

Leaders FORUM

Fall 2009

What Kind of Leader Are You?

Welcome to the 2009-10 school year! I hope each of you had an opportunity to recharge your batteries. There is something magical about the beginning of a new school year. There aren't many occupations where one gets to start fresh every year.

As leaders, it is important that each of us continues to develop our leadership skills. Robert Galford identified six categories of leadership roles. Following are descriptions of each role. I encourage you to reflect and identify areas that you believe are strengths of yours, and areas that you may not be as comfortable with as you would like to be.

Ambassadors - handle a variety of situations with grace; diffuse nasty situations and are persistent and persuasive in a gentle and respectful way.

Advocates - act as spokesperson in a group; are articulate, rational, logical and persuasive; and can be relentless in championing ideas or strategic positions.

People Movers - are someone with parental, nurturing qualities; instinctively take the lead in building teams; introduce people to new ideas and new paths; possess ability to view performance as a larger lens of potential.

Truth Seekers - exhibit good judgment, are level-headed and process oriented; competence is unquestioned;



Gary Amoroso
Superintendent
MASA President

able to identify the root causes of issues.

Creative Builders - are visionaries and entrepreneurs who are most driven at the start of things; take ideas and make them real; energized by new ideas.

Experienced Guides - have the ability to listen and put themselves in other's shoes; help people think through their own problems.

I would venture to say that throughout your leadership career, it will be necessary to exhibit the skills identified in each of these leadership roles. As an organization, we will provide you with professional growth experiences which will help you to continue your development as an educational leader.

We will face numerous challenges over the course of the upcoming year. One of the most critical challenges will be the financial conditions under which all of our school districts must operate. Though resources are scarce, it is our responsibility to ensure that every child within our school districts is provided with the best possible education. Our students only have one opportunity to be in first grade, sixth grade, or a senior in high school. We must motivate our professional and support staff to be the very best they can be for the children they serve. Though the challenge is immense, I can't think of a finer group of educational leaders I'd rather be working with than all of you in

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Looking Ahead No Money, So Reposition to Concentrate on Student Learning

The legislative session is just four months away. It will be the interim session to this biennium period and will probably see minor policy maneuvering and not much happening with funding of education. MASA understands how dire the situation already is for K-12 schools with no new money this year or promised next year. Even more worrisome is the fact that when the next biennium starts the State will have a huge structural deficit based on the fact that they raised no new revenue, did all kinds of accounting shifts and will still be short of money to meet the needs of government.



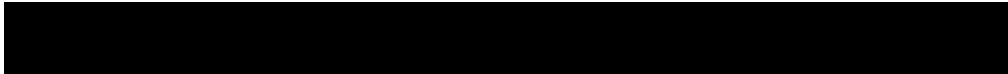
Charlie Kyte
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of
School Administrators

strong curriculum aligned standards is the best approach to having a healthy school system for student learning. The second thing that research says is that strong curriculum and strong teaching will not work for every student, thus the best of our school systems will have very strong intervention strategies in place with teachers meeting frequently to analyze how students are doing and then adjusting their teaching technique so that students can have a greater likelihood of success.

This on the ground approach of coordinating curriculum, making sure everything is up to the standards and then having an intervention strategy that is time intensive, but is not necessarily money intensive. Thus, the best of our leaders will not dwell on money but rather will dwell on having their staff pulling together in a cooperative spirit to do the very best to provide great learning opportunities for students and intervention strategies for those who are struggling. In the mean time, MASA will do what we can within the legislative processes to try to secure some additional funding to help you along the way.

You can fret all you want about this situation and also know that MASA will be lobbying hard to try to pick up a few “crumbs” of money to help schools. But overall it’s going to be a tough time, thus we recommend to school leaders that rather than worrying you reposition your mindset to think in terms of what you can do to improve student learning in your districts.

Research shows that long-term steady leadership that concentrates on developing



What Kind of Leader Are You Continued from Page 1

the State of Minnesota.

On a personal note, I’d like to thank our Past-President, Dan Brooks, for his outstanding leadership. I will always value his guidance, wisdom and most importantly his friendship.

I look forward to working on your behalf to

ensure that MASA continues to function as a premier educational organization. Please feel free to contact me if I can ever be of service to you. Have a great year!

The *Leaders Forum* is your newsletter and we welcome your input. Please send your ideas or articles to Mary Law at mrlaw@mnasa.org.

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**Plan to attend the
MASA 2009 Fall Conference**

*Leading the Promise:
Our Students, Our Future*

September 27 - 29

Duluth Entertainment & Convention Center (DECC), Duluth

Ten overarching strategies...an articulation of role responsibility for stakeholders on the state, school district, and school level... critical measures to determine progress... Minnesota's Promise has given us an opportunity to develop a comprehensive strategy for improving public education and closing the achievement gaps among our students here in Minnesota as well as throughout the world. The Promise states, "As Partners in Minnesota's Promise, we have agreed to work toward the ten strategies of Minnesota's Promise both within our organizations and together across the state as a whole." Join your colleagues this fall and explore our pledge to Minnesota's students and how we may lead to insure that Minnesota's Promise becomes reality. Don't miss this important event!

2009 Fall Conference Highlights

- Golfers will enjoy the **MASA Foundation Golf Tournament Mixer** on Sunday at 11:30 am. The tournament offers fun, prizes and an afternoon on beautiful Nemadji Golf Course in Superior Wisconsin. All conference participants are invited to play. The tournament benefits the work of the MASA Foundation, enhancing the leadership development of educational administrators.
- Celebrate the service of our honored peers at the Sunday **Awards Banquet**. Awards will include recognition for years of service.
- After the banquet, join our colleagues for conversation and relaxation at The Inn on Lake Superior, a short stroll across Canal Park from the DECC. Our reception begins at 8 pm.
- Our kick-off keynote speaker **Donna Walker Tileston** has served education as a leader in teaching, administration, research, writing, software development, and national consulting for the past thirty years. Her administrative responsibilities have included curriculum development, management, technology, finance, grants management, public relations, and drug abuse prevention programs. For the past fifteen years Dr. Tileston has been actively involved in brain research and the factors that inhibit learning or increase the brain's ability to put information into long-term memory.
- Members' partners are invited to the **Partners' Breakfast** on Monday morning at the DECC. All

spouses and partners are encouraged to attend. This event is gender-friendly—we've planned an event that both men and women will enjoy. There is no cost for this event.

- The **Exhibit Fair** is a convenient way to visit with representatives of companies offering the latest products and services of value to school leaders.
- An outstanding array of **Breakout Sessions** offer cutting-edge information on a variety of topics. A large variety of different small group sessions offer something for everyone!
- After a busy Monday, relax at the DECC. Join your colleagues for the **President's Reception** and enjoy refreshments and good company.
- Tuesday morning, levy campaigns and strategic plans may seem like strange bedfellows, but MASA's 2009 Richard Green Scholar **Jay Haugen**, Superintendent of the West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Schools melds these two professional activities to explore some larger questions. Join Jay as he describes a process to reach every citizen through campaigns that deeply engage hundreds of citizens who themselves connect with dozens of other community members.
- Our Tuesday luncheon speaker **Karen Seashore** will present the kick-off for an ongoing collaboration with the Elementary and Secondary Principals' Associations: "Building Strong School Cultures: A Guide to Leading Change."

Register today!

**Thank you to our major
conference sponsors:
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Before and After High-Quality Early Childhood Education and After-School Programming

Minnesotans have always known how important teaching and learning is for the lives of our children. Throughout history, we have intrinsically understood the value of surrounding children with love, security, support, and other assets. We have known that our economic and social success depend upon a sound, comprehensive system of public education. Before we ever read “It takes the whole village to raise a child,” we formed neighborhoods and communities and villages. Now, with the accelerating speed of change in our world, it is clearer than ever that our responsibility is not limited by calendars or clocks. Research confirms that it is important to the future of kids and our society that we offer high-quality educational opportunities in early childhood, and that children have access to after-school programming.



Shari Prest
Ark Associates

Cost/Benefit factors of high-quality early childhood education ⁵	Targeted program serving 3- and 4-year-olds from families in the lowest quarter of the income distribution; costs & benefits in Minnesota ¹	Projected costs and benefits for a universal voluntary high-quality pre-K program serving all 3- and 4-year old children: ²
When the program would start paying for itself	3 years	9 years
Annual cost if the program had been fully phased in 2008	\$32 million	\$567 million
Total benefits in 2050	\$4 billion	\$16.8 billion
Costs in 2050	\$146 million	\$1.7 billion
Ratio of total benefits to costs in 2050	\$27 to 1	\$10.2 to 1

Invest early... for the greatest human and economic returns.

- “High-quality early childhood education is more than an admirable goal; it is fundamental to making sure all children have the opportunity to succeed.”¹
- “Every child needs a good early childhood education. That’s an ethical principle that transcends what the data says.”²
- “There is persuasive evidence that a child’s first few years are a sensitive period for brain development and set a trajectory for his or her success in school and later in life. Well-focused and -funded investments in early childhood development programs produce substantial returns for disadvantaged children and, to even a greater degree, for the public.”³
- “If a child from birth through age five receives support for development in cognition, language, motor skills, adaptive skills, and social/emotional function, he or she is more likely to succeed in school and in the workplace.”⁴
- Three of the most significant studies on the economic impact of high quality preschool programs (High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, Abecedarian Project, and Chicago Child-Parent Centers) reveal a significant personal and public return on each dollar spent. The public benefit for each dollar spent ranged from \$2.69 to \$7.16. Including both the personal and public benefit, the range was from \$3.78 to \$10.15 for each dollar invested in 2002 dollars.

1. Dr. Vincent Ferrandino, executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals
2. Larry Schweinhardt, head researcher, *High/Scope Perry Preschool Study*
3. Arthur Rolnick, Ph. D. and Rob Grunewald, *Achieving a High Return on Early Childhood Investment*
4. C.T. Ramey, F.A. Campbell, M. Burchinal, M. L. Skinner, D.M. Gardner, S. L. Ramey, *Persistent Effects of Early Childhood Education on High-Risk Children and Their Mothers*, “Applied Developmental Science”
5. *Enriching Children, Enriching the Nation*, Robert Lynch, professor of economics, Washington College

At the end of the day... Every day, at least eight million kids are left alone and unsupervised once the school bell rings.¹ “That time can represent either an opportunity to learn and grow through quality after-school programs, or a time of risk to youth’s health and safety.”² Parents, especially low-income and minority, worry about how their children use time when they are on their own.³ In fact, kids who don’t participate in after-school programs that are safe and structured are “at greater risk of being victims of crime, or participating in anti-social behaviors.”² They are 49% more likely to have used drugs and 37% more likely to become teen parents than are those students who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities.²

After-school activities play an important role in the development of today’s youth. A 2004 Public Agenda survey indicated that 79% of America’s middle and high school students regularly participate in activities after school and on weekends, and 57% had some kind of non-school activity nearly every day. Unfortunately, low-income and minority parents have much more difficulty finding high-quality, convenient and affordable programs for their children.³

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Before and After
Continued from page 4

The Need for After-School Programs

- More than 28 million school-age children have parents who work outside the home.
- As many as 15 million “latch-key children” return to an empty home after school.
- Almost 100% of people polled in a recent survey agreed that it is important for children to have an after-school program that helps them develop academic and social skills in a safe and caring environment.
- One study found that twice as many elementary and middle school parents wanted after-school programs than were currently available.

Helping Children to Succeed

- After-school programs keep children of all ages safe and out of trouble.
- The after-school hours are the time when juvenile crime hits its peak.
- After-school programs can help to improve the academic performance of participating children. For many children, their reading and math scores have

improved.

- After-school programs contribute to raising children's self-confidence and academic performance.
- Teachers and parents report that children who participate in after-school programs develop better social skills and learn to handle conflicts in more socially acceptable ways.
- Families able to enroll their children in good programs indicate that their children are safer and more successful in school.
- After-school programs provide a structured, safe, supervised place to be after school for learning, fun, and friendship with adults and peers alike.

Support our kids and our future by supporting early childhood through graduation and after-school activities.

Materials taken from:

1. U.S. Department of Education, September 2000
2. *After School Programs Fact Sheet*, National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, safeyouth.org.
3. *Out-Of-School Activities Play Crucial, Positive Role*, Public Agenda, 2004
4. *After-School Programs: Keeping Children Safe and Smart*, U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice.



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Addressing Chronic Absenteeism Under the New ADA & FMLA

A Preview to Fall Conference Breakout Sessions

Every employer is periodically faced with the challenge of a chronically absent employee. However, regular and predictable attendance by employees is a legitimate expectation of every employer. In the schools, significant absences of teaching staff can create concerns that go beyond additional administrative burdens and costs. Frequent or prolonged absences can have a real adverse impact on student progress and behavior. Therefore, excessive absences which are not “protected” by a CBA, district policy or state or federal law, may (and should) be addressed by school administrators. Discipline and even termination may be warranted in some circumstances. On the other hand, an employee’s chronic absences may reflect an illness or disability that affords the employee special consideration or specific rights under a CBA, district policy or state and federal law. As a result, school administrators are oftentimes forced to delicately balance the needs of students with the rights of their teachers when responding to a teacher’s frequent absences.

The balancing act has now become slightly more complicated. In the past year Congress passed significant changes to the American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Since chronically absent employees oftentimes invoke rights under both of these federal laws, school districts are well advised to review their absenteeism policies and practices for compliance with the recent federal changes.

In order for an employee to be entitled to certain protections under the ADA, it must be determined that the employee has a physical or mental impairment that impacts a major life activity. Under the new ADA it will arguably be easier for a chronically absent employee to show that his or her condition amounts to a disability for several reasons— particularly because Congress has expressly stated that the term “disability” is required to be “construed in favor of broad coverage.” However, this does not mean that employers are relegated to taking an employee’s or their physician’s word that the employee has a disability or that they require a particular accommodation. If anything, the recent changes to the ADA, should cause administrators to pay greater attention to the “interactive



Tim Palmatier
Attorney
Kennedy & Graven

process” (i.e. obtaining proof of a disabling condition and consideration of reasonable accommodations) for employees claiming a disability and requesting significant time off.

While “time off” or leave may or may not be a reasonable accommodation for an employee with a disability, the FMLA guarantees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for qualifying employees who suffer from a “serious health condition.” Unlike the determination of reasonable accommodation under the ADA, whether an employee must be granted FMLA leave typically involves less discretion on the part of the employer. Nonetheless, because the FMLA regulations and the Department of Labor model forms

have undergone substantial modification, it is strongly recommended that administrators and/or HR directors familiarize themselves with the new FMLA timelines and forms to ensure compliance.

To prepare you and your staff for working with a chronically absent employee take the following steps:

- Review and revise non-discrimination policies to satisfy clarified standard for determining who is disabled under the ADA;
- Train all administration responsible for HR decisions in the proper use of the “interactive process” for determining the existence of a disability and consideration of reasonable accommodations where appropriate;
- Update all FMLA forms and notices with revised Department of Labor materials;
- Train staff on FMLA notice requirements; and
- When considering discipline for a chronically absent employee confer with counsel.



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2009-2010

MASA Strategic Initiatives

The MASA Board of Directors has created strategies to carry out each goal at a state, national, and membership level and as initiatives of MASA. Please review our overarching goals and strategic initiatives to meet each goal below.

OVERARCHING GOALS:

ADVOCACY:

to lead systems that will provide a world class education for every Minnesota child.

VOICE:

to convey to citizens and community leaders the value of a universally accessible public education system.

MEMBER SERVICE:

to enhance the ability of MASA members to be skilled leaders of Minnesota's education systems.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

ADVOCACY:

I.) State & National Influence:

A. Communicate with political and thought leaders about "Minnesota's Promise...World Class Schools for a World Class State."

B. Write for national & state publications on Minnesota's Promise.

C. Share the Minnesota Promise story with other state level organizations inside, and outside, of Minnesota.

II.) Association Initiatives:

A. Systemically articulate the Minnesota's Promise components to members & disseminate "best practices" for members to implement in their districts.

B. Develop a process to encourage greater member "buy-in" and provide support for bold & innovative action by members implementing these components.

C. Screen and educate Governor candidates on the principles included in the MN Promise report.

III.) Strategies & Tools for Member Use

A. Create member teams to encourage innovation in the areas of curriculum focus, governance, leadership and innovative learning delivery.

B. Encourage regional "think tanks" of education

leaders to determine how to implement each component of Minnesota's Promise.

C. Assist districts in designing a data platform for assessing their progress in implementing the Minnesota's Promise vision.

VOICE:

I.) State & National Influence:

A. Communicate to members and the general public on the need for innovation and change in the delivery of education.

B. Write and speak on the effectiveness and efficiency of public education in supporting the ideals and existence of democracy.

C. Create a national & state level awareness of, and commitment to, environmental advocacy.

II.) Association Initiatives:

A. Identify research that supports the investment in public education and communicate this information to members in formats they can use in their local communities.

B. Promote the removal of existing "silos" that limit the ability to educate children and reach parents.

C. Become a model in the areas of technological innovation and environmental responsibility.

III.) Strategies & Tools for Member Use:

A. Assist members in leading collaborative community conversations that support public education.

B. Encourage members to focus more on student learning in their conversations with staff and citizens.

C. Help members use innovative technologies to communicate with parents and citizens.

D. Assist members that are area leaders in areas such as environmental awareness.

MEMBER SERVICE:

I.) State & National Influence:

A. Communicate examples of outstanding leadership in our public schools.

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MASA Strategic Initiatives
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B. Publicize awards and recognition of members more widely in the media.

II.) Association Initiatives:

A. Provide high quality professional development with an emphasis on using technology as a delivery model.

B. Increase the Association's attention on specific subgroups of members including Metro Leaders, Rural Leaders and Central Office administrative specialists while helping all to maintain focus on our overarching goals.

C. Develop partnerships with organizations/companies that can help members increase the efficiency of communications and operations in their districts.

D. Promote the appreciation/recognition of members at the national, state and regional levels.

III.) Strategies & Tools for Member Use:

A. Provide support and monetary encouragement for regional innovation projects, communication systems and professional development.

B. Enhance member skills of so they have both a mindset and the tools necessary to enhance relationships with boards, employee groups and community leaders.

C. Ask members to provide systemic reinforcement of key MASA messages, goals and initiatives in their schools and communities.

Have you renewed your membership?

Membership materials have been mailed. For more information or additional membership materials, contact the MASA office at (651/645-6272 / 866-444-5251 or members@mnasa.org) or visit our web site at (www.mnasa.org).

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Does What Is Videotaped in the School, Remain in the School?

Schools across the country are video taping hallways, cafeterias, buses, sporting events and other activities to record events and to increase the school's security. Is information available to the public and if so, under what conditions? This article addresses the most common scenarios.

Under the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), much of the information a school creates or retains is considered either public data¹ (available for public review) or private educational data² (subject to public review only under certain circumstances).³ Private data about students is available only to the student's parents or guardians unless the parent has authorized its release or a court orders its release. Video tape of students' activities may be requested by persons other than their parents or guardians for a variety of reasons.

Video Tape Footage of a Sporting Event is Public Data

The star girl's hockey goalie is being recruited by colleges. Coaches from those colleges ask for the video tapes of the student's hockey games. Is this information public data that may be provided to the coaches without parental consent?

The Minnesota Department of Administration, charged with interpreting the MGDPA, has on two occasions addressed this question. In both opinions, the Department held that the video tape of games or sporting events is public data.⁴ The Department opined that by attending a public event, those present at the event gave their implied permission to be video taped and subsequently to have it released because the event itself was open to public viewing.

There is, however, one exception. Where the school district designates the data as private data in its data practices policy, the video tape footage is private data and cannot be released to the public without parental consent.⁵

Video Tape Footage of an IEP Meeting Is Private Data

Generally, the footage of a meeting regarding a student's Individual Education Program (IEP) would be considered private educational data.⁶ At an IEP meeting, the information discussed and recorded on video tape was found to be information that related to the student's education and was therefore private educational data. Therefore, a school district should require parental consent or a court order for release to people other than the parent.

Video Tape Footage of a Hallway or Classroom Is Private Data

A student is accused of misbehavior that occurred in the hallway or on a bus. The parents ask for a copy of the video tape that allegedly shows the student's misbehavior as well as images of other children.

Footage of activities in school hallways, on a school bus, or a school cafeteria containing personally identifiable information about a student is private data under the MGDPA. Districts have two options if they want to release the footage to the public. The district may seek permission from the students' parents for release or the district may redact the video footage to remove any personally identifiable data about other students.⁷ Sometimes, this may make the footage unuseable because removing too much information renders the video to be of little or no value.⁸

Conclusion

In order to address these issues, a district may want to review and revise its data practices policy to consider the following points:

- Unless a district decides to designate sporting events as private data, video footage of a sporting event will be available to the public.
- Video tape of an IEP team meeting or other meeting regarding a student's education would be considered private data and not available to the public.
- Video footage of the hallway, school bus, or classroom is public data that the district must allow others to review without parental consent. Unless it contains other students' private data, it can not be removed or doing so makes the tape meaningless.
- Video tape of the hallway, bus or classroom may be private data and not available to the public even with redaction of other students' data if the district has designated such data as private in its data practices policy.
- A district may destroy video tape in accordance with its retention and destruction of data policy. The policy must be approved by the Minnesota Department of Administration.

—Cory D. Knudtson, J.D. & Laura Tubbs Booth, J.D. © Booth Law, 2009 (763) 550-7194

¹ Public data is defined by the MGDPA as, "data collected, created, received, maintained or disseminated by a government entity... unless... private or confidential." *Minn. Stat.* §13.03 subd. 1.

² Educational data is defined by the MGDPA as, "data on individuals maintained by a public educational agency or institution or by a person acting for the agency or institution which relates to a student." *Minn. Stat.* §13.32 subd. 1.

³ See *Minn. Stat.* § 13.32 subd.

⁴ *Adv. Opinion* 03-010; *Adv. Opinion* 07-016.

⁵ *Adv. Opinion* 03-010.

⁶ See *Adv. Opinion* 99-038.

⁷ *Minn. Stat.* § 13.05 subd. 4(d); *Adv. Opinion* 96-002.

⁸ The district can deny access to the videotape only if "the public and nonpublic information is so inextricably intertwined that segregating the material would impose a significant financial burden and leave the remaining parts of the document with little informational value." *Northwest Publications, Inc. v. City of Bloomington*, 499 N.W.2d 509 (Minn. App. 1993).

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LEADER'S NOTES

Federal NCLB Law Getting Ready for Re-Authorization

We have now lived with the original version of the No Child Left Behind Law for about 9 years and it seems that Congress will be reauthorizing this law sometime next spring. More than likely the law will have a new name and hopefully will have a bit of a new focus. As all of you know, the law intended to push towards universal proficiency for all students and has had a very negative affect in some ways on our schools.

Yes, schools have concentrated on the basics more than ever before and we are much more tuned to testing and measurement. We understand the shortcomings of our program and the accomplishments of many of the children who struggle in our society, and are concentrating our resources there. But at the same time, especially in Minnesota, with the negative connotations of not making AYP it is also significantly damaging the reputations of our public schools in the eyes of our citizens. We have good schools here in Minnesota and they continue to improve, but the affects of the media coverage on our schools regarding AYP have been hurtful.

As the new law is considered for reauthorization we are hoping that it continues to concentrate on universal proficiency with ways to reward schools and to encourage innovation in areas where schools can make an impact on having more students learn well. We also hope that the new law will not place very good schools in the position of looking like failures.

The work of creating the new statute is beginning right now. We have several key elected representatives in Congress that will have an influence on this law, including Representative John Kline. He is the Republican Congressman from our south suburbs and he is the ranking minority member on the House Education and Workforce Committee. Congressman Kline was originally a great supporter of NCLB and now has completely flipped the other way and thinks that the law is terrible and that the Federal Government should have no involvement with education. We will interact with Congressman Kline hoping to have him come to the understanding that to be a real player in this debate he needs to work towards significant modification of the law rather than pushing for repeal – which is not going to happen.

Another person that will have an influence is our brand new senator, Senator Franken. He is on the Senate Education Pensions and Labor Committee and will also have an influence over how this law is shaped. Senator Franken is reaching out to all educators and we are glad to see he is including

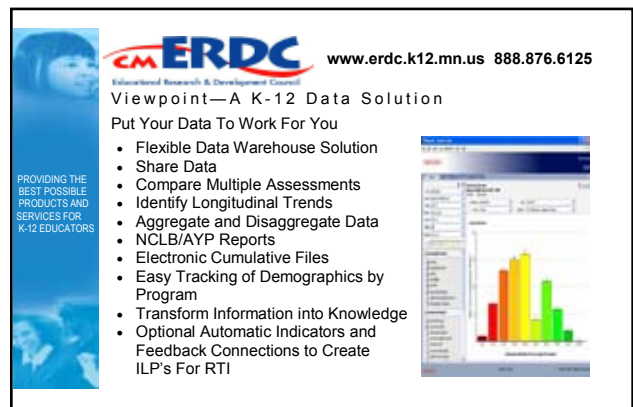


Charlie Kyte
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of School
Administrators

management and leadership in that attempt to gain information. He has met with a group of our rural administrators in the Rochester area and a group of suburban administrators during the state fair. He listened closely and will hopefully take some of our suggestions and try to have them placed into the new statute.

Other congressional representation is also critical for us. Congresswoman Betty McCollum is on the House Appropriations Committee and is actually on the sub-committee within Appropriations on Education, so she has influence. We also have several other senior congressmen, including Oberstar and Peterson who can have a significant affect on the development of this law.

MASA will stay engaged at the national level and will include the opinions of our members as we work together with our congressional delegation to help shape the new education law. Hopefully, it will be passed this coming spring.





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MASA FOUNDATION

Making Giving A Priority

Welcome to the new school year. It seems that summer flies by so fast and quickly, we are once again in the exciting and chaotic fall season. One of the things I love about the start of school is the feeling of potential the new year brings. Our students come to school and they will grow and learn, becoming more and more their best selves.

I am also excited to start this new school year because I will serve as President of the MASA Foundation, and there, too, I see the potential of the upcoming year that the Foundation will have to help our school leaders become more and more their best selves. It is a bit daunting in these economically uncertain times to take on a leadership role of a fundraising organization, but it is also clear that when resources are scarce, giving is most important.

The mission of the MASA Foundation is to support leadership development of educational administrators, encourage those interested in educational careers, enhance the role and image of school leaders, and conduct research and provide information. We accomplish this important work through a number of fundraising initiatives throughout the year that create significant support despite tough economic times. Foundation dollars support:

- The Great Start Workshops, training for new superintendents and other school leaders to help them experience a successful first-year of practice. We are grateful to Springsted Incorporated for their support of this program.
- The Fresh Start Workshops, professional development for mid-career leaders that focuses on learning through presentations and facilitated conversation. ATS&R sponsors the Fresh Start Series.
- New this year will be workshops for our members who are anticipating retirement. The Foundation appreciates the support of AXA Equitable in bringing this opportunity to our members. There will be two sessions: one in December for those planning retirement in six to eighteen months and one in April for those planning for retirement in two to four years.
- Requests for support for individual professional development. MASA members may make grant requests at any time. The Foundation Grant Committee and the MASA Executive Director can make grant decisions as requests are received. Individuals have received funds to support



development such as conference attendance, professional coaching, and study programs that would not otherwise be covered by district or individual resources.

There are a number of ways to support the Foundation:

- Participate in the annual golf tournament. This year's event will take place on Sunday, September 27 at the Nemadji Golf Course in Superior, in conjunction with the MASA Fall Conference.
- Plan to donate items to the Silent Auction at the Spring Conference in March, and then shop the auction! Each year the auction gets better; don't miss this year's event on March 18 at the Northland Inn.
- Make a pledge. Many of our members support the Foundation through an annual gift. With the end of the calendar year coming, a donation helps the Foundation and gives you a tax deduction.
- Name the Foundation as the beneficiary of your MASA \$3,000 life insurance policy. Members age 75 and older who make this designation receive complimentary retiree membership, and retirees age 65-74 receive a reduced membership rate.

Those options are easy, low-impact, and they all add up to support excellent school leadership in Minnesota. Tough times may keep you or a colleague from being able to access professional development, but the strength of the Foundation endowment can help us access those opportunities and continue to grow, this school year and every year.

Thank you all for all you do for the MASA Foundation, and special thanks to our hard-working Board of Trustees, including 2008-09 President Fred Nolan, President-Elect John Christiansen, and Treasurer Chris Richardson.

For more information about the MASA Foundation, please visit our web page. Simply go to the MASA web site (www.mnasa.org), click on Member Resources, and then on the MASA Foundation link or contact Stephanie Kastanos (schaeffe@mnasa.org / 651-645-6272).

—Janet Mohr, MASA Foundation President & Transition Manager,
NE Metro 916 District

CREATING STRONG SCHOOL CULTURES

A Collaboration of the Associations of School Administrators

The Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP), the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA) and MASA have joined together this year to create a sequenced set of conferences and workshops that are all designed to help school leaders understand and to build stronger school cultures.

This work will be centered on the writings of Karen Seashore Lewis and will kicked off at the MASA Fall Conference. Karen Seashore Lewis will be the keynote speaker and we are planning to give every attendee at the conference a copy of her book Building Strong School Cultures. Breakout sessions and the work of the conference will concentrate on this theme. This will be followed by conferences by both MASSP and MESPA as they build on this theme as well so that not only superintendents, but also principals all across the state will be hearing this same message.

During the year the three associations will collaborate to

provide regional workshops to help build upon this theme. We know that when there is a strong and positive school culture the curriculum and intervention strategies will come together, teachers will happier, students will learn better, and we will ultimately create better schools. The MASA Fall Conference is the kick-off to the strong school culture theme of this year.

STAFF PROFILE

Jamie Hultgren

Job Title: Associate

How long have you been with MASA:

Since January of 2007.

Tell us about your loved ones (spouse, significant other, children): I am blessed


to have a wealth of friends and family in the Twin Cities.

What do you like most about working for MASA:

MASA has provided me with many opportunities to acquire new skills (I've learned to edit videos and manage the website in the past couple of years). I am also super appreciative of the wholehearted support I've been given to pursue my other work in the theatre/arts.

Favorite Memories at MASA: Trying to solve the mystery of the fallen MASA Christmas tree (2007) and tracking the staff addiction to Cheetos.

One thing you would like the members of MASA to know about you: I will be performing in the role of Grace Bradley in The Best Christmas Pageant Ever at Festival Theatre in St. Croix Falls, WI this fall/winter. I played Meg Magrath in Crimes of the Heart for the theatre this summer and am so happy to be returning so soon to such a beautiful and artist friendly community. Come on over and see the show if you can peel yourself away from your district!



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BOARD DEVELOPMENT

A Conversation with MSBA

We are in the season of fall which I view as the “new year” for many of us who have children in school or work with school districts. Family schedules change, elections are held and school boards welcome new members.

I have the great opportunity to work with school board members around the state of Minnesota as the Minnesota School Boards Association’s Director of Board Development.

Working with new board members and providing them the opportunity for training in board governance is a privilege. As a former school board member myself, I understand the immediate feeling of heavy responsibility after being elected. This experience allows me to say, “I’ve been there and done that. I know what you’re feeling right now.”

I enjoy providing the basics in training for board members. The training provided shares strategies for good board member – board member, board member – community, and board member – superintendent expectations.

With new board members potentially every two years due to elections, training is important, and the Phase II that MSBA offers is state-mandated for school board members. Board members mentoring new board members is a good way to get your board moving in the right direction toward understanding everyone’s roles and responsibilities. We encourage more “seasoned” board members and / or superintendents to accompany new board members to the trainings MSBA provides. Not only can you clarify how the information we’re sharing pertains to your district, but it’s a great opportunity for what I like to call “windshield time.” Windshield time is that important exchange that takes place while traveling to and from the training. It’s a chance for you to get to know your new board members and for them




Katie Klanderud
MSBA Director
Board Development

to get to know you. Once everyone understands the values and experiences on which we base our decisions, we create an opportunity for deliberation (vs. debate), good conversation, an informed vote, and support the board’s decision.

Parents entrust board members and superintendents with their two most valued possessions: their children and their money. And the public demands a fair exchange. That is a heavy burden, one not taken lightly by board members or superintendents. With good training and understanding of each other’s mutual expectations, I know your board can serve your community well.


I look forward to meeting each of you either at an MSBA training or a visit to your individual district for an in-service. MSBA services for board development can be found online at: www.mnmsba.org.

Have you encouraged your board members to attend MSBA training?




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Midwest Dairy Council Announces



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ACHIEVING OUR CLIENTS' GOALS SINCE 1947

K-14 Rural Initiatives Project Envisioning the Future of the High School/College Transition

Most rural Minnesota secondary and post secondary education institutions face a near universal condition of declining enrollments and insufficient funding that fuels a downward spiral of decreasing course offerings and less opportunity for offering the diverse and highly challenging education that students need and desire. In 2008 Minnesota State Colleges & Universities (MnSCU) in cooperation with the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) convened a group of rural college presidents and school superintendents to identify potential strategies to address this situation with particular emphasis on how to foster the seamless transition for students from secondary grades 10-12 into post-secondary grades 13 and 14 and explore areas for collaboration.

In early 2009 MnSCU sponsored the Envisioning K-14 Connections Work Group to build upon the momentum and interest demonstrated by presidents and superintendents.

The Work Group established the following vision for its effort:

Connect learning from Year 10 through 14 by designing new education pathways for rural learners.

In addition, the Work Group determined that its mission was to:

Identify and remedy the policies and practices that inhibit K-14 connections in Minnesota by clarifying stakeholder desires and proposing appropriate regulatory change.

The final component of the Work Group's strategic plan is a set of goals whose achievement will greatly advance the cause of seamless K-14 education across rural Minnesota.

1. Recognize and advance better practices of K-14 connections in rural Minnesota.
2. Identify new education pathways that build institutional capacity (e.g., Commonwealth Districts).
3. Eliminate Post Secondary Education Options (PSEO) financial disincentives.
4. Meet requirements of graduation standards in dual-credit college courses.
5. Determine preparatory alignment prior to Year 10 that assures college readiness.

MnSCU and MASA then conducted a survey to clarify the desires of MnSCU college presidents and Minnesota superintendents. The survey results provided a basic

framework that allowed the workgroup to identify the most important and solvable areas for improvement in Rural MN K-14 connections, identify the barriers that inhibit these positive changes, and create action steps to implement change. Among the top barriers to change (as determined by the workgroup during a forum on August 13th, 2009) were communication, funding, technology, political will, calendars, and union/contracts/licensure issues. The workgroup split up into subgroups to determine specific goals that would address the barriers to creating change, and formulate workable priority solutions for them. The top choice areas in which to create specific change were:

- Alignment of Expectation for Assessments/Standards/Requirements.
- Intercultural Advancement for "The Learner"
- Impacting Political/Societal Will (Urgency, buy-in, institutional readiness for change)
- Sharing resources (technology) through regional contracts

The leadership team is in the process of determining the next steps for change and will be convening the workgroup this fall in various settings to get the action steps in place and inform key stakeholders (including leaders of the Minnesota Legislature). For more information about this initiative, please contact Jamie Hultgren at jamie@mnasa.org or Joe Sertich at joe@sertichconsulting.com.

-Jamie Hultgren, Associate, MASA

Curriculum Leadership: **Pillars of Reflective Practice**
the 2009 clm fall conference

Be sure to mark your calendars for the

2009 CLM Fall Conference

November 18-20, 2009 -
Cragun's Resort, Brainerd!

EXPLORING SOCIAL MEDIA

What's All the Fuss Anyway?

It seems like everywhere you turn these days, people are talking about social media. Social media is defined as any site or application that allows users to connect, collaborate, react, organize and quickly consume information. In other words, social media is people having online conversations. Social media can include:

- Blogs/Vlogs
- Facebook, Ning (social networks)
- Flickr (photos) and YouTube (video)
- Twitter (micro-blogging)

Though the social media tools and platforms may differ, the objective of social media remains the same: it's another way to build relationships.

Blogs

Bloggng is by far the most popular social media tool used today. School district blogs are used for multiple reasons, from dispelling rumors to covering topical district news.

While popular with many school administrators, some are hesitant to blog because they see it as an outlet for critics to post negative comments. While that's true, it's not necessarily a bad thing. Conversations about education, our schools and school districts are taking place right now—both in person and in cyberspace. Why not join the discussion and use blogs as a place to correct misinformation or offer more detailed explanations regarding district decisions?

A few rules of thumb:

- Blogs are not meant to be one-way communication tools. Do allow comments once they've been reviewed and approved.
- Have clearly posted rules of participation (i.e., no profanity or name-calling. Posters can disagree while remaining civil).
- Blog regularly, but not without purpose. If the topic calls for it, have a school board or staff member blog.
- Blogs are a place for district residents to get to know you: use your own voice and keep the tone friendly and informal. (Avoid posting news releases as blogs.)

Video Blogs (Vlogs)

Inexpensive video cameras have helped increase the popularity of video blogging. No longer constrained by equipment, school board members, superintendents and other district officials can use a \$100 Flip video camera to record and upload a 5-minute video message or response to a breaking news story. Again, these are best unscripted and informal. If bandwidth is a concern, videos can be housed on YouTube.

YouTube, Teacher Tube, Flickr, SmugMug

Content sharing sites such as YouTube, Flickr and SmugMug make it easy to share school generated videos and photographs.



Robin Smothers, APR
Owner,
RMS Public Relations LLC

School board meetings, graduation ceremonies and sporting events are only a few examples of how districts are using these tools. TeacherTube was created in 2007 as a safe place for teachers and other education professionals to share instructional videos, audios and documents.

Facebook

Created in 1994, Facebook is a free-access social networking Web site that has exploded in popularity (in April 2009, Facebook announced it had grown from 100 million to 200 million users in just eight months, with biggest area of growth being women 26 and older).

Despite its growing popularity within key demographics, privacy and other issues make Facebook the slowest social media platform adapted by public school districts. However, hundreds of alumni organizations, booster club and other school-related organizations are finding Facebook an extremely effective way to reach others who share their interests.

Ning

Ning is a technology platform that enables users to create and join their own closed networks. The greatest benefit to Ning networks is that they can be made public or private for members only. Network administrators vet members before they are allowed to join, and photos, videos, groups, chat and events can all be reviewed and/or moderated. Many school districts are finding innovative ways to leverage Ning. For example, a Texas independent school district has created a network for its teacher-mentoring program.

Twitter

The newest entry into the social media arena, Twitter is a micro-blogging platform that allows users to send messages to other Twitter users who "follow" them. The catch? These updates—called tweets—are limited to 140 characters.

School districts across the nation are embracing Twitter as a way to share information. Tweets are being sent on topics ranging from awards to school board meetings to the opening of a new high school.

Benefits and Challenges of Social Media

Social media is not meant to replace a district's current marketing communications channels and/or strategies: it should enhance those already in place. Like any other method of community engagement, social media is a long-term commitment that takes time, effort, planning and resources. (Tip: content can be created and re-purposed for multiple social media channels.)

But don't let that scare you away. Remember, social media is about people. It's about your community members connecting, conversing and building relationships around a shared interest: their local schools.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2009... September

26
Executive Committee Meeting
10-11:30 am
The Inn on Lake Superior, Duluth
Board of Directors Meeting
1-4 pm
The Inn on Lake Superior, Duluth

27
Board Meeting Continues
8:15-10 am
The Inn on Lake Superior, Duluth
Foundation Golf Tournament
11:30 am
Nemadji Golf Course, Superior

27-29
Fall Conference
Duluth Entertainment & Convention
Center (DECC), Duluth

October

20
Legislative Policy Committee Meeting
10 am-2 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

21
Great Start Workshop II
MASA Offices, St. Paul

21-23
MASE Fall Leadership Conference
Cragun's Resort, Brainerd

26
Legislative Finance Committee Meeting
10 am-2 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

28
Fresh Start Workshop
MASA Offices, St. Paul

29
Legislative Pensions Committee Meeting
10 am-2 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

November

3
Foundation Meeting
11 am-1 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

10
Executive Development Committee Meeting
10 am-2 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

13
Newsletter Submissions Due

16
Member Services Committee Meeting
10 am-2 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

18-20
Curriculum Leaders of Minnesota
Conference
Cragun's Resort, Brainerd

23
Legislative Contact Committee Meeting
10 am-2 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

26-27
Thanksgiving Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

December

1
Great Start Workshop III
MASA Offices, St. Paul

2
Executive Committee Meeting
9- 10:45 am
Board of Directors Meeting
11 am - 4 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

9
Retiree Workshop
MASA Offices, St. Paul

18
Nominating Committee Meeting
11 am-1 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

24- 25, and 31
Winter Holidays
MASA Offices Closed

2010... January

1
Winter Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

5
Foundation Meeting
11 am-1 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

13
Great Start Workshop IV
Hilton Downtown, Minneapolis

14-15
MSBA Winter Convention
Minneapolis Convention Center,
Minneapolis

February

4
Minnesota Legislature Begins

11-14
AASA National Convention
Phoenix, AZ

15
Newsletter Submissions Due

24-25
Minnesota School Safety Conference
Northland Inn, Brooklyn Park

March

17
Great Start Workshop V
Northland Inn, Brooklyn Park
Executive Committee Meeting
9- 10:45 am
Board of Directors Meeting
11 am - 4 pm
Northland Inn, Brooklyn Park

18-19
Spring Conference
Northland Inn, Brooklyn Park

April

2
Spring Holiday

14
Retiree Workshop
MASA Offices, St. Paul

22
Foundation Meeting
11 am-1 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

May

14
Newsletter Submissions Due

31
Memorial Day Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

June

TBD
Board of Directors Retreat
Madden's Resort, Brainerd



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