

Leaders FORUM

Spring 2014

There is COMMON GROUND

"We must engage all interested parties to truly have a rich conversation about the future of education in Minnesota. Let's focus on where we can find common agreement on the issues."



Gary Amoroso
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of
School Administrators

On February 6th I attended the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Education Summit 2014. The first keynote speaker was Michelle Rhee, former Chancellor of the Washington D. C. Public Schools and founder and CEO

of StudentsFirst. She stated that in order to improve the achievement of our students in this country we must focus on three things:

- Honoring and Respecting Teachers
- Recapturing the American Competitive Spirit
- Taking Politics Out of Education

I found myself agreeing with these concepts. Though I know that there are parts of the StudentsFirst agenda that we might not agree with, it was important for me to be reminded that there is some common ground when it comes to education issues.

Former Mayor of Minneapolis, R.T. Ryback, executive director of Generation Next, stated that we must use data to drive our decisions.

The data will assist us in determining what strategies can be effective in closing the achievement gap. He felt that all students must master reading by 3rd grade and algebra by 8th grade. Again, I found myself agreeing with these concepts.

The final keynote speaker was Kati Haycock, president of The Education Trust. One of her main themes was that all of us care about the achievement of our students. We must find a way to focus on what we can agree upon and not on what we cannot. Once again, I agreed with that sentiment.

I believe that at times we allow the title of an organization to determine how we view that organization and the individuals associated with it. We must take the time to interact and have thoughtful conversations to truly understand the perspectives of others. I know that we will not always agree, but by engaging in thoughtful and purposeful dialogue we will gain a better understanding of where people are coming from.

Minnevate will allow us to have these conversations. We must engage all interested parties to truly have a rich conversation about the future of education in Minnesota. Let's focus on where we can find common agreement on the issues. The relationships

Common Ground...
Continued on Page 7

INVOLVE

What's Inside...

- 2 **President's Perspective**
Local Control
- 3 **Spring Conference**
- 4 **District Involvement**
Distance Makes a District's Work Stronger
- 6 **Community Involvement**
NCRC and Career Counseling Piloted in Brainerd
- 8 **Community Involvement**
Social Media is Integral Part of District's Communication Plan
- 10 **Association Involvement**
Minnevate! Continues...
- 12 **Legal Issues**
Searching Student Cell Phones
- 14 **Point of View**
A Long Horn Must be Honked Often
- 16 **Technology News**
New Tool Increases Parent Engagement
- 18 **eEducation**
SW-PBIS Partners with Infinitec
- 19 **Capitol Report**
2014 "Un-session" Begins
- 20 **Calendar of Events**



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Local Control



Jay Haugen
MASA President and
Superintendent
Farmington Area Schools

I recently had the honor of speaking to a large crowd of Minnesota policy-makers who were sitting at tables with school board members and superintendents from across the area. I was reflecting on the upcoming legislative session,

and many legislative sessions to come, trying to change one aspect of the conversation we have as school districts and educational organizations with our legislators. We tend to drift from item to item, addressing legislative initiatives as they come up, or proposing initiatives of our own. I proposed an over-all picture of how policy-makers can support us, and have their hopes and dreams for us and the students we serve realized. That theory is local control.

Local control is usually talked about as an ideal, as a right, as a way to get decisions made closer to the action. While all true, there is a deeper reason for local control, it is the only thing that really works. It goes like this.

There is a limited number of things any of us can do to increase engagement and direction in any organizational system. We can clarify what we are after, provide inspiration through why, and provide support in terms of resources, information, and coaching, (clarify, inspire, support). This all serves to increase true accountability in a system.

There are many things we can do to destroy accountability, most of them include telling people what to do and how to do it. This allows a system to “wash their hands” of the ultimate result because we all just “did what we were told,” so “it is not our fault,” and all we really need to do is “comply.”

The hopes and dreams of our policy-makers tend to align pretty closely to our own. With so many after the same thing (closing the achievement gap and providing a system of education where every student finds success and is college and career ready) why does the system make so little progress, incremental at best?

To develop strong, response systems that actually accomplish their intent, policy-makers need to give us clear, compelling direction, state what we are after, why we are after it, provide reasonable support, and then leave us to create what we do and how we do it, holding us accountable for the ultimate result.

We are constantly given well-meaning legislation, heavy on compliance “accountability,” which is actually not accountability, and low on providing support. Often the heart of the legislation provides strong, positive direction that could inspire us and move us forward, but instead, much of the good is overshadowed by telling us what to do and how to do it, asking for compliance instead of our heart.

There is something about humans that makes us love to tell others what to do. There is also something about humans where we do not want to be told what to do, but we can be inspired, we can achieve greatly, if we clearly know what we are after and why, and are given support. Human systems, such as our educational system, are just the same. I know it feels like local control will be leaving things to chance, but a deep understanding of human systems and true accountability can help us understand why telling people what to do and how to do it is doomed to failure. The only way our policy-makers will ever have their hopes and dreams reached, and true progress made, is when you have a systems heart and it knows where to go and has the support it needs.

And so I have a request of everyone who reads this. In all of your interactions with policy-makers, MDE staff, federal staff, colleagues, really anyone with whom you have this conversation, don't let them get away with mislabeling a compliance measure by calling it accountability. If the purpose of a given measure is to make sure we are doing a certain thing, a certain number of times, involving certain groups of people, etc., this is compliance not accountability. True accountability is about the ultimate result and what we are after in the end. These types of accountability measures are rare but powerful. They should be the basis of everything we do, the basis of good legislation, and frankly of our own work as school leaders.

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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@mnasa.org.



The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) &
The Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) presents...

2014 MASA/MASE Spring Conference

innovate
inspire
involve

Join your MASA and MASE colleagues 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...

March 13 - 14, 2014

Minneapolis Marriott Northwest, Brooklyn Park

Conference Highlights!

There's an app for this! Once again our spring conference is going green and will be using a conference app. This app features a complete conference schedule with general session & breakout session details, handouts, participant list, maps, exhibitor information, conference event reminders and more to allow participants to create their own professional development experience.

Don't miss the Tech Cafe. MASA's partner TIES will host a multipurpose area that will include presentations, displays, and hands-on opportunities for exploring technology resources, best practices and emerging technology.

New this year! Retirees - join us for the **Retiree's Breakfast**, Thursday, from 7 - 8:30 am. Hosted by MASA Board of Director's Retiree Representative Mary Ann Nelson, the breakfast is a chance to visit with old friends and get an update on association news. All retirees are welcome but you must register to attend!

Our **Exhibit Fair** is a great way to visit with representatives of companies offering the latest products and services. You don't want to miss your chance to win the door prize - ASUS Transformer Book, 2-in-1 laptop and tablet!

Don't forget to shop the Silent Auction. Profits support the programs of the MASA Foundation. And, it's not too late to make your own donation to the auction!

Throughout the conference, we will celebrate the accomplishments of your colleagues. Congratulations to our award recipients!

Meet Our Keynote Speakers



Alan Coulter has a passion for data around student performance and a commitment to support administrators in the use of those data. Join us for Thursday's general session entitled, *Success in Instructional Leadership: What does the research SAY, and what do practitioners DO?*



Valerie Greenhill will explore *The Role of Leaders in 21st Century Education*. Our Friday general session will include the latest ideas in leadership and teambuilding and a workshop-style session where participants can reflect on their own practice and go home with ideas for implementation in their own setting.

Schedule At-a-Glance

Thursday, March 13

(Registration open 7 am - 4:30 pm)

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 7:30 - 8:30 am | • Retiree Breakfast |
| 8:30 - 10:30 am | • Awards & Keynote: W. Alan Coulter |
| 10:30 am - 5:30 pm | • Exhibits Open |
| 11 am - 12 pm | • Breakout Sessions I |
| 12 - 1:30 pm | • Lunch & Dessert Reception |
| 1:30 - 2:30 pm | • Breakout Sessions II |
| 3 - 3:30 pm | • Exhibit Hall Break & Drawings |
| 3 - 4 pm | • Breakout Sessions III |
| 4 - 5:30 pm | • Reception |

Friday, March 12

(Registration open 8 - 11 am)

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 8:30 - 10:30 am | • Awards & Keynote Part 1: Valerie Greenhill |
| 10:30 - 10:45 am | • Break |
| 10:45 am - 12 pm | • Awards & Keynote Part 2: Valerie Greenhill |

Distance Makes a District's Work Stronger

Executive Director Reggie Engebritson shares her secrets to collaborative leadership for a district that covers 5,000 miles...



Reggie Engebritson
Executive Director
Northland Special Education
Cooperative

"Working collaboratively and involving districts from within and outside the cooperative has been a fun and rewarding experience."

I joined with members of my board to create some powerful learning opportunities for all licensed staff. My board consists of the superintendents for the ten other districts we serve, besides mine. This is a huge geographic region of the state with hours, not minutes, between districts. Our board meets once a month. While we take care of business, we also manage to have some laughs. We work well together and can freely share opinions and ideas.

Last spring, seven superintendents and I decided to offer the very first regional staff development day to the licensed staff in our districts. We surveyed staff for topics of interest and found that technology, student behavior and strategies for reading and math were the top vote getters. We spent the summer planning a "Back-to-School" workshop that we hoped would knock their socks off. Our objective was to make them "think, laugh and cry," because we figured that would make it memorable. We reached out to both the school and general community to find people willing to present on a topic for 45 minutes. The response was

I am having a great year. I am the executive director of a school district. I am also the director of special education for eleven school districts in northeastern Minnesota. Our special education cooperative covers approximately 5,000 square miles. Because of the large distance between districts, I have had to think of different ways to keep in touch and involve the special education staff within those districts. A little over two years ago, I started a video blog. I use this blog to create short, five minute videos on different topics in special education. Then I email the link out to all staff. Special education coordinators, supervisors and principals have used them for additional training for both special and general education teachers.

Besides finding ways to reach special education staff, this year

incredible. We had social workers, police officers, college instructors, mental health professionals, teachers and agency providers speak on a variety of topics. We created an online registration site where teachers could choose four different break-out sessions to attend, out of 100-plus possible options. We had a speaker to kick off the day and a motivational speaker to end the day. On August 28, 2013, we had our first Professional Development Summit (PDS) for 600 licensed staff. It was an incredible day and the responses from our follow-up survey showed that we had hit a home run. Teachers DID think, laugh and cry.

In late August, we decided to hire a consultant as we created a Regional Teacher Evaluation Project (RTEP). This project was to look at a teacher evaluation model before the law goes into effect July 1, 2014. We brought together two teachers and one principal from twelve districts across the region to create a Work Group. This Work Group was charged with recommending a regional teacher evaluation model. They had three months to work on this and report back to my board. They were able to create a modified-MDE model, using the Charlotte Danielson framework.

From this work, we planned and implemented a second PDS day, this past January, to introduce the basics regarding the Danielson framework. Teachers were able to cross their district boundary lines and meet new colleagues and share ideas, under the same roof. It was a successful day and teachers are asking for more.

Working collaboratively and involving districts within and outside the cooperative has been a fun and rewarding experience. I'm not just reaching special education staff. WE are reaching EVERY EDUCATION staff. I don't think I'll ever forget how exhausted, yet exhilarated, I felt after our first PDS day ended, last August. The text messages were flying between me and the seven superintendents, as we gave each other virtual pats on the back and high fives for putting on such a powerful day. You wouldn't know that many miles separate our districts from each other. That day we were one. That momentum has carried us forward as we continue to involve districts and share regional resources to plan for the future.



THE REAL GROUND WAS BROKEN AFTER CONSTRUCTION.

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

NCRC and Career Counseling Piloted in Brainerd

"I looked at this new ACT and corresponding certificate as a potential 'currency' for future job seekers; our team saw it as a possible gift to students who struggle most to advocate for themselves in an increasingly competitive employment market."



Steve Razidlo
Superintendent
Brainerd Public Schools

Three years ago Brainerd High School began a pilot program with the help of the Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (RMCEP), the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce, and the Central Minnesota Initiative Foundation. Our hope was to offer seniors at Brainerd High School more help and assistance in identifying a future path and a skill set for constructive employment. In our first year we targeted students whose plans were either vague

or non-existent. We served 57 at-risk seniors with new employment readiness tools and specific workplace guidance from a career counselor. Funding for our pilot in the second and third years has been augmented by a significant grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation.

From the outset of our effort we looked to build awareness of the new Career Readiness ACT, Work Keys. Work Keys assessments include two reading and one mathematics test that students complete via computer in a few hours. Like other ACT products, Work Keys tests for skills and aptitudes common to literally thousands of potential occupations. Work Keys participants are able to earn a bronze, silver, gold, or platinum certificate called the National Career Readiness Certificate, or NCRC. Certificate levels are then matched with the entrance level skills of literally thousands of possible careers.

As a former principal of Brainerd High School, I looked at this new ACT and corresponding certificate as a potential 'currency' for future job seekers; our team saw it as a possible gift to students who struggle most to advocate for themselves in an increasingly competitive employment market. With help from our RMCEP partners we then built a pilot program of career counseling/contact through existing high school classrooms and through our Career Center. In the first year of this work, 57 seniors (12% of the graduating class) earned an NCRC certificate-many earning the gold. It is important to note that in our first year those who took the Work Keys tests and earned the NCRC had not taken any other college entrance exam. It was a great victory to have a new group of seniors re-engage in their own career planning.

How can the NCRC act as currency in current labor markets? Across the country major employers have instituted hiring and or credentialing processes which

provide advantage to anyone with an NCRC certificate. In central Minnesota, our RMCEP office maintains a list of over 100 employers who look favorably upon applicants who have earned the NCRC. For our seniors, the ease of taking three relatively brief tests has also become a motivator to look again at their own skill levels while not feeling as 'beaten up' as they sometimes feel after the MCA. For many of these students, taking the Work Keys assessments has provided a counselor or a teacher the avenue to assist skills development through the accompanying remedial helps in reading and math. We have experienced the gift of a few students passing MCA's and then going on to higher education after the Work Keys tests showed them their skills were better than they believed. Now in statute, Work Keys exists as an alternative to the traditional ACT for some of our students.

We have embedded the expectation of Work Keys into most of the Career and Technical course offerings at Brainerd High School, opening the door for our career counselor to work with an expanded pool of students. Career counselors have different training than guidance counselors, and our pilot has informed what guidance counselors will do with students in the future as we prepare to meet new mandates for World's Best Workforce.

The work of quality post-secondary planning can be made easier for many students through Work Keys; 83 students at Brainerd High School have earned an NCRC at the midpoint of this year even while they are meeting other regular requirements. From the use of this tool and the inclusion of specialized career counseling, the career readiness conversations at Brainerd High School have been significantly enhanced.

Beyond the easy moral imperative of helping students look realistically at a future career, all of our schools are now compelled to more fully plan for college AND career readiness. Work Keys, NCRC, and career counseling have helped move our work toward the new mandate in ways we feel are relevant and important to students whose futures cannot be underserved.



Common Ground... Continued from Cover

find common agreement on the issues. The relationships that will be built and strengthened will serve all of us in the future.

Most of the regional Minnevote sessions have been scheduled. I hope that you can take time out of your very busy schedules to become involved in this conversation.

Best wishes for a successful last quarter of the school year. As always, please contact me at (651) 319-1211, if I can be of service.

Watch Your Email for Election Ballots!

This year's elections will again be conducted electronically.

Electronic ballots will be emailed during the week of March 17th. Be sure to watch your email for your login information and voting instructions.

Ballots need to be completed by Monday, April 14th.



MASA Foundation Grants Available!

The MASA Foundation will provide up to 10 grants to members this year for

professional development experiences that you would not be able to access through your district or that are unique learning opportunities. Grants can range from \$500-\$750. To apply, simply submit a one page summary of your intended experience and either mail or fax it to the MASA offices (651-645-7518) or email Gary Amoroso (gamoroso@mnasa.org), and the Foundation Grant Committee will consider it in a timely manner.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MDE Back-to-School Superintendent's Conference

August 5 - 6, 2014
Minneapolis Marriott Northwest, Brooklyn Park



Congratulations!

Arne Carlson,
2014 MASA
Distinguished
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Recipient

Deb Henton,
2014 MASA Kay E
Jacobs Memorial
Award Recipient

Barb Knudsen & Jeremy Kovash,
2014 MASA Outstanding Central Office
Leader Award Recipients

2014 Regional Administrators of
Excellence Recipients:

Region 1, **Steve Sallee**
Region 2, **John Cselovszki**
Region 3, **Jerry Kjergaard**
Region 4, **Doug Froke**
Region 5, **Steve Razidlo**
Region 6, **Steve Dooley**
Region 7, **Deborah Hilde**
Region 8, **Norm Baumgarn**
Region 9, **Dennis Carlson**

All of these individuals represent the leadership excellence found in MASA members: the willingness to risk, strong communication skills, a progressive change agent with high expectations for self and others, and their strong advocacy for Minnesota's children.

All of the above recipients will be honored at the 2014 MASA/MASE Spring Conference.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Social Media is Integral Part of District's Communications Plan



Carissa Keister
Community Engagement
Coordinator
Stillwater Area Schools

In an effort to go to where the people were, Stillwater Area Public Schools took the plunge into social media in August 2009 by launching Facebook and Twitter pages. Our goal was to engage parents and the community in an informal, two-way conversation. In the years that have followed, social media has allowed the district to connect with stakeholders in a more personal, timely, and cost-effective way – making it an important element of our communications plan.

The Facebook page originally launched to a small following. The district hovered around 400 “likes” until April 2010 when communications staff members from the Stillwater and Mounds View school districts organized a friendly competition to see which district could garner the most Facebook “likes.” The contest boosted Stillwater page to more than 1,600 followers. Since then we’ve continued to

grow our social media presence, reaching more than 4,300 “likes” as of early 2014 and nearly 2,000 Twitter followers. We’ve also added three Community Education Facebook pages as well as a Pony alumni page.



Conversations are taking place every day on social media and followers are actively involved with our school community. Through the analytics functions within these tools we are able to track our followers and identify what information they are most interested in. In the past few months one of our most popular posts was about high school student athletes who signed early with NCAA teams. That post had a reach of 3,100 users, and 768 of those people commented or shared the post with others. Using this information, we can anticipate that similar posts will be well received by our followers. We also saw a significant increase (more than 150 likes in one week) during the period of very cold weather in January, and could tell that most of these came from parents and students. Clearly they recognized our Facebook page would be one of the first places we’d announce a school closure and they wanted to be among the first to know.

Social media is a great way for us to provide real-time updates on important things happening in the district. We’re able to post photos and videos of our students and staff engaged in activities, which give our followers a “peek” into a school day. This type of post has high viewer counts and likes. Our Facebook and Twitter posts are aligned and often complement each other. They both work to drive people to specific web pages or online photo albums. We also post teasers with links to newsletter articles that have already been published to drive more traffic to our website.

The time that we invest into maintaining our social media sites amounts to one to three hours each week - a very small investment when you consider the engagement of the community, parents and students we have received in return.

Find Stillwater Area Public Schools online:
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Objectives:
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ASSOCIATION INVOLVEMENT

Minnevate! The Conversation Continues...



John Moravec
Founder
Education Futures LLC

75 participants joined MASA as we launched Minnevate! on December 3, 2013 with an event that included conversations surrounding the opportunities for Minnesota's schools in the future, engaging key stakeholders to develop collective capacity around a common agenda, and collaborative opportunities to create positive futures for Minnesota's youth. Presenters included Minnesota Commissioner of Education Brenda Cassellius, Minnesota

Secretary of State Mark Ritchie, MASA Richard Green Scholar Aaron Ruhland, and Education Futures founder John Moravec.

Minnevate! is a dialogue process to build an action agenda for Minnesota educational leadership. Constituents from many stakeholder groups engaged in rich conversation, discussions focused on how we can come together and truly work as a state on behalf of every child, focusing on what we all can agree upon and not what we do not agree upon.

A frequent point that emerged in our discussion is that there is a leadership gap. *We do not have a common agenda among our organizations for education.* For MASA, this is a strategic opportunity that we aim to develop further through the Minnevate! project.

Participants expressed a concern that we are disconnected from each other as individual professionals and as organizations. As we set a common agenda, we need to keep in mind the desire for people to collaborate, share, and learn from others.

Perhaps most surprisingly, a theme emerged that calls on us to question or rethink our assumptions about education, students, and teachers. With the group present at the Minnevate! launch, the "business as usual" mentality was not evident. Rather, voices emerged that said it is "okay" to take risks and try new approaches – and to share what we have learned with others.

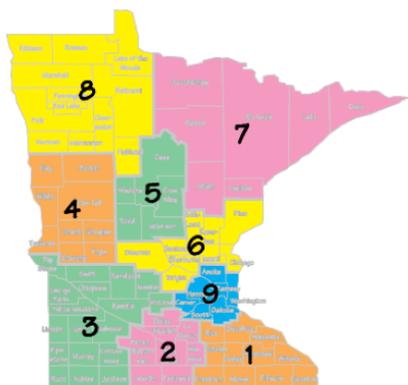
Whereas, as a society, we often "educationalize" our problems – that is, we blame education for many things that have gone wrong – our conversation was received as being unexpectedly positive. Tobias "Toby" Spanier wrote of his table's experience:

Participants thought it was a pleasant surprise to be talking about opportunities rather than challenges, since they indicated that this is the normal operating procedure. There was a recognition that self-interest is always at play when we approach any change in Minnesota schools. We have to be willing to have an open and honest discussion about what those changes mean to each of us personally and professionally.

But, during conversations around how all segments of our communities can best collaborate, many attitudes became skeptical: *Can we transcend self-interest and create a collective capacity for building positive futures for Minnesota's youth?*

Indeed, this is a challenge. As we continue the conversation this spring with regional Minnevate! groups, we will revisit this third question as our starting point: *Looking forward, how can we best collaborate and create positive futures for Minnesota's schools and youth?*

We are excited to continue the Minnevate! conversation with you and work to develop an action agenda for our future. The full calendar of meetings and archives of our collected resources are available online: minnevate.mnasa.org



- **Region 1: March 5, 2014**
Contact: **Suzanne Riley**, Southeast Service Cooperative
- **Region 2: April 24, 2014**
Contact: **Glenn Morris**, South Central Service Cooperative
- **Region 3: April 9, 2014**
Contact: **Shelly Maes**, SW/WC Service Cooperative
- **Region 4: May 13, 2014**
Contact: **Jeremy Kovash**, Lakes Country Service Cooperative
- **Region 5: May 14, 2014**
Contact: **Deb Cervantez**, National Joint Powers Alliance
- **Region 6: TBA**
- **Region 7: TBA**
- **Region 8: March 26, 2014**
Contact: **Bruce Jensen**, Northwest Service Cooperative
- **Region 9: April 29, 2014**
Contact: **Julie Frame**, Metropolitan Educational Service Unit



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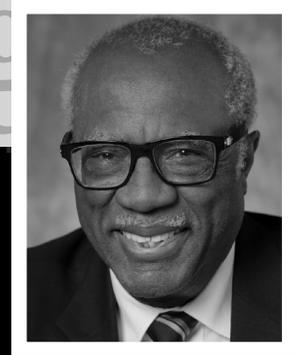
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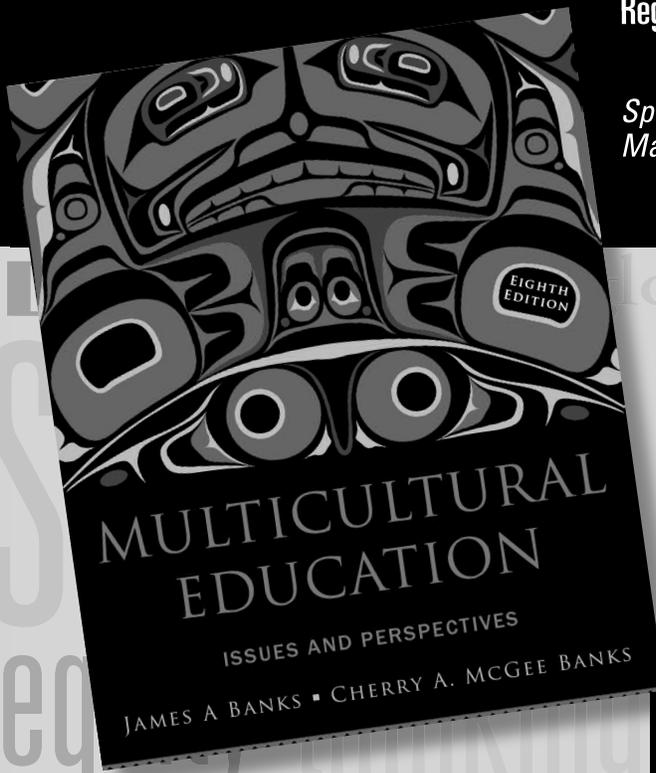
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LEGAL ISSUES...

Searching Student Cell Phones: Legitimate Inquiry or Illegal Invasion of Privacy

Schools beware. The violation of a school rule that justifies taking away a student's cell phone often is not a sufficient justification for reviewing a student's text or other private messages.



Greg Madsen
Education Law Attorney
Kennedy & Graven, Chartered

A troubled student with a disciplinary history is caught texting in class in violation of a school rule. Do you simply confiscate the cell phone, return it later, and impose a disciplinary consequence for the violation, or do you search the student's text messages to see if there is any evidence of other activity that violates school rules?

It has been well settled by the U.S. Supreme Court that conflicting tensions between a student's Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable search and seizure and a school's responsibility to keep students safe and educate them must be resolved by balancing the "schoolchild's legitimate expectation of privacy and the school's equally legitimate need to maintain an environment in which learning can take place." *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, 469 U.S. 325 (1985).

Consequently, a student search must be justified at its inception by "reasonable suspicion" the search will result in information connected with violation of a school rule, and must be reasonably related in scope to the circumstances justifying the search. Factors to be considered in judging the legitimacy of the search include: the student's age, history and school record; the seriousness and pervasiveness of underlying conduct; the urgency of the circumstances; and the reliability of the information on which the reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing is based.

Despite the seeming clarity of the Supreme Court's test, however, in recent years courts across the country have reached different conclusions about what circumstances justify searching the contents of a cell phone seized from a student.

In *Klump v. Nazareth Area School District*, 425 F. Supp.2d 622 (E.D. Pa. 2006), a Pennsylvania federal district court was presented with a case involving a search of a cell phone that had fallen out of a student's pocket in class. School policy

prohibited student "use or display" of cell phones during school hours. After the phone was taken from the student, a school official called other students listed in the seized phone's directory and reviewed the student's private text messages and voicemail. School officials eventually found evidence of drug activity on the phone. The student sued, claiming an illegal search.

Despite discovery of an incriminating text message on the phone, the Klump court upheld the student's challenge to the search, concluding that, for the purposes of a Fourth Amendment claim, the court must consider only that which the officials knew at the inception of the search: "the school officials did not see the allegedly drug-related text message until after they initiated the search of [the] cell phone. Accordingly, . . . there was no justification for the school officials to search [the] phone for evidence of drug activity." *Id.* at 640-41.

Although the school was justified in seizing the phone for violation of school policy, the court in Klump concluded the school was not justified in using the confiscated phone as a "tool to catch other students' violations," and denied the district's motion to dismiss the lawsuit.

In another case, a Mississippi school confiscated a cell phone used in class by a seventh grader to retrieve a text message in violation of a school rule. School officials and a police officer viewed photos stored on the phone, including a picture of the student holding a BB gun. The student claimed an illegal search under Fourth Amendment, but a Mississippi federal district court found no constitutional violation. The court held that, because the student "was caught using his cell phone at school," it was "reasonable for a school official to seek to determine to what end the student was improperly using that phone." *J.S. v. DeSoto School District*, 2010 WL 4394059 (N.D. Miss. 2010).

Last year, in *G.C. v. Owensboro Public Schools*, 711 F.3d 623 (6th Cir. 2013), the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (whose decisions are binding authority in the federal courts of Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee) was

Cell Phones...
Continued on Page 13

Cell Phones...

Continued from Page 12

asked to decide whether a Kentucky school had violated a student's Fourth Amendment rights when a school official viewed text messages on a student's cell phone that had been properly seized after the student violated school policy by texting in class.

After receiving the confiscated phone, the assistant principal read four text messages because the student previously had "talked about" suicide, had admitted to past drug use, and because she was concerned about the student's mental state and the possibility the student might harm himself or others.

However, the Owensboro court rejected the school district's justification for the search, holding that "general background knowledge of drug abuse or depressive tendencies, without more, [does not enable] a school official to search a student's cell phone when a search would otherwise be unwarranted." *Id.* at 633-34. The court concluded that the Fourth Amendment claim could continue because the school district had failed to demonstrate "how anything in this sequence of events indicated to them that a search of the phone would reveal evidence of criminal activity, impending contravention of additional school rules, or potential harm to anyone in the school." *Id.* at 634.

Schools beware. The violation of a school rule that justifies taking away a student's cell phone often is not a sufficient justification for reviewing a student's texts or other private messages. The scope of a Constitutionally-sound search must be tailored to the nature of the infraction and must be related to the objective of the search.



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Matt, 4th grade

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POINT OF VIEW

A Long Horn Must be Honked Often

Kate Maguire reflects on her year as the Minnesota Superintendent of the Year



Kate Maguire
2014 MN Superintendent of
the Year & Superintendent
Osseo Area Public Schools

When my kids were growing up, their grandpa (my dad) would take them jeeping in the woods of Northern Minnesota's Iron Range. The old jeep had no roof, windows, or doors but provided hours of summer fun in blueberry patches and on logging trails.

A long horn, like the vuvuzela that became popular during the World Cup Soccer Tournament in South Africa, was standard equipment on every jeep ride. As the jeeps prepared for each trek into the woods, my dad would hand the horn to the youngest rider and declare, "A long horn must be honked often."

The long horn served many purposes on those jeep rides. It was used to keep the youngest passengers in the back seat busy while my dad focused on driving lessons for the older kids in the front seat. The kids believed that the horn warned bears of their arrival, allowing the bears to flee into the woods with fear – which they thought was in the bear's best interest. The horn was also used in celebration of each child reaching various benchmarks in their jeeping apprenticeship – successful steering, shifting, clutching and finally, driving. Lastly, the horn was used to announce the homecoming and would be blown all the way down the long driveway to the cabin.

Good advice is always transferable to multiple situations, and the advice my dad gave to the "Junior Jeepers" years ago is applicable to us today. As educational leaders in Minnesota, we have much to share and to celebrate about the work we do each day to prepare our students for success. And, sometimes, we need to make noise about it.

The journey as 2014 Superintendent of the Year has allowed me to reflect on the work we're doing in Osseo Area Schools and to learn from other leaders across the country. Along the way, I am also taking advantage of every opportunity to honor Minnesota superintendent colleagues and to highlight



Pictured above: Dr. Maguire catches up with Park Center Senior High School students.

Pictured below: Dr. Maguire speaking during AASA's Minnesota State Breakfast in February.



the significance of their leadership to a thriving public school system.

In February, I attended the AASA National Conference in Nashville where the state superintendents of the year were recognized at the conference general session. I met superintendents from every state who shared the progressive work they're undertaking. Our own MASA staff and Minnesota colleagues were there to support me as I crossed the stage with leaders from other states. I was invited to address Minnesota superintendents as they gathered for breakfast on the last day of the conference.

Later this spring, I'll have the chance to speak to various other groups in Minnesota, including aspiring female educational leaders at the Women in Educational Leadership Symposium at St. Cloud State University. Since only 14% of Minnesota superintendents are female, this is a subject that I'm particularly passionate about. Next November, the state superintendents of the year

will gather in Washington, D.C for several events planned by AASA.

I believe that a thriving system of public schools is essential to the future of our democracy and that superintendents play a critical leadership role in ensuring effective schools. This journey has, perhaps most importantly, caused me to reflect on how much I appreciate other Minnesota leaders who continue to influence me and who have impacted my practice.

Leadership matters. And as you prepare for each trek you take as leaders into your organization's proverbial woods, remember that a long horn must be honked often.



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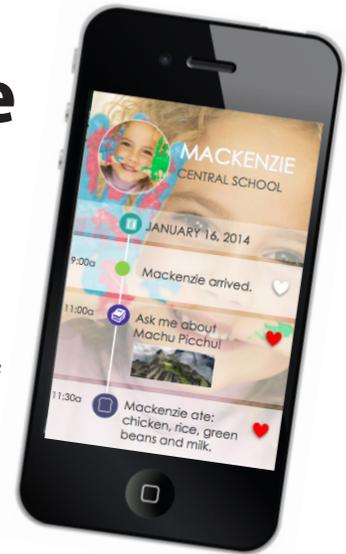
New Online Tool Can Increase Parent Engagement

How many apps do you have running on your phone right now? Social apps, news, sports, navigation, games? Each designed to update you throughout the day with must-have details that encourage your attention when you have a free minute. A Minneapolis-based company saw this fast growing technology as an opportunity to innovate parent-district communication.

PreciousStatus is a three-year-old Minnesota company and MASA business partner member, founded by former Best Buy executive Julie Gilbert Newrai.

This innovative education application allows parents to receive updates about their children throughout the school day. Teachers, coaches, nurses or administrators have the ability to send messages, photos or videos to one child's parents, selected children, or all the children's parents in the class. Completely customizable, the application can be used with a variety of devices (personal computers, tablets and smartphones) allowing district staff to communicate with parents in an efficient, effective manner.

As school districts across the nation continue to work towards closing the achievement gap, it's important to communicate with parents where their child may be excelling or struggling. The daily updates from this application can encourage parents to become active participants in their children's learning, and along with teachers and administrators, work together towards their student's educational success.



More information regarding this application is available at www.preciousstatus.com.

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Minnesota SW-PBIS North Region Partners With Infinitec to Host Training Videos

Winter is upon us and best laid plans are often deterred. Don't despair. New opportunities await you. The Minnesota SW-PBIS North region implementation project has produced five training videos to meet your needs. The videos are now available for all Minnesota schools on the MyInfinitec.org website <www.myinfinitec.org>. Infinitec membership is not required to view these videos. Navigate to the Online Classroom in the menu at the top of the screen. Then select the Behavior category from the Resource drop-down below the black flowplayer. The videos will be viewed in the flowplayer or can be viewed full-screen.

The presenters chosen for these videos include Cheryl Glad, PBIS Coordinator for St. Cloud, Minnesota area schools, Charlie Eisenreich, Principal for Apollo High School in St. Cloud, statewide presenter and lead trainer in the North region for new schools implementing PBIS and Steve Wagner, teacher at Apollo High School in St. Cloud.

Two videos are useful at the Tier 1 stage:

Tier 1 Individual Student

PBIS has 5 systems of support – school-wide, non-classroom, classroom, individual and families/community. This video explores the Tier 1 Individual Student systems of support for prevention, which is possible through the predictability provided by a common vision, common expectations and common language of PBIS.

Engaging Youth in PBIS Individual Student Tier 1

Engaging youth in PBIS is based on the focus of giving all youth the chance to form relationships with caring adults, building skills, exercising leadership and helping their communities. This video provides examples of engaging students at all age levels.

For Tier 2, this video is posted:

Managing Escalating Behaviors Individual Tier 2

The assumptions of PBIS include: behavior is learned and serves a function, behavior is lawful and serves a function, behavior is escalated through successive interactions or practice and behavior can be changed through an instructional approach. In this video you will understand how the behavior escalation cycle works, understand best practice and learn when we should intervene.

Tier 3 is addressed with this video:

Tier 3 and Function Based Assessments

A function based assessment (fba) is a process for identifying the events that reliably predict and maintain problem behavior. The fba leads teams to why a behavior is happening and the answer helps teams create effective interventions. This video describes the ABC approach when identifying undesirable behaviors and provides examples of problem behaviors for discussion.

Lastly, the topic of sustainability is addressed with this video:

SW-PBIS Sustainability

There are two key features of PBIS sustainability: a student behavior reinforcement plan and teaching behavior expectations. The strategies that support these two key features and contribute to sustaining a school-wide PBIS initiative are presented.



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**Questions? Contact Mary Bettlach
at mbettlach@ucpnet.org**

CAPITOL REPORT...

2014 "Un-session" Begins



Valerie Dosland
EWALD
MASA Lobbyist

The 2014 session, which began February 25, will be very short and intense. This year's timeline is much more compressed and those with interests at the Capitol have a much shorter timeline to accomplish their legislative priorities.

In December, we received more good news on the economic forecast -- a projected balance \$1.086 billion for this biennium. After the remaining K-12 school shift of \$246 million was paid in full, as current law required, and an additional \$15 million borrowed from the state airports fund is repaid, the remaining forecast balance is \$825 million.

While the November forecast is an indicator that the state's budget outlook is improving, these budget figures are projections and subject to change depending on the economy, tax collections and spending. Another report delivered to state officials in February is the baseline that legislators and Gov. Mark Dayton use to enact any spending or savings changes for the state during the 2014 Legislative Session.

With this good economic news, the Governor and the House DFL majority expressed their commitment to repealing the business-to-business taxes instituted last session as well as looking at middle income tax relief. The Senate DFL majority is very interested in beefing up the state rainy day funds.

As it relates to education, a number of policy issues will be addressed by the House and Senate education committees. Mandate reduction is always a popular topic and we expect discussion of a "un-session" bill from the Department of Education. The teacher evaluation requirement remains unfunded and legislative leaders have expressed a desire to look at ways to provide funding for school districts. We are also planning for continued discussion of the Safe and Supportive Schools legislation and are working to assure the legislation aligns with MASA's legislative priorities.

Thank you for your work and your efforts in the interim to connect with your elected officials on your ideas, efforts and concerns. Your work strengthens and helps us on daily basis as we navigate the process and advocate on your behalf.



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Calendar of Events...

2014

March

5
MASA Region 1 Minneveat Event
Southeast Service Cooperative

12
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
Marriott, Brooklyn Park

12
At Ruth's Table
Marriott, Brooklyn Park

12
Great Start Cohort Session 5
Marriott, Brooklyn Park

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

26
MASA Region 8 Minneveat Event
Northwest Service Cooperative

April

9
MASA Region 3 Minneveat Event
SW/WC Service Cooperative

24
MASA Region 2 Minneveat Event
South Central Service Cooperative

29
MASA Region 9 Minneveat Event
Metropolitan Educational Service Unit

May

13
MASA Region 4 Minneveat Event
Lakes Country Service Cooperative

14
MASA Region 5 Minneveat Event
National Joint Powers Alliance

June

19-20
MASA Board of Directors Retreat
Madden's Resort, Brainerd

August

5-6
MDE Back-to-School Conference
Marriott, Brooklyn Park

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