minnesota needs your help to renew investment in Minnesota public schools

By **Scott Croonquist**

Executive Director

Association of Metropolitan School Districts

An unprecedented coalition of parents and statewide education organizations, including the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, has come together to change the way public schools are funded in Minnesota. The initiative, dubbed "P.S. Minnesota," seeks to mobilize parents, students, educators, and concerned citizens to urge our public officials to rededicate themselves to Minnesota's tradition of providing our students with a world class public education. In the coming months, you will hear more about this initiative from MASA and the other partner organizations and find out how you can become directly involved in the campaign.

During the past century, Minnesota earned a reputation for great schools, good jobs and exceptional communities. However, children today face new and increased competition from their peers around the globe. In addition, the state and federal governments have dramatically changed requirements for our students and schools. Our schools are now charged with ensuring that EVERY student, regardless of language barriers or disability, meets state-determined learning standards. The last decade has seen historic changes to the demands placed on public schools, yet we have

not modernized our approach to school funding to meet new requirements. Through it all, Minnesota continues to lead most other states in education quality. In 2005, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) placed our state near the top in science, among other areas.

However, other statistics indicate our leadership position is in jeopardy, particularly with regard to how we fund schools. For example, in 1995, Minnesota ranked 12th in the nation for per pupil spending; in 2003, it ranked 28th – below the national average for the first time ever. Additionally, fees paid by students and families (for coursework and extracurricular activities) increased 45 percent from 2002 to 2005 according to the Minnesota Department of Education.

The P.S. Minnesota campaign seeks a state funding mechanism that provides all of our students and schools with the resources they need to succeed into the future.

As a grassroots effort, the success of the P.S. Minnesota initiative will depend on educators, parents and concerned citizens working together by staying informed about the campaign and using and customizing the tools available to them on-line. Please visit the P.S. Minnesota website (www.psmminnesota.org) to learn about ways to become more involved in this truly unique initiative. •

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Calendar 2006 - 2007

September 30
MASA Executive Committee

Meeting
 9:30 - 11:30 am
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
 1 - 5:30 pm
 Madden's Resort, Brainerd

October 1
Board Meeting Continues
 9 - 11:30 am

October 1 - 3
MASA Fall Conference
 Madden's Resort, Brainerd

October 11 - 13
MASE Fall Directors' Conference
 Arrowwood, Alexandria

October 20
MASA Foundation Board Meeting
 MASA Offices, St. Paul

November 10
Newsletter Submissions Due

November 15-17
Curriculum Leaders of Minnesota Conference
 Cragun's, Brainerd

November 23 - 24
Thanksgiving Holiday
 MASA Offices Closed

December 6
MASA Executive Committee

Meeting
 9 - 10:45 am
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
 11 am - 4 pm
 MASA Offices, St. Paul

December 23 and 26
Winter Holidays
 MASA Offices Closed

2007...

January 2
Winter Holiday
 MASA Offices Closed

January 10
Great Start Workshop IV &

Year 2 Cohort III
 Hyatt, Minneapolis

January 11-12
MSBA Winter Convention
 Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis

February 6
MASA Executive Committee

Meeting
 9 - 10:45 am
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
 11 am - 4 pm
 MASA Offices, St. Paul

February 16
MASA Foundation Board Meeting
 MASA Offices, St. Paul

February 9
Newsletter Submissions Due

March 1-4
AASA National Convention
 New Orleans, LA

March 14
Great Start Workshop V & Year 2 Cohort IV
 Sheraton Bloomington Hotel,
 Bloomington

March 14
MASA Executive Committee

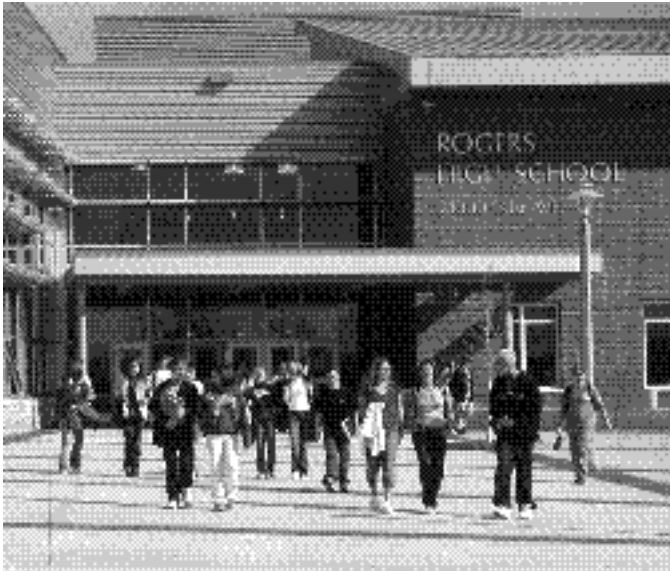
Meeting
 9:30 - 11:30 am
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
 1 - 5:30 pm
 Sheraton Bloomington Hotel,
 Bloomington

March 15-16
MASA & MASE Spring Conference
 Sheraton Bloomington Hotel,
 Bloomington

April 6
Spring Holiday
 MASA Offices Closed

May 11
Newsletter Submissions Due

May 28
Spring Holiday
 MASA Offices Closed



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