

Leaders FORUM

Fall 2013

Transformation Without Leaving Anyone Behind

New legislation this year asks us to report our efforts at creating the Worlds Best Workforce. Perhaps a better word than create, would be sustain. By all accounts we have the most productive workforce in the world, and the most entrepreneurial. This has been substantially so for decades.

But the world is changing and there is no guarantee that our place as a leader will continue. And while we may lead in aggregate, far too many live in poverty, without the skills and purpose needed to participate fully in society and support themselves and their families.

Our schools mimic society. Some students find their place, their purpose, whether in traditional curricular areas, athletics, activities or clubs.

But many students' interests lie outside the narrow band of options offered in schools and many more never discover that spark inside them, that passion that can lead to worthy purpose.

We talk a lot about the achievement gap these days. The achievement gap is real, but I believe it is much more a symptom than a cause. The real gap is an aspiration gap, an engagement gap, a gap in discovering and being supported in our worthy purpose. And so when we address the symptom, low academic achievement as measured on a



Jay Haugen
MASA President and
Superintendent
Farmington Area Schools

"The real gap is an aspiration gap, an engagement gap, a gap in discovering and being supported in our worthy purpose."

standardized test, it is like giving pain killers to someone in pain without ever finding out what the underlying cause is. In other words, when we go directly at closing the achievement gap by directly teaching those skills, we mask the root cause, and while things may feel and look better for a time, the symptom usually comes roaring back.

I believe that the almost universal nature of this type of educational system in our world, one that engages a small percentage of youth and strives for compliance from the rest, explains an interesting observation from the last 50 years of international academic and workforce comparisons. Countries that score the highest on standardized tests have the lowest entrepreneurship and workforce productivity.

Presumably, these are the countries that do the best job at masking the symptoms and gaining compliance, so rarely do their students break out and find their passion and purpose.

Our country, which has historically scored low on academic achievement and so high in regard to entrepreneurship and productivity, has had a bit of magic in its educational

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INNOVATE

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Capitol Report...

Building Relationships



Valerie Dosland
EWALD
MASA Lobbyist

The 2013 legislative session was a very hectic one. There were many newly elected representative and senators, a switch in political power and a requirement to implement a state budget while facing a budget deficit. All of this made for a hectic 2013 legislative session and provided challenges in getting to know our elected officials.

Although February 25, 2014 seems a long time from now, there is important work you can now do to solidify your relationships with your legislative delegation. This fall is an excellent time to build and strengthen relationships with your elected officials, educate them on your issues and rally their support for future legislative efforts.

There are a number of ways to interact with legislators during the interim:

- If you have not done so yet, be sure to thank them for their work during the 2013 legislative session.
- Invite them to tour your district, speak at a school board meeting or participate in a specific event in your district.
- Ask them to meet you for coffee or lunch so you can get to know them better.
- Respond to legislative updates and legislative surveys so they get feedback in a number of ways.
- Attend a legislator's town hall meeting and ask questions of their plans for the 2014 session.

Do not miss this opportunity. Fall is a great time for your elected officials to get to know the district and your issues at a deeper level than the hectic legislative session affords. Your work now strengthens the work MASA is able to do on your behalf at the Capitol.

Transformation... Continued from front cover

system. We have historically valued students asking and debating great questions and wrestling with topics that are outside the standard curriculum while in class. We have provided strong arts and vocational programs as part of school along with all sorts of opportunities for students such as clubs and activities where students can discover and develop their spark(s).

But this last decade or more has been an exception. We have, for some inexplicable reason, pushed an agenda of testing and directly addressing the symptoms, chasing countries whose systems achieve many high scores but few entrepreneurs and leaders.

Instead, we should have been capitalizing on our strength. We should be redesigning

our educational system to find and develop the strengths, talents and passions in every student, applying our "magic" to all. Why are we strangling instead of celebrating and enhancing our unique educational system?

I feel an incredible sense of urgency to set a new course before it is too late. To create a system that inspires all students, engages them, encourages them to raise their own aspirations, and to explore all the possibilities for their life. For every student has greatness inside them.

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The *Leaders Forum* is your newsletter and we welcome your input. Please send your ideas or articles to Aimee Ranallo at aranallo@mnaasa.org.

Objectives:
SECURITY
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Access to Expertise includes access to highly experienced technical assistance staff.

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Questions? Contact Mary Bettlach
 at mbettlach@ucpnet.org

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2013 MASA FALL CONFERENCE

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Great school leaders create effective systems that adapt to rapid and pervasive change, provide a culture supporting risk-taking and experimentation, and nurture a climate of possibilities. Collaborative leadership focusing on excellent instruction for all students draws on those systems and the integration of curriculum, instruction, professional development, technology, and assessment, creating a powerful learning environment. Join your MASA colleagues this fall and examine how we can **innovate** within our systems and our wider networks, **inspire** one another here and within our communities, and **involve** everyone in scaling up the work that provides great education systems for all...



2013 MASA Fall Conference
October 6 - 8, 2013
Duluth Entertainment Convention
Center, Duluth MN



**Implementation
Science and
Bringing Our
Innovations
to Scale**

Michelle A. Duda



**The Practical
Futurist Looks
at Education**

Michael Rogers



**Educational
Adequacy:
Leading the
Dialogue About
Educational
Process and
Outcomes**

Aaron Ruhland

Conference Highlights

Annual MASA Foundation Golf Tournament: Participate in the MASA Foundation Golf Tournament on Sunday afternoon. Tournament proceeds support the Foundation's professional development initiatives for MASA members. All skill levels are welcome!

Welcome Reception: Meet with your friends and colleagues for a fun, casual evening to kick off the Fall Conference. Join us at Grandma's Sports Garden for drinks, hors d'oeuvres, prize drawings, music and fun! The door is open so come and go as you please. There is no cost for registered conference participants.

Exhibit Fair: A convenient way to visit with representatives of companies offering the latest products and services. Sign up for the prize drawings - this year's door prize is a Up by Jawbone! - and collect tickets for refreshments during the Monday afternoon reception.

Breakout Sessions: Our breakout sessions will offer rich content with many options to customize your conference experience.

Richard Green Scholar Presentation: Hear from MASA's 2013 Richard Green Scholar, Aaron Ruhland. Aaron's educational adequacy research seeks to explain the relationships between financial resources, educational processes and student outcomes.

Schedule At-a-Glance

Sunday, September 6

- 9 am - 4 pm • MASA Great Start Cohort II
- 11:30 am • Foundation Golf Tournament
- 6 - 9 pm • Welcome Reception

Monday, October 7

(Registration open 7 am - 4:30 pm)

- 8:30 - 10:30 am • Keynote Speaker: Michael Rogers
- 10:30 am - 5:30 pm • Exhibits Open
- 11 am - 12 pm • Breakout Sessions I
- 12 - 1:30 pm • Awards Luncheon
- 1:30 - 2 pm • Dessert Reception in Exhibit Hall
- 2 - 3 pm • Breakout Sessions II
- 3 - 3:30 pm • Exhibit Hall Break & Drawings
- 3:30 - 4:30 pm • Breakout Sessions III
- 4:30 - 5 pm • Exhibitor Reception

Tuesday, October 8

(Registration open 8 - 11 am)

- 8:30 - 10:30 am • General Session
- 8:30 - 9 am • MASA and MCPE Annual Business Meetings
- 9 - 10:30 am • Keynote Speaker: Aaron Ruhland
- 10:45 am - 12 pm • Keynote Speaker: Michelle Duda

**Please register by September 23rd. Online registration is available on the MASA website: www.mnasa.org.
Questions? Contact MASA at (651) 645-6272.**

EXECUTIVE VIEW...

Breaking Down the Silos Between Regular and Special Education



Gary Amoroso
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of
School Administrators

In an unprecedented move, the boards of MASA and MASE had a joint session at their June board meetings. Dr. Robert Pasternack, former Assistant Secretary of Education, led a discussion on improving outcomes for all students and “reinventing” special education. Dr. Pasternack praised the efforts of both Boards to work collaboratively and noted the symbolic gesture of removing the dividing wall that separated both boards.

Dr. Pasternack noted that, as a country, we spend \$500 billion on public education. Nationally, 12 percent of students are identified as needing special education services. Since it costs twice as much to educate students with disabilities, Dr. Pasternack estimated that we are spending about 25 percent of education dollars, or \$125 billion, on special education. The majority of that funding is coming from state and local sources. In MN, these statistics hit close to home based on the recent report released from the Office of the Legislative Auditor. In March, a legislative audit was conducted on special

education, and it found that MN school districts are using about 33% of their general funds to cover the portion of special education services not funded by state or federal governments. (e.g., cross subsidy).

Students with learning disabilities amount to about 50 percent of those receiving special education services nationwide. Of the students who qualify as specific learning disabled (SLD), the majority of those students qualify because they can't read. Many researchers have speculated that many students receiving services because of reading difficulties probably aren't disabled. These are students who haven't been taught to read well using the science of reading instruction.

When we look at outcomes for students with disabilities, Dr. Pasternack noted that students with disabilities drop out of high school at twice the rate of peers, and the college enrollment rate is 50% lower than peers. Most states, including MN, continue to have significant achievement gaps between students with disabilities and typical students.



Many of these poor outcomes are due to a culture of low expectations that have plagued students with disabilities. Dr. Pasternack proposed a number of needs that exist in education including:

- Embracing a culture that all students are all teachers responsibility.
- Shifting our thinking from “what students need help?” to “What help does each student need?”
- Providing sufficient time and support to teachers to ensure all students achieving to high standards,
- Providing all low performing students with focused instruction
- Providing good first instruction to all students by the regular education classroom teacher.

Proposed Solutions and Policy Recommendations

Five policy recommendations were presented to address the needs we are facing as a county.

- Flexible use of IDEA funding to provide school districts with a more coherent focus on improving achievement among students with disabilities.
- Limit special education eligibility to only those students with significant disabilities so that there is greater involvement by regular education teachers and to avoid special education being a “dumping ground” for struggling students.
- Replace IEPs with Individual Growth Plans for students who have median growth levels below the 35th percentile.
- Implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)/ Response to Intervention (RtI) framework to provide early intervention and support to students at-risk of achievement and/or social and emotional difficulty.
- Teacher certification based on the diagnostic and prescriptive instructional skills in core content and behavior areas.

Next Steps

As another school year is about to begin, it is important to reflect on what matters most for improving outcomes for all of our students – high-quality instruction. In this era of increased accountability, collaboration between key stakeholder organizations is critical. In the upcoming year, MASA and MASE will continue the dialogue on how we can continue “visible collaboration” to support improved outcomes for all students.



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Arif Quraishi

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Member Service...



A very important part of the work of MASA is to provide outstanding service to the members of the association. Besides a strong professional development component, MASA wants to stand ready to help members as they navigate the many complex situations that they face on a day-to-day basis.

The five member Professional Assistance Team (P.A.T.) is made up of highly experienced school leaders who will use their expertise to help their colleagues when they need consultation and/or advice. The members of the 2013-14 P.A.T. are listed below...



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These individuals will take confidential calls and contacts from any MASA member. The only case in which information may be shared is in the event that a situation is complex enough that you may require legal assistance and will be directed to the Executive Director of MASA.

A Professional Development Opportunity Especially for New (or Newer) Superintendents, sponsored by Springsted, Inc.



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In our Great Start Cohort, you will receive information and develop

practical skills designed to help you be successful right away in your first year of your new position. Our five sessions are single-day events scheduled throughout the year, accompanied by online quick-reference tools created specifically for new leaders. This program provides a great opportunity for participants to build their professional network, meet their regional leadership teams, discuss any issues they are currently facing, and continue to grow in their career. All MASA members in new (or newer) leadership roles are welcome to attend. Register today, the second session is October 6th!

2013 - 2014 Workshop Schedule

- August 7: Great Start Session 1
Minneapolis Marriott Northwest, Brooklyn Park
- October 6: Great Start Session 2
Duluth Event & Convention Center, Duluth
- November 13: Great Start Session 3
Craguns Resort, Brainerd
- January 15: Great Start Session 4
MASA Offices, St. Paul
- March 13: Great Start Session 5
Minneapolis Marriott Northwest, Brooklyn Park

Registration materials available on the
MASA website: www.mnasa.org

INNOVATIVE PRACTICE..

More Than a Vision - Creating an Action Agenda for our Children's Future



Gary Amoroso
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of
School Administrators

Here at MASA, we spend a lot of time thinking about the evolution of the practice of educational leadership. To do this, we try to step back and examine “the big picture,” not only that of our schools, but of our communities, other organizations, and the world. We invite our members, other colleagues, and the wider community into conversation about children and their education and we ask how can we provide the very best education for our students, one that is relevant for their future success.

then we don't question current systems or their operating assumptions. Instead, we work hard to revive or improve them. We support initiatives and programs focused on process improvements, developing present systems to work more effectively and more efficiently. ... If we believe that the old system cannot be repaired, if we expect to see only more system failures, then the work is not to fix. Instead support needs to be given to radically different processes and methods, new systems based on new assumptions. The work becomes not process improvement but process revolution.” (Margaret J. Wheatley, Supporting Pioneering Leaders as Communities of Practice, copyright 2002.)

When you hear an inspiring speaker present a vision for the future, do you see it as possible, or do you get whiplash as you think about it in the context of the reality of practice? MASA conferences will again be focused on innovative practice--but with a focus on how to create an action agenda around that innovation, bridging the space between thinking about and doing.

It's challenging, that prognostication about what knowledge and skills kids will need in ten, twenty, or thirty years. We live in times of rapid, pervasive change—not just in the technology that affects every part of our lives (how old is your cell phone?), but in the fabric of our communities, the expectations of public organizations, the impacts of economic shift, and the interaction of diverse communities locally and globally.

Inasmuch as global change can feel chaotic, it is far more a great opportunity to support the success of all of our students. We hear every day of individual student needs being met because we now have resources that didn't even exist ten years ago. So, when we look at that “big picture,” what do we really see?

There are voices in our world saying that we are failing. There are also those who refute that hypothesis. I am wondering what we, Minnesota's educational leadership community, truly thinks is true. Over ten years ago, leadership expert Margaret Wheatley wrote,

“Is (this) a time of new possibilities, of great examples of hope, of positive human evolution, of transformation? Are we succeeding in solving major problems, are we creating more? ... It's important to think about how we answer this question, because that answer affects our choice of actions. If we think that, generally, things are working, that at present we're going through a difficult but temporary downturn,

So I am asking you today: Is this a time of new possibilities for our students, staff, and communities? Is it our charge to improve our systems, or are we about revolution? This might seem a bit “out there,” but I think MASA members are the people to ask. Our members are the experts at leading excellent school systems.

Of course, there is a mind-boggling amount of factors at play in answering that question. One small change within a system can have a domino effect that would terrify the most stalwart of leaders. Public policy can thwart change efforts. The community's vision of what “school” is (based mostly on their own experience as long-ago students) can have a large impact on reform initiatives. Staff contracts may not have latitude to incorporate change. And so on.

We see school districts with dozens and dozens of projects and programs meant to affect change and support student success. Last year, when one of our smaller districts was asked to write down their district initiatives, they came up with ninety-six in a short period of time! Of course, those initiatives are producing positive outcomes, but at what cost? And are we as leaders OK with that cost?

I wonder, because once again this past year, we saw a turnover of about 20 per cent, just within the superintendency. In what other profession do we see those kinds of numbers, year after year? We know that there is a link between leadership tenure and student achievement

Action Agenda...
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(Waters, Marzano, 2006) but we still have factors within our system that create a climate that does not support extended tenure.

MASA's Strategic Plan charges us with "strengthen(ing) relationships with other Minnesota educational associations and policy makers to develop a common education agenda," and to, "deliver a multi-tiered system of professional development that meets the individualized learning goals of all members." We are doing a number of things in support of those goals, and a tremendously important aspect of our MASA initiatives is a continuing conversation with and among our members.

We are committed to bringing our members the best information and perspectives in support of that conversation. We have heard from experts such as Tony Wagner, Yong Zhao, Peter Skarzynski, and Annie McKee. So here's another question: Does this professional development, these expert voices, make a difference in how we structure and lead our school systems, or is it mainly philosophical "nice to know" information? I ask this (and hope to embed this in an ongoing conversation) specifically because of that "big picture view" and the perspective of improvement versus reform. When you hear an inspiring speaker present a vision for the future, do you see it as possible, or do you get whiplash as you think about it in the context of the reality of practice?

I'd like to invite you into that conversation. How do we bridge the space between that vision for the future and the reality of practice? At MASA, we plan to spend some time this year talking about exactly that. We will start this fall, when our Board of Directors will hear from Thieu Besselink in a live video streaming presentation from Utrecht, the Netherlands. Thieu is founder of The Learning Lab, a think-tank for social change. He is a learning innovator, researcher, philosopher, and social entrepreneur. He teaches social entrepreneurship, action research, system innovation, and leadership learning at Amsterdam University and Utrecht University. We will ask our board to reflect and bring those reflections home to you, our members, to enhance your conversations and start our statewide discussions.

Our conferences this year will again be themed around innovative practice—but with a focus on how to create an action agenda around that innovation, bridging the space between thinking about and doing.

We are also excited to note that we will be hosting a legislative summit in December to bring our MASA leaders, state policymakers, and business community members together for a significant conversation about these issues.

We hope to extend this conversation regionally, because we know that what makes sense in Ada might not be the solution for Zumbrota. Please join this conversation. Your leadership is needed.

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Legal Issues...

A Warning About Tennessees: New Twists on an Old Law

A school district may be precluded from introducing an individual's own statements or admissions as evidence against that individual during a hearing if it failed to first administer a Tennessee warning.



Charles E. Long
Education Law Attorney
Kennedy & Graven, Chartered

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act contains many procedures for the collection, maintenance, and use of public and private data. One of the most confusing and often overlooked procedures is the notice that public entities, such as school districts, must give to individuals before collecting private or confidential information about them. This notice, called a Tennessee warning after the state representative who introduced the legislation in the 1970s, requires a school district to tell

the individual:

- the purpose and intended use of the requested data;
- whether the individual may refuse or is legally required to provide the data;
- any known consequences from supplying/refusing to supply the data; and
- the identity of all persons (internal or external) or entities that may receive the data.

The rationale underlying administration of Tennessee warnings is that individuals should make informed decisions before providing information about themselves to a governmental entity. If, however, an individual volunteers private or confidential data without the district requesting it, the data about the individual is public, or the data is not about the individual being asked, then a Tennessee warning is not required.

Although Tennessee warnings may be needed in a variety of contexts, they most often arise during school district investigations of staff or student misconduct. Whether a school district is able to use information and prevail in a discharge or expulsion proceeding or otherwise impose discipline often rests upon whether it gave a proper Tennessee warning. The Minnesota Department of Administration, the state agency which oversees the state's data privacy laws, has explained that the Legislature, in creating this notice requirement, "provided a consequence for government entities which do not meet their statutory obligation regarding the collection of private or confidential data . . . [t]hat is, those data may not be stored, used or disseminated" by that entity. Advisory Opinion 95-028. Thus, a school district may be precluded from introducing an individual's own statements or admissions as evidence

against that individual during a hearing if it failed to first administer a Tennessee warning.

Recently, the Department of Administration again addressed the requirements for a proper Tennessee warning and arguably added some new facets. In Advisory Opinion 13-011, school district staff questioned several students regarding an incident of vandalism that occurred off school property. Staff asked each student about the student's actions, where the student was, and who the student was with. At the start of each interview, staff told each student the purpose and reason for the interview, that the student had the right to refuse to answer the district's questions, that the district was going to use the information to help determine each student's involvement in the situation and potential disciplinary actions, and that the information would remain within the district. At the conclusion of its investigation, the school district briefly suspended the students from participating on their athletic teams pursuant to the Minnesota State High School League rules. No information was given to the High School League.

One of the parents contacted the Department, claiming that the district had not provided the students with a Tennessee warning at the time of the interviews. In its review, the Department explained that the purpose of the Tennessee is to provide individuals with sufficient information to decide whether to provide the requested information. While agreeing that the district told the students why it was collecting the data, how the data would be used, and that the students were not legally required to answer, the Department concluded that the district did not comply with the statute because it did not clearly state the consequences of the students providing or not providing the data. The school district did not specifically tell the students that if the data confirmed their involvement in the incident then their MSHSL eligibility could be jeopardized.

The Department also found that the notice did not identify those persons outside of the district who could receive the data. The Department noted that the school has the authority to release educational data to the juvenile justice system or to third parties pursuant to a court order. It stated that, at a minimum, the district needed to inform the students of those authorized disseminations even though in this situation the data never left the district's hands.

Lastly, the Department noted that although the statute does not require written Tennessee notices, it is important for

A Warning ...
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A Warning...

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a school to document in some manner that it gave proper notice. The Department suggested providing the notice in writing and asking the data subject to sign and date it as a “simple way” of establishing compliance.

This opinion suggests a significant departure from not only the general practices of school districts but also from the statute itself. The Department apparently now expects much more specificity in Tennesen warnings and seemingly requires a district to anticipate every consequence an individual might experience and every entity that might receive the information. Given that an individual may reveal completely unanticipated information during the course of an interview, districts may now need to stop and readminister a Tennesen warning every time a new issue or area of investigation is introduced – if a district wishes to use or rely on an individual’s interview statements.

The Department also potentially calls into question the amount of reliance school districts can place on their handbooks and policies. Staff and students are presumed to know and understand the school district’s discipline rules. Participating students sign the high school league code of conduct, pledge to abide by it, and are forewarned of the consequences for not doing so. With this new opinion, however, schools may need to restate possible high school league rules and consequences.

Finally, the law does not require that Tennesen warnings must be given in writing or that an individual must sign an acknowledgment that the warning was received. The opinion does not change the law but certainly indicates that a school district faces a much greater challenge to demonstrate compliance in the absence of a signed written notice.

As the new school year begins, school districts should consider the following steps in light of this recent opinion:

- review policies and practices regarding Tennesen warnings;
- review and revise current written Tennesen warnings;
- develop additional Tennesen warnings for use in various situations;
- train (or retrain) appropriate staff about when Tennesens must be given; and
- train (or retrain) appropriate staff about the proper administration of Tennesens.

With proper attention to the statute and the guidance from the Department of Administration, school districts can successfully meet the law’s requirements and avoid the consequences that result from an inadequate Tennesen warning.

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.

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Technology...

Rosemount School District Goes Cashless *How the Rosemount School District became one of the first in the nation to implement a comprehensive fee management system*



Betty Schweizer
Executive Director
TIES

In 2010, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools began looking nationwide for a single payment system that would handle all revenue and sign-up activities, including community education, sports, meals and more. Finding none, they partnered with TIES to develop one.

The goal was to provide convenience for their parents by giving them an Amazon-type, one-stop-shopping experience. They wanted to end the need for parents to make multiple payments to multiple accounts for multiple activities. In addition to handling payments online, they also sought a single solution that would manage the sign-up process online when payments are made.

Key features sought

The district identified these key features:

Easy to use: Parents would be able to complete transactions with multiple departments and programs in just a few steps.

Extensive automation: The ideal system would automate manual functions, including:

- Calculation of fees based on eligibility
- Forms parents can complete online and sign electronically
- Robust financial tracking

Strong support: They looked for a developer who would collaborate and support their system for the long-term, providing consulting, implementation, training and support.

Secure and reliable: The highest standards would be employed for the security and reliability of the transactions.

As the project progressed, an additional objective became apparent: the need for a system that provides incentives for making online payments and disincentives for cash or check transactions. Handling cash is inefficient for parents and district administrators; it also can lead to theft, fraud, misplaced payments and lost revenue.

Handling the cost of electronic payment

By reducing cash and check handling services, districts can streamline business processes and save money. For this reason, the Rosemount School Board decided not to charge

The new fee management system has done a tremendous job of streamlining the district's business practices. By removing cash from the system, we can be more efficient and accountable. Plus, parents really appreciate the convenience.

- Jeff Solomon
Director of Finance and Operations
Rosemount School District

parents to use the online payment service. The goal was to ramp up use of online payments and the associated benefits.

The Comprehensive Fee Management System offers online payment and paperless registration for:

- Community education classes and activities
- Student activities, including sports, fine arts, field trips and more
- Before-and after-school child care
- Fee-based transportation services
- School meal account deposits
- Scheduling public use of school facilities

A vision fulfilled

TIES helped launch the new system for the 2012-13 school year. The comprehensive fee management system has freed up staff workloads, help create uniformity and increased online payments by 265 percent in one year.

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Invest MN's Talking Points...

Fall Forward



Shari Prest
Ark Associates

For many people, fall is the first sign that another year will soon draw to a close. For educators, parents and students, fall marks the beginning of a new academic year; a time of fresh starts, renewed vigor, increased commitment, and updated teaching and learning strategies. Fall can also mark a time for parents and communities to explore ways to embed the importance of school outcomes and student learning into community life.

Public schools are privileged and mandated to provide interesting, relevant and challenging curriculum and instruction in a secure environment, and to identify the individual strengths and weaknesses of students and address them strategically. It is the job of school and school district leadership to see that this is happening on a daily basis for every learner in every classroom.

Of course schools alone cannot ensure students' success, but they can—working in concert with students, parents, and communities—make a remarkable difference in the lives and futures of learners. There is a starring role for everyone in educational excellence.

Students

- Be responsible for completing your assignments on time.
- Let your teachers and parents know when you need help.
- Look for opportunities to take what you learn beyond the classroom.
- Be respectful and seek to learn from parents and teachers and other responsible adults.
- Identify role models in your life.
- Look for opportunities to share what you have learned.
- Read, read, and read.

Parents or guardians

- Give your child your undivided and supportive attention sometime every day. Ask your child about his or her fears, dreams, goals, and challenges.
- Support your child's involvement in supervised group activities and exploration of individual talents.
- Find ways to engage in your child's education at home and school.
- Expect your child to take age-appropriate responsibility for his or her decisions and behaviors.
- Communicate with your child's teacher(s) when you have questions, suggestions or concerns. Help the teacher to know who your child is and what your expectations are.

- Affirm your child's efforts and personal successes.
- Let your government leaders know the importance of supporting youth development.



Teachers

- Reinvent yourself and your approach to teaching and learning annually (if not daily).
- Treat every child as if they were your child—unique and precious and promising regardless of strengths, weaknesses, capacity or personality.
- Recommit to regular and meaningful communication with students and parents.
- Plan parent/teacher conferences in a way that will align student, parent and teacher goals.
- Engage the larger community in providing exceptional opportunities for learners.
- Provide clear expectations to students and parents.
- Let government and civic leaders know what your students are doing in the classroom.

Communities

- Find positive ways to involve businesses in student learning and experiences (classroom presentations, company tours, mentorships, shadowing, etc.).
- Engage faith communities, businesses, athletic organizations, and civic organizations in educational themes.
- Establish meaningful volunteer/service opportunities for students.
- Recognize students for hard work, progress, leadership, civic contributions, and positive behaviors.
- Create a community culture that emphasizes the importance of learning (posters, cable and newspaper spots, recognition events, free opportunities for learners, group quiet time study spaces, mentorships, internships, shadowing events, etc.).
- Let government leaders know the value of high quality schools in your community.
- Establish and publicize the school/district mission, vision and goals.
- Establish high expectations for staff and learners, and monitor outcomes.
- Involve others in all appropriate aspects of your school(s).
- Seek feedback about your schools, your staff, and your role as an educational leader.
- Establish a trusting relationship with school boards and councils, local government, the media, civic groups, and legislators.

Fall Forward ...
Continued on Page 19



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DESIGN THINKING...

Design Thinking - Unleashing its Potential to Create Environments that Cultivate Innovation



Judith P. Hoskens
REFP; LEED AP

Recently, MASA and CEFPI have partnered to offer some great workshops on leveraging a Design Thinking approach to foster Innovation in support of learning in a Global Knowledge Economy, but what does it mean for our physical learning environments? Why in fact do so many of our learning spaces look like those from fifty years ago when the world for which we are preparing our learners has so radically changed? And if collaboration, interdisciplinary problem solving,

communication and curiosity are critical for success in the future, then how might we unleash the potential of Design Thinking to create the kinds of experiences and environments that foster these attributes?

In Review: What is it? Why is it important?

Design Thinking is really a mindset that firmly believes in the collective, creative capabilities of a diverse team of individuals to find new and unique solutions to complex challenges. It exhibits empathy; it's collaborative; it's optimistic and it relies heavily on experimentation and iteration. Remember the "Fail often to Fail Better" quote from Tim Brown? And remember how we discussed the urgency to model this approach ourselves with our co-workers and with our communities to create the kind of culture that embraces experimentation to allow our Learners to safely follow suit?

I was struck by the relevance of these conversations with two articles that appeared in the August 4th issue of the StarTribune. One was about Target and their application of innovation from the inside out wherein Beth Jacob, Target's Executive Vice President and Chief Information Officer is quoted as saying: "Innovation is Everyone's Day Job" and in an article about the University of Minnesota's implementation of "Informatics", an emerging field that relies on the collaboration of doctors, mathematicians, programmers and other professionals to sift through huge quantities of medical data to diagnose, understand and cure diseases. In each situation, the significance of leveraging the same characteristics inherent in a Design Thinking approach was critical to realizing their innovations. And as we work to bring relevance to our learners' education to prepare them for these types of jobs, then instilling the attributes of collaboration, creativity, innovation, problem solving, communication, resilience, and citizenship become paramount to their success.



How do we create an Environment that Fosters Innovation?

According to Tim Brown, there are two primary aspects to creating a culture of innovation: social and spatial. In his book *Change By Design*, he states that the prerequisite is an environment – in which people know they can experiment, take risks, and explore the full range of their faculties." We know that learning is all about risk-taking. Creating a culture that encourages experimentation is vital to our learners' success.

But just as important is the role the physical environment can play in supporting creativity and innovation. Tim Brown refers to these as: inspiration, ideation and implementation and each requires different kinds of spaces. It no longer is a "One size fits all approach". Rather what is needed is a range of different scaled spaces to support a range of learning activities, from quiet reflection time – to the frenetic activities of creating lots of ideas – to the spaces necessary to allow the fabrication of these ideas – to places that celebrate the learners' accomplishments. Flexibility and agility are key for spontaneous ideation to occur. The cartoon *Dilbert* suggests that "regulation-size spaces produce regulation-size ideas". Rather, what follows below are the attributes of the physical space necessary to support a Design Thinking approach:

- Variety of different scaled spaces to support different sized groups for collaboration
- Range of spaces that support the full range of Design Thinking activities from Nooks for quiet times for reflection to enclosed Group rooms for the more noisy activities of ideation and prototyping
- Lots of useable wall surfaces to support the ideation phase—remember how we had 3-M stickies plastered over the walls of the Guthrie at the UnConference?

Design Thinking...
Continued on Page 19

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Design Thinking...

Continued from page 18

"Design Thinking is really a mindset that firmly believes in the collective, creative capabilities of a diverse team of individuals to find new and unique solutions to complex challenges."

- Learning Labs for messy, hands-on project based activities with a range of resources i.e.: water, storage and supplies and with enough space to safely store projects when they are not being worked on. One of the best models I can think of is the d.school at Stanford University; reference: dschool.stanford.edu
- Transparency to honor all the fabulous learning taking place
- Display and inquiry areas distributed around the school to celebrate learning
- Staff planning and collaboration spaces so they can model these attributes for the Learners
- Inviting and welcoming places for learners, parents, staff, and the entire community.

It definitely is not school as usual, but then the world that we are preparing our Learners to enter has radically changed. Instilling a spirit of innovation and creativity are necessary attributes and creating environments that support a culture of innovation both philosophically and physically is critical if we are going to successfully prepare them for this Innovation Economy.

Fall Forward ...

Continued from page 15

- Genuinely appreciate school board members and the value of the varied perspectives they bring to the table.
- Share information with stakeholders in a timely and accurate manner, personally and through media and technology.

Yes, summer is over and fall is here, as are new opportunities for renewed vigor and commitment. It is a time for improved leadership, instruction and learning; a time to lead a partnership of your school(s) and communities into an historic fall forward.

Coming Soon!

**Registration materials for the
2013 Curriculum Leaders
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Welcome Back...

A Message from Commissioner Cassellius



Brenda Cassellius
Minnesota Commissioner
of Education

Welcome back to a new school year! This one will feel just a bit lighter I hope. The 2013 legislative session was a start to making good on our promise of a uniform system of public schools. Although there is still much to do, we took a huge leap forward in setting the stage for fairer and better funding for our schools and policies that make sense for teaching and learning.

We will be staying the course for a while with the passage of our new social studies standards,

the implementation and first year administration of the ELA common core and our third year implantation of Minnesota's math standards.

Hopefully, with the new funding, policy reforms, and the adopted standards, we can settle in and get focused on what works for kids to finally work to eliminate the disparities in achievement and outcomes that exist among our Minnesota students. No one likes to be at the bottom of any list, much less a list that repeatedly shows our underachievement of Indian students, students of color, poor kids, and students with disabilities. Collectively we can beat this reality, but it will have to be done student-by-student, classroom-by-classroom, school-by-school, and district-by-district. There's just no way around it. No silver bullets. It is doable if we work together and take personal responsibility to ensure every single student succeeds and no child falls through the cracks.

I am convinced after 24 years at this work that it is personal, but also collective and that is the crux of leadership. As the leader you set the vision, goals and strategy, but you enlist your team in showing up and giving their best every day—their best thinking, their best effort and their best selves. That only happens when they feel inspired, supported and personally responsible.

The best accountability comes from personal responsibility as a leader in your district. Intrinsicly everyone on the team does their best because they don't want to let students down, you down, but most importantly, they don't want to let themselves down. New ideas grow out of not wanting to fail and not allowing others to fail. If the work is hard, it requires multiple solutions and strategies, which requires new thinking and opportunities. You only get those in a healthy, respectful working environment where ideas are expected, celebrated, and forgiven when they fall short. That takes a lot of patience and trust from the leader. It also means giving up control and allowing innovation to seed, grow and take root. Those leaders who daily feed and nurture these seeds of innovation and new ideas will also gain the respect and trust of their team and ultimately have

"... It will have to be done student-by-student, classroom-by-classroom, school-by-school, and district-by-district."

a rich culture in which not just the children thrive, but the adults do too.

I wish you the best school year ever and believe in each of you to turn this tide. If we all do our part with our students and our teachers...I know we can close our state's achievement gaps. If we all take personal responsibility for every student in our schools, Minnesota will once again be a nation leader.

It's not too tough. You know what to do. We just need to be disciplined and do it.

Make it a year to remember,
Brenda

Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) and Springsted Incorporated Presents...

SCHOOL FINANCE ELECTIONS A COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING MODEL FOR SUCCESS

School Finance Elections: A Comprehensive Planning Model for Success is a workshop based on the book of the same title authored by our presenters. The workshop's content represents a marriage of research and successful practice, emphasizing systems and strategies rather than specific campaign tactics and allowing school leaders to elevate their thinking to a more comprehensive and long-range vision of election planning.

This workshop will be beneficial to school districts planning an initial operating, bond or technology referendum, or to those coming back for another try after a lost election. It will also feature invaluable strategies in preparing for and conducting a school finance election.

WORKSHOP INFORMATION:
Monday, November 18, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Venue at Cray Plaza (formerly Galtier)
380 Jackson Street, Third Floor
Saint Paul, MN 55101

More information and online registration is available on the MASA website: www.mnasa.org.

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News from the Field...

MDE EDTalks Snapshots



During the 2013 MDE Back-to-School Conference, each of the MASA regions and our partner MASE provided a 15 minute EDTalk sessions. The EDTalks were modeled after the popular TED talks, and featured innovative programs or practices that are enhancing student success throughout the state. Just in case you missed it, we have shared a short snapshot of each presentation. More information and presentation handouts are available in the Library on the MASA website.

Collaborative Arrangements Between School Districts and Higher Education for Dual Credit Programming

Region 1 superintendents Steve Sallee and John McDonald, presented their partnership with Riverland Community College to offer in-house associate degrees to their high school students. The district even built student lounges within their buildings so students can experience a college campus setting! They also explained how the Southeast region is using Interactive TV to offer several classes that would normally not be offered.

Connecting the Dots: Students • Learning • Standards

Region 2 presenters John R Cselovzski, Nancy Moore and Kevin Schneider explained the district's process of developing quality curriculum guides that will provide direction for teaching and diminish the reliance on textbooks using a Wiki portal. The Wiki portal is a cost-effective tool that allows the curriculum development teams to collaborate, teachers to share curriculum plans, and modifications to be made based on analysis.

The Next Generation Classroom

Region 3 Superintendent Clint Willert shared a kindergarten classroom created for 21st century students. The classroom featured flexible seating, interactive technology and a personalized learning approach that allowed students the ability to create a learning environment that meets their needs. Mathematics and reading results improved from the previous year!

Communication Tips for the Superintendent

Region 4 superintendent Jerry Ness used Prezi software to share tips on communicating with district staff, school boards and the community. He encouraged school districts to make it a priority to "toot their own horn" by blocking out time to write, using Google Docs for evaluations and Bloggerspot to feed the district website and social media accounts.

Innovative Teacher Instruction, Beginning with New Teachers

Region 5 representatives Meg Litts and Rynell Schock showcased the Mentorship/Peer Coaching Academy at NJPA. Through the Academy, participating districts develop a positive, collaborative climate where educators seek the advice of their peers, while drawing on education research and scholarship to improve instructional practice. To learn more about the program visit, www.njpacoop.org

Social Media Supports Social Learning

Presenting via YouTube, region 6 superintendent Darrin Strosahl shared his district's experience while developing a social media campaign. He explained that social media posts should fall into three areas: educate/inform, share achievements, and social. The use of social media has doubled the district's website traffic, increased their community education course online registration and allowed the district to address student and community member questions. Watch Darrin's video on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/nh-NBkfXa7c>

EDTalks...
Continued on Page 23

Silos to Systems - a New Vision for Instruction in Minnesota

MASE President-Elect Cheryl Johnson shared the conversation the MASE and MASA Boards had during their June retreats regarding how both organizations can collaborate to take down the silos of leadership practice in the interest of building strong, effective systems of instruction that support the success of all students. We need to work to shift our thinking from which students need help to what help does each student need to develop a system with intentional design based on services and resources needed. MASE and MASA members will be encouraged to join this conversation throughout this year's conference programming.

Opportunity: Hear it Knocking Before it Does

Region 8 representatives Laine Larson and Tim Vagle discussed Thief River Falls Public Schools' 1:1 journey for grades K-12. Because the district had prepared for the unthinkable, this program will be funded for 12 years at \$0 additional cost to the general fund!

Innovation Zone Ahead

MASA President Jay Haugen told the story behind the Farmington and Spring Lake Park district partnership to become one of the state's new Innovation Zones. Their innovation zone will focus on using new approaches to online education and personalized learning. Both districts recognize that without fundamental systems change, the system will snuff out innovation. Google "Innovate 192:16" to watch A *New Design for Education*.

Written by Aimee Ranallo
MASA

2013 MDE Back-to-School Conference Scrapbook



Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton stopped in for a Q&A with conference participants.



The award-winning 728 Cadets marching band kicked-off the conference with a great performance!



Keynote speaker Yong Zhao met with MASA's Great Start Cohort participants for a small group discussion.



Check out MASA's facebook page for more pics from the conference. Type MASA-Minnesota Association of School Administrators in the search box.

Calendar of Events...

2013...

September

30
mi.Lc Leadership Summit 7
St. Paul River Centre, St. Paul

October

1
mi.Lc Leadership Summit 7
St. Paul River Centre, St. Paul

3-4
CAREI Teens & Sleep Conference
Doubletree, Minneapolis

5-6
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
Canal Park Lodge, Duluth

6
MASA Foundation Golf Tournament
Enger Park Golf Course, Duluth

6
Great Start Cohort Session 2
Hampton Inn - Canal Park, Duluth

6-8
MASA Fall Conference
DECC, Duluth

November

13
Great Start Cohort Session 3
Cragun's, Brainerd

13-15
CLM Fall Conference
Cragun's, Brainerd

18
Springsted's School Finance Elections
Venue at Cray Plaza, St. Paul

December

3
MASA Legislative Summit
TIES Grand Hall, St. Paul

4
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

25 - 27
MASA Offices Closed

2014...

January

1
MASA Offices Closed

15
Great Start Cohort Session 4
MASA Offices, St. Paul

16-17
MSBA Conference
Minneapolis

February

13-15
AASA National Convention
Nashville, TN

March

12
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
Marriott, Brooklyn Park

12
Great Start Cohort Session 5
Minneapolis

13-14
MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Marriott, Brooklyn Park

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