

Leaders FORUM

Spring 2016

Becoming a Radical Learner



Jeff Ronneberg
MASA President and
Superintendent
Spring Lake Park Schools

I had a moment of pause and reflection recently while reading a Seth Godin blog I had saved, where he challenged leaders by stating, “Our task, then, is to find people we can encourage and nurture until they’re as impatient with average as we are” (Godin, 2010).

John Maxwell, a well-known author on leadership, shares a related sentiment: “Average people do not want others to go beyond average” (Maxwell, 2004).

In our society, there often seems to be a push for people to fit in and strive for the middle. Jennifer York-Barr, a mentor of mine at the University of Minnesota, refers to this as “crab-bucket culture.” Crab buckets don’t need lids because as one crab attempts to escape, it is pulled down by the others. Too often, educators feel a need to hide their excellence, their innovative ideas, from colleagues. An aspiration for average is far too pervasive in our society and our schools.

Shifting this culture in schools requires educators who think creatively, identifying and implementing new ideas that have the potential to deepen student engagement and dramatically improve outcomes. It requires each educator to be a radical learner, working with leaders who are radical learners.

Jim Knight describes radical learners as “people who are driven by learning, who get up in the morning fired up to try something new, to make a difference, to teach and learn”

(Knight, 2010).

However, radical learners cannot flourish working in isolation. Ensuring the success of each of our students is a collective endeavor, at the state, district, school, and classroom level.

The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) recognizes the need for effective collaboration that aligns our efforts, within our association and across education associations in Minnesota, around improving student learning. MASA provides a place for each of us to find resources, support, and connections with like-minded educators. It allows a vehicle to connect, deepening our collective efforts to create the conditions in our schools, and throughout Minnesota, that will capitalize on the creativity of our teachers and staff to design innovative approaches that meet the unique needs, interests, and aspirations of our students.

Accomplishing excellence in schools, where students experience academic achievement while developing life skills such as self-direction, curiosity, and critical thinking, requires leaders who are radical learners, leading collaboration within their system and across systems. It requires leaders working collectively to create the conditions that will lead to each educator aspiring to be remarkable, supported in seeking new, innovative approaches to engage their students.

This can happen in each of our schools, and it starts with each of us overcoming the aspiration for average that is so pervasive in society. It starts with each of us being radical learners, working collectively each day to make a difference. We can – and must – create a system of schools throughout Minnesota that are learning from one another as we pursue,

Radical Learner continued on page 3.

What's Inside

- 3 **Executive View**
Building a “Happy” School Culture
- 4 **MASA/MASE Spring Conference Preview**
- 5 **MASA Foundation Spring Fundraiser**
- 7 **Courageous Conversations**
Student Aggression in Schools is on the Rise
- 8 **2016 Legislative Platform**
- 9 **Technology**
Technology Redefined
- 11 **Legal Issues**
Finding Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion
- 12 **Professional Assistance Team**
- 13 **Research To Practice**
What Are The Needs In Minnesota?
- 15 **MASA Elections**
President-Elect Candidates
- 16 **Reflective Practices**
Managing Your Own Annual Evaluation
- 17 **MASA Award Recipients**
- 18 **Best Practices**
The Basics of Good Board Behavior
- 20 **Reflective Leadership**
My Time as MN’s Superintendent of the Year
- 22 **Put Me In, Coach... Notes for Mentors**
Awareness Precedes Change
- 24 **Invest in MN**
Community and Political Engagement
- 26 **MASA Business Partners**
- 28 **Leaders Toolbox**
The Four Essential Roles of Effective District Leaders

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Building a “Happy” School Culture



Gary Amoroso
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of School Administrators

I had the opportunity to attend the 2016 AASA National Conference on Education in February. One of the keynote speakers reinforced for me the importance of creating a happy culture. Shawn Achor is a New York Times bestselling author of

“Before Happiness” (2013) and “The Happiness Advantage” (2010). He is considered one of the world’s leading experts on the connection between happiness and success.

According to Achor, research has proven that the human brain responds to the environment. He conducted a brief experiment where two people looked into each other’s eyes. One tried to show no emotion and one showed kindness and warmth. Within seven seconds most people were smiling. According to Achor this will occur 90% of the time. In essence a smile is truly contagious and can have a significant impact on the people within your district.

Achor stated that happiness has a positive impact on performance. He noted that “intelligence rises, creativity rises, and energy levels rise when you are happy.” He identified five daily habits that can improve your happiness and performance. They include: practicing gratitude, exercising for 30 minutes, practicing two minutes of meditation, journaling, and using praise. By practicing these habits you can become a happier person and you can truly become a role model for those with whom you interact with on a daily basis.

At times, I think that as adults we forget about the human side of our co-workers and constituents. We certainly need to be concerned about the skills and expertise of the people in our districts. We are accountable for the students’ results on a daily basis. Yet, by the simple action of smiling we may be able to raise the performance level of our staff.

I urge you to consider implementing the five daily habits identified by Achor in your life. If you find value in them, you may want to share them with the staff in the school district.

Thanks for all that you do every day for the students of Minnesota. As always, please contact me if I can be of assistance - (651) 319-1211 or gamoroso@mnasa.org.

Save the Date!

2016 MDE Back-to-School Conference
Tuesday - Wednesday
August 9-10, 2016

Minneapolis Marriott Northwest
Brooklyn Park, MN

Keep your eyes open for
registration, agenda and lodging details!

Radical Learner from page 1.

and realize, success for each student we serve.

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MASA/MASE SPRING CONFERENCE PREVIEW

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. Future ready leaders' systems optimize the use of technology while keeping the vision about the learning, not the devices. Collaborative leadership focusing on excellent instruction for all students draws on well-developed systems that integrate curriculum, instruction, professional development, technology, and assessment, creating a powerful learning environment. Join your MASA and MASE colleagues this spring and examine how we can employ future ready leadership within our schools and wider networks to provide great education systems for all of our students.



Networking, Networking, Networking! There will be numerous opportunities to socialize with colleagues you already know, as well as grow your professional network with fellow administrators from around the state. Gather in the Fireside Room for the Welcome Reception on Wednesday evening, dine with new faces during meals, and learn together during general sessions and breakouts.

Inspiring Keynote Speakers! Thursday will feature a keynote address from **Len Forkas** who will present "What Spins the Wheel," discussing leadership challenges and what he learned as he fought through the scorch of deserts and the joint-wrenching cold of 11,000-foot mountain elevations during his 12-day, 3,000-mile, coast-to-coast solo bicycle race. On Friday morning, **Katherine Prince** will present "Imagining the Future" and explore the opportunities and challenges raised by KnowledgeWorks' ten-year forecast, examine the 2006-16 forecast for clues to inform the next decade, and consider what role you will play in shaping learning for the coming era.

New Fundraising Format! The MASA Region donating the largest amount will receive \$400 to use for professional development (PD) and the "second place" region will receive \$200 in PD funds for the region. In order to level the playing field, we will weight the donations based on the number of MASA members in each region. Donate at www.mnasa.org/donate.

Thought Leader Sessions! We are featuring three longer breakout sessions on topic of particular interest to our members. These sessions will be 90 minutes long and we have invited thought leaders to address topics such as concurrent enrollment, the teacher shortage, and secondary literacy. Attend these sessions and get a "deeper dive" into three selected topics:

- **"Improving Secondary Content Literacy in Light of the Common Core State Standards: What Administrators and Teacher Leaders Need to Know,"** presented by **Kevin Feldman**, Educational Consultant.
- **"Concurrent Enrollment: Where We Are and Where We Are Headed,"** presented by **Pakou Yang**, System Director of P-20 and College Readiness Academic and Student Affairs Division, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.
- **Panel Presentation: Addressing Minnesota's Emerging Teacher Shortage**

Customize Your Experience! Individualize your professional learning with a variety of breakout sessions, UnConference - and visit Thursday's Exhibit Fair. With more than 80 exhibitors offering the innovative products and services, you'll discover the latest educational technology available for your students and communities.

Celebrate Your Colleagues! Throughout the conference we will be celebrating the service of our colleagues. In addition to celebrating our 2016 retiring members, we will present the Kay E. Jacobs Award, Distinguished Service Award, Outstanding Central Office Leader Awards and the Regional Administrator of Excellence Awards.

Practice 21st Century Skills! All MASA and MASE conferences are digital, featuring program information, session handouts, contact lists and much more on our app. Please bring your computer, tablet or smartphone with you to stay connected!

2016 MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Future Ready Leadership
March 10-11, 2016
Minneapolis Marriott Northwest
Brooklyn Park, MN
regonline.com/2016masamasespringconference

Meet Your Keynote Speakers...



Len Forkas



Katherine Prince

Schedule At-a-Glance

Wednesday, March 9 - Pre-Conference Events

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 9 am-4 pm | • MASA Great Start Cohort
• MASE New Leaders Cohort |
| 11-4 pm | • MASA & MASE Board Meetings |
| 12:30-4 pm | • At Ruth's Table, Women Leader's Workshop |
| 2-5 pm | • Conference Registration Open |
| 4-5 pm | • Ruth's Table Reception |
| 6-8 pm | • MASA Past Presidents/MASA Board Dinner |
| 8-10 pm | • Conference Reception |

Thursday, March 10 (Registration open 7 am)

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 7-8:30 am | • Retiree Breakfast |
| 8:30-10:30 am | • Keynote Speaker: Len Forkas
• MASA Foundation Fundraising Kickoff
• Awards Presentation |
| 10:30 am-3:30 pm | • Exhibits Open |
| 11 am-12:30 pm | • Thought Leader Sessions |
| 12:30-1:30 pm | • Lunch |
| 2-3 & 3:30-4:30 pm | • UnConference |

Friday, March 11 (Registration open 8 am)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 8:30-9:30 am & 9:45-10:45 am | • Breakout Sessions (details at mnasa.org) |
| 8:30-10:30 am | • Keynote Speaker: Katherine Prince
• Awards Presentation |

A special thank you to our premier business partners!



MASA FOUNDATION SPRING FUNDRAISER

Donate at the Spring Conference!

Let's "grow our own" leaders for tomorrow's schools. We encourage you to consider a pledge to the MASA Foundation to help Minnesota's education system continue to improve by developing the skills of our leaders.

The mission of the 501(c)(3) School Administrators Charitable and Educational Foundation is to enhance the leadership development of educational administrators, to encourage and support individuals interested in careers in teaching or educational administration, to enhance the role and image of educational administrators, and to conduct research and provide information to policymakers and the public at large.

The generosity of our members allows the MASA Foundation to award grants to individual members to further their professional development. These grants provide up to \$750 to members with particular needs that cannot be otherwise met by their districts, allowing members to participate in conferences, workshops and training opportunities they may have otherwise been denied.

The MASA Foundation is proud to sponsor MASA's Professional Assistance Team (P.A.T.) The P.A.T program directly supports the Foundation's mission of leadership development and individual support by meeting the immediate need of MASA members to confidentially discuss issues, seek advice, and receive valuable coaching from experienced and trusted MASA colleagues. Meet the 2015-16 P.A.T. members on page 12.

The MASA Foundation also sponsors the MASA Mentorship Program. Through guidance and coaching, networking, training, and social support, MASA's Mentorship Program supports administrators new to their role in building the capacity to lead their schools in student growth.

Help us meet our goals:

1. Provide outstanding workshops for early career & mid-career school leaders.
2. Provide grants to MASA members engaging in creative professional development.
3. Create an endowment fund to support the work of the MASA Foundation.

Donate at www.mnasa.org/donate

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Each year at the Spring Conference, the foundation fundraiser solicits support from our conference participants and exhibitors. This year, instead of a silent auction, we will be asking for donations to support the Foundation, and we will host a regional competition for the greatest amount donated!

In addition to significant bragging rights, the MASA Region donating the largest amount will receive \$400 to use for professional development (PD) and the "second place" region will receive \$200 in PD funds for the region. In order to level the playing field, we will weight the donations based on the number of MASA members in each region. So don't be the only person at the conference who isn't sporting an "I Donated" badge on your conference nametag! Donate online or in person – before or during the conference. Your donation supports excellent leadership for our schools!

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Be sure to indicate your region in the comments box on the donation form!





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Student Aggression in Schools is on the Rise



Connie Hayes

Superintendent
Northeast Metro 916
Intermediate School District

We are hearing more about student-to-student and student-to-adult aggression in our schools. What is really happening? And how can school administrators be thinking, planning, and problem-solving for this increase in aggression?

First of all, let's not forget that most students in our schools today do not show aggression towards others. Secondly, relatively few students who have a mental illness use aggression,

so we need to be careful about directly linking the rise in mental health needs to the reason that we are seeing an increase in aggression in our schools.

Yet, the increase in aggression is real. Our experiences as school administrators demonstrate that there is a growing number of students who have significant challenges in their lives who use acting out as a way to cope with their problems. Here in the metro area, the incident at St. Paul's Central High School precipitated more media attention to this challenge than in the past, causing us to further examine the pattern of aggression in schools.

Although mental illness is not synonymous with aggressive behavior, the need for better mental health services for our children and youth is getting more attention and is one strategy that seems to help. The need for early intervention is critical to the long-term well-being of our youth as they become adults, and there is a growing body of evidence that early intervention really works. At a legislative meeting held by the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) several years ago, Dr. Joel Oberstar, CEO and Chief Medical Officer at Prairie Care, informed listeners that we now know from using brain scans that there is a physiological difference between the brain of an adult with clinical depression compared to a person without depression. With that kind of evidence, if we intervene early, it is possible that we can limit the chance that an individual will suffer with lifelong mental health challenges like depression.

The intermediate district superintendents partner with Sue Abderholden, executive director from the National Association of Mental Illness Minnesota (NAMI Minnesota), at the legislature. I recently heard Sue say that she believes our mental health system is not really broken, but we do have to build a system. In fact, a lot has already been done at the legislature to build a better mental health system for children and youth in the last several sessions. To name just a few:

- To support early intervention, in 2013 and 2014 we saw an increase in funding for School Linked Mental Health

grants that allows schools to partner with a local mental health provider so that children have easier access to services.

- To support children for more crisis intervention, the 2015 Legislature approved opening psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs) with up to 150 new beds in up to six sites that can open beginning in 2017. PRTFs are for children who require more intensive care due to mental health symptoms such as a significant aggressive behavior, development disorders, psychosis or physical health.

It is true that many of the supports coming from the legislature seem slow to develop. It is particularly hard to be patient when we see a young person who is having difficulty managing conditions like the early onset of psychosis, ongoing depression, or anxiety, especially when we know that childhood trauma has a significant impact on the psychological development of a child. General educators are seeing the symptoms of these kinds of conditions in schools, as well as the impact they have on students' success with their school program.

And to recognize them specifically, staff and principals in our level IV programs around the state see students, who not only bring those same mental health challenges to school, but who also have a disability such as an emotional behavioral disability, autism, or cognitive delays. Programming for their highly complex needs is particularly difficult and costly.

But what can be done? Do the protections afforded to students mean that principals and educators cannot intervene when there is a fight? No, the use of reasonable force remains in statute to give schools the authority to keep the environment safe, but reasonable force is not necessary in every incident nor is it always the preferred method. Most of us know that fewer students will respond to the command, "Sit down and be quiet," when a situation starts to boil. So the question remains, what else can we do in a situation to intervene earlier, when there is time, to diffuse the situation?

If staff are trained, they can employ the use of verbal de-escalation to try and diffuse situations as they start to intensify. This is not a skill most of us come by naturally and so training is both useful and essential. In fact, I believe that most principals and educators would much prefer to have the skills to put the lid on the boil and help maintain order rather than have the situation turn chaotic. This is one of the takeaways I have seen in my work as superintendent at Northeast Metro 916 Intermediate School District, where we are constantly providing training to our staff so they have this

Student Aggression continued on page 12.

2016 Legislative Platform

The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) recommends the Minnesota Legislature consider passage of the following proposals:

Education **Funding**

A well-funded quality educational system is vital to Minnesota's prosperity. To support academic achievement across the state, create a world-class work force, and reinforce local decision-making the state must:

- Fully fund the special education cross subsidy.
- Increase the basic general education formula by at least \$182 per pupil unit and establish an ongoing cost of living adjustment to address the current rate of inflation to prevent future underfunding of the basic formula.
- Expand investments in school-based early learning programs by fully funding all program components and ensure district flexibility in meeting the needs of children and families.
- Continue with comprehensive facilities funding reform to increase access to deferred maintenance revenue, capital projects, operating capitol, technology access and infrastructure, and lease levy for all school districts. Each funding stream must include improvement to equalization factors and be indexed where allowable for inflation.

Education **Policy**

In addition to meeting the financial needs of school districts, State policy issues impact each school district's ability to provide a high quality education system and develop the world's best work force. As a result, State education policy changes must:

- Provide a comprehensive strategy to address the rapidly growing teacher shortage in Minnesota, including the shortage of substitute teachers.
- Repeal 2015 statutory limitations on the maximum number of hours for testing, reform our assessment system to assess 21st century skills, and balance assessments between those used for accountability and those that inform instruction and track growth.
- Repeal the 2015 statutory requirements for filling School Board vacancies and allow local school boards to fill a vacancy by appointment until the next school board general election.
- Implement solutions for credentialing secondary teachers to teach concurrent enrollment courses to high school students.

Technology Redefined



Mark Diehl

Director of Information and
Technology Services
Little Falls Community Schools

The computer scientist Alan Kay once said, "Technology is anything invented after you were born" - given that definition, technology looks a little different for each of us. Contrary to what my kids think, fire and the wheel would not be considered technology to me; my technology would include the cassette tape, cordless phone, VCR, microwave oven, personal digital assistant, and many other items.

Stop and think for a moment about what technology looks like for your students. Depending on their age, responses will likely differ; students in Kindergarten have never known a world without iPads, smartphones, and high definition television, whereas students readying themselves to graduate this spring have never known a world where laptops and cellphones were not common place.

In schools, technology is a word used very loosely to basically describe anything that has a circuit board. In many schools the door and camera security, clocks, phones, and even the energy management are being managed by the "technology" department. Given the charge of "directing technology," it is useful/necessary/requisite to consider my own working definition of technology in the educational setting, and its place in innovating educational practice.

Technology is the last step of a five step process. Independently these steps do not necessarily create technology, nor do they prompt innovation; the process has to work in sequence in order to truly be effective. Some parts of the process need to be repeated before a technology is truly realized.

The Technology Process

1. Conversation
2. Change
3. Creativity
4. Innovation
5. Technology

Conversation. Where do good ideas come from? Most good ideas are spurred on by a conversation. When talking about a challenge or difficulty, someone comes forward with an idea that is worthy of further exploration. The exploration may be really quick or may take time, but it eventually leads us into the next step. The answers may not be found within the school, so reach out to others in your circles who may not be in education at all. By engaging others in the conversation, new perspectives will offer insight that we do not see through our educator glasses.

Change. At some point the conversation step leads into a place where a need for change is recognized. The change may be small or large, it may be real or perceived. Regardless the need for change has to be recognized. Once the need for a change is recognized then the real work begins.

Creativity. The problem or challenge has to be identified before the creativity begins. If it does not happen first, you have no idea what you are really working a solution towards. The creativity step can be the longest or shortest in the process. The complexity of the needed change will often dictate how long the creative process will take. In this step solutions to the problem or challenge are being developed and tested. It is not unusual to see the creativity process go back to conversation and/or change for further refinement. Being creative, finding solutions, and showing patience during this step is not always easy. Hang in there, the rewards can be very much worth the effort.

Innovation. The innovation step happens when we go to put our idea into successful practice.

The following questions will help you to determine the success of your innovation.

- Does the solution work?
- Does the solution make a task easier or does it solve a problem?

If you can answer yes to these two questions, then you can congratulate yourself for being an innovator.

Technology. The final step in the process. If the innovation can be replicated for use by others, then congratulations you have generated a new technology.

The process of seeing good ideas come to fruition is exciting. New energy is found to do things that were never before thought possible. So, what are your challenges? Go ahead start a conversation. You may be surprised by what new technology will you be creating in the classroom, school, or district.

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Finding Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion



Tim R. Palmatier
Education Law Attorney
Kennedy & Graven, Chartered

Because school safety is an ever-growing area of public concern, school administrators are under greater pressure than ever to make quick and decisive disciplinary decisions. At the same time, schools are coming under increasing legal scrutiny in connection with their disciplinary decisions. For example, the Minnesota Court of Appeals recently overturned a school district's expulsion of a student who possessed a knife that she had mistakenly brought to school after doing chores

on a family farm over the weekend. *See, In re: Expulsion of AD from ISD 2134* (Minn. App. 2014) (unpublished). The court in the AD case overturned the school's expulsion based upon its conclusion that the student's conduct was not "willful" and that it did not "endanger" others at school. While the ruling of the court has been appealed, the decision was notable because of the court's willingness to second guess what has historically been an area of substantial deference to school administrators.

Similarly, the U.S. Department of Education—the Office of Civil Rights ("OCR")—has recently demonstrated a strong interest in investigating school districts' disciplinary decisions based upon claims of race and disability discrimination. According to the OCR, black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students and students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension as students without disabilities. These disproportionate statistics have led to a spike in OCR complaints/investigations concerning school discipline decisions.

Given the current legal atmosphere, schools are well advised to consider alternatives to the traditional responses of suspension or expulsion. One common alternative employed is commonly referred to as an "Agreement in Lieu of Expulsion." Under such agreements the school can agree not to seek to expel a student in exchange for a voluntary withdrawal from school or a voluntarily change in school location. Such agreements can oftentimes strike a balance between the school's strong interest in having a seriously offending or dangerous student removed from a school, while at the same time removing the stigma attached to a student for having been "expelled." Because such agreements necessarily impact the substantive rights of a student to challenge a school's decision to expel, districts are strongly advised to confer with legal counsel when pursuing such an option.

Another option (typically available to larger school districts) is imposing an "administrative transfer." By transferring a student from one school to a different school in the district, the district can avoid contentious and expensive expulsion proceedings. On the other hand, for serious infractions this option may prove to be problematic because it requires another school to oversee the behavior of a student that also may pose a risk to the new school environment.

Interestingly, Minnesota Statutes actually lists other alternatives to suspension (and presumably expulsions) that schools should consider—particularly with students who appear to be frequent offenders. The statute provides:

[A]fter a school administration notifies a pupil of the grounds for suspension, the school administration may, instead of imposing the suspension, do one or more of the following: (1) strongly encourage a parent or guardian of the pupil to attend school with the pupil for one day; (2) assign the pupil to attend school on Saturday as supervised by the principal or the principal's designee; and (3) petition the juvenile court that the student is in need of [protective services] chapter 260C.

Minn. Stat. § 121A.575.

Whatever course school administration decides to follow in imposing discipline for student misconduct, it is important to be cognizant of implications of such decisions. The initial suspension or expulsion may prove to be only the tip of iceberg in a more protracted dispute.

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.

Tim R. Palmatier is an education law attorney with the law firm of Kennedy & Graven, Chartered.

For more information, please contact him at (612) 337-9300 or www.kennedy-graven.com.

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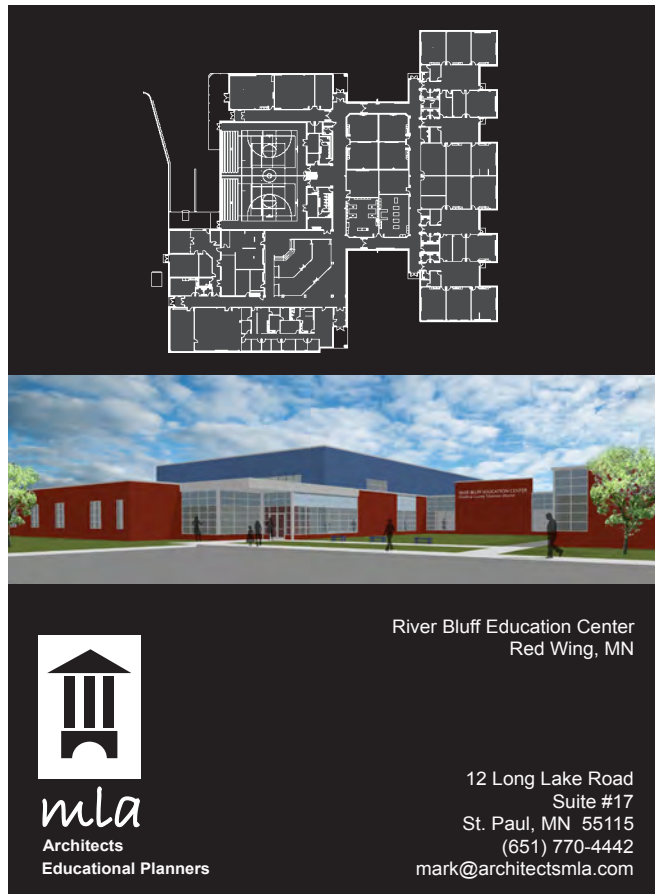
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CUNNINGHAM
GROUP

Student Aggression from page 7.

skill in their tool belt. And it really works in many situations. In the past, when a frustrated student works would move to pick up an object to throw, we would immediately put hands on the student. Today, our staff have greater ability to use their verbal de-escalation skills to diffuse a situation like this and prevent the situation from becoming a crisis for both the student and the staff members.

For those of you thinking it is sad that we have to train educators how to do this, I have to agree. But aggression is on the rise in our schools. That is a fact. I do believe that as educators we must constantly be open to building new skills to meet the demands of our job. Public education has done this for the nearly 40 years I have been an educator and I am confident we can do the same with this challenging problem now. At the same time, we all need to work with our policy makers to help continue building the mental health system for our children and youth. Please visit the NAMI Minnesota website at www.namihelps.org to learn more about what is being done and learn about ways you can support the mental health needs of our children.



PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE TEAM

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 2015-2016 P.A.T. are listed below...



Deb Henton

Office: (651) 674-1000
Cell: (651) 439-7719
dhenton@isd138.org



Jerry Nesland

Office: (218) 894-2439
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Cell: (651) 357-0996
pattyjphillips@gmail.com



Carl Wahlstrom

Cell: (952) 807-8906
Home: (952) 435-2893
cwahlstr@smumn.edu

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.

Examples of services the P.A.T. provides:

- Answers to questions regarding your role as a school leader
- Advice on how to handle specific situations involving the community, school board(s), employees, students, and operational situations
- Communication situations

P.A.T. members will always maintain confidentiality when working with our members.

What Are the Needs in Minnesota?



Kim Gibbons
Associate Director
Center for Applied Research and
Educational Improvement (CAREI)

Minnesotans value education. Education is the largest financial investment in the state budget, and those investments place Minnesota students among the top performers in the nation. Still, substantial gaps in opportunity and performance persist. The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) recently engaged in a yearlong evaluation of the needs among educators in Minnesota.

We completed this needs assessment

for three reasons:

1. To describe infrastructure, capacity, and costs of program evaluation and educational assessment;
2. To identify unmet needs; and
3. To evaluate how the CAREI at the University of Minnesota (University) might contribute a solution.

Researchers and evaluators from CAREI interviewed and surveyed educational leaders and other stakeholders. For the purpose of the needs assessment, CAREI gathered input from approximately 800 individuals and 13 professional organizations.

Key Findings

The conclusions from our 2015 statewide needs assessment are very clear. There are substantial unmet needs at all levels of the Minnesota educational systems with respect to research, evaluation, assessment, and data use. The following are some key findings:

- A large majority of respondents believe **good quality data can improve educational decisions**. Nearly everyone with whom we spoke articulated that they would benefit from additional assistance in the use of data.
- A large percentage of survey respondents indicated **their school's or district's capacity to effectively use data to guide educational decisions was fair or poor**. Despite substantial motivations and efforts to use data, most educational systems in Minnesota lack the capacity to meet their own needs for data-based decision making.
- Educational professionals consistently described the need for **additional resources** to help them use data. There are very limited resources at all levels of the educational systems in Minnesota to access, analyze, present, and interpret data in a timely and effective manner.
- Respondents consistently described the **need for professional development and expert consultation** to assist, automate, and deliver timely reports and provide guidance for the use of data for educational decisions.
- Educational leaders indicated that they **do not have the time**

or personnel to design, develop, or implement assessment and evaluation programs that would effectively inform leadership and practice. The results of surveys indicate that those professionals are too few in number in Minnesota and, perhaps, too costly for many educational agencies to afford.

- Relatively few school districts in Minnesota employ **professionals with advanced training in research, program evaluation, or assessment/measurement**. Those are generally the largest districts concentrated in the metro region such that most rural and out-state systems with limited capacity and expertise.

How Can CAREI Assist in Meeting Unmet Needs?

Like many other states, Minnesota has established rigorous systems for accountability, which include state standards. It has also established useful programs for data collection. Those include the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), the Minnesota Student Survey, and the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS). The returns on those and other investments have yet to be realized, in part, because there are substantial unmet needs for educational systems and professionals to use them. Additional supports may substantially improve their uses by policy makers, educational leaders, and educators.

Those who responded to the interviews and surveys consistently indicated a lack of resources and expertise to support their efforts. To truly leverage state and local investments, **professional educators require infrastructure to build capacity and efficiencies to use data that improve educational outcomes**. Historically, CAREI coordinated with educational agencies located in the twin cities metropolitan area. The proposed solution will expand the mission and accessibility of CAREI. It will provide resources to policy makers and educational agencies throughout the state; especially those in **rural and high need communities** who were historically under-served. CAREI will enable the use of evidence and data at all levels of the education system and foster high-value partnerships. In its expanded role, CAREI will continue as an impartial and independent hub for applied research and educational improvement. It will bring others together to define their values, goals, objectives, policies, and programs. It will provide services and resources to facilitate high quality research, evaluation, and assessment practices among its partners.

The personnel, expertise, and infrastructure at CAREI already exist and can expand to provide centralized services for the state. In part, these services will enhance the usability and effects of data that are already collected by state and local educational agencies; however, it will do much more. If it were just a little bit easier and more feasible for leaders and educators to use data, they would use it more often and

What Are The Needs In Minnesota? continued on page 19.



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2016 MASA ELECTIONS

Meet Your MASA President-Elect Candidates!



Curt Tryggestad
Superintendent
Eden Prairie Schools

It is an honor to be nominated for MASA president-elect. If chosen, I will bring a broad perspective to the position of president-elect. I entered the education field as a band director in Hinckley, and later became a secondary principal in Pine City. I have served as superintendent in Esko, Little Falls, and Eden Prairie. I have had the opportunity to work in rural, regional center, and suburban districts during the past 35 years, and all of these positions were equally challenging and unique in their own

way. I believe that I can represent and advocate for the entire MASA membership.

I currently serve on the AASA Governing Board and MASA Board of Directors, and have chaired both the MASA Legislative Policy and Executive Development Committees. Other statewide roles include the Minnesota Rural Education Association President and two terms on the Board of Directors, and lastly as the Chair of Infinity Online—an on-line learning provider and consortium that served approximately fifty member districts in Minnesota. I have been appointed to several MDE Committees: the Board of Teaching Standards and Rules committee, the Online Learning Advisory Committee, the Open Education Resources Committee, and the Technology Task Force.

Rather than attempt to explain what I intend to do if elected, I believe it important that each of you know what I stand for in education and our profession. First and foremost, I am for kids. In Eden Prairie we talk about “each” ...inspiring each student every day. All of our work must be placed into that framework. While more difficult to define at the state level, know that my main motivation will be to advocate for the children of Minnesota no matter where they live or go to school.

Secondly, I believe in collaboration. We need to work together to achieve our mutual goals. We cannot be metro-centric or rural block minded. As members of MASA we must recognize that member districts have different needs based on demographics, location, resources, etc. As superintendents we all advocate for our district in the best way in which we are capable. However, instinctively we also know we are stronger when we work together toward a common goal.

Third, we must advocate if we want change. Whether it be at the state or federal level, MASA must remain an important and consistent voice for children and public education. I believe that it is important to tell our stories to those who might advance public education in our state and nation. Only through communication and perseverance will we adequately inform the public about our work and needs of our students and staff.

It is an exciting time to be a superintendent. We live and work in of incredible time of change and therefore need support for our work. So in closing know that if chosen by you, the membership, I will do my utmost to represent and support all of MASA. But more importantly, please know that I will advocate tirelessly for the needs of “each” Minnesota student. I humbly ask for your support.



Brian Corlett
Superintendent
Central Public Schools

I am truly humbled to have been nominated for the important position of MASA president-elect. With this group being the number one voice advocating for students in our state, this is certainly not an honor that can be taken lightly. In my twenty plus years in school administration, the last 13 as a superintendent with 11 of those in Minnesota, there have been many changes in public education. The one constant throughout this time is the fact that superintendent leadership is crucial to being the one voice with all

students at the forefront.

As you all are well aware, there are many competing interests for educational funding and programs in the state of Minnesota. While we all can agree that our educational programs and opportunities can be improved with additional funding and resources, it continues to be our leadership that will demonstrate how and why these additional resources will be utilized and needed. I feel that we must convince our legislators and public that our schools and students can no longer be a political tool to be used as bargaining chips by groups. We need to convince these people to believe in student-first thinking when major decisions are being made, as our group has always led with this in mind.

My ideas fit well with the MASA legislative platform that has been distributed with a couple other small areas of interest:

- Funding special education cross-subsidy – educating legislators as to the true cost of these programs
- Increasing the formula allowance-again showing how and why this is utilized and needed
- Facilities reform funding-with access and improvements in connectivity for all schools, including rural districts
- Educating legislators on school budgets, processes, decisions and how their decisions universally effect student outcomes

I look forward to the work we need to do together to continue the great programs and reputation that Minnesota has in our arena. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the students and the MASA organization as we strive to make a better future for all our students.

Electronic ballots for elections for the following positions will be sent to all active members on March 14, 2016.

Elections will be held for the following representative seats on the MASA Board of Directors:

President-Elect

Region 1 Superintendent Component Group Representative

Region 2 Superintendent Component Group Representative

Region 3 Superintendent Component Group Representative

Region 8 Superintendent Component Group Representative

Region 9 Superintendent Component Group Representative

Regions 1-8 - Greater MN Central Office Component Group Rep.

Regions 1-8 - Greater MN Tech Component Group Rep.

Managing Your Own Annual Evaluation...

Begin with a good professional development process



Tom Westerhaus
Retired Superintendent
ROCORI & Prior Lake-Savage
Area Schools



Charles Kyte
Retired Superintendent
Northfield Public Schools

Principals and teachers must now be evaluated annually as laid out in Minnesota state statute. Although there isn't yet a similar statute for school superintendents, there is an ethical imperative that superintendents, as district leaders, be evaluated through a comprehensive process, as well.

Setting an example of embracing leadership evaluation is essential to implementing a model of continuous improvement and an ongoing evaluative system at every level of the school district. The superintendent's responsibility is to see that the process of evaluation is identified, implemented, and completed to the school board's satisfaction. Such a process calls on the superintendent to be the best leader possible.

The challenge for superintendents today is that they work in an ever more politically charged environment and can at times be subject to less than fair evaluation processes. One way to help school boards is to have a strong and transparent professional development process that can lead to a more thorough and honest evaluation.

A good way to structure a professional development process is to have a good method of setting goals annually, a respected framework to measure your professional competence, and a way for stakeholders to provide feedback on their perceptions of how aligned the superintendent is to goals and professional competencies.

In regard to leadership of school districts, the key leadership competencies might be identified as including:

Strategic Leadership

Ensuring the development and implementation of a shared district vision for student achievement, high expectations for students and staff, and goal-setting based on core district beliefs.

Instructional Leadership

Focusing on continuous improvement of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, along with employee and system accountability.

Managerial Leadership

Strategically managing district human, fiscal, and material resources for system accountability in achieving the district

vision and mission.

Professional and Ethical Leadership

Personally and professionally exhibiting and promoting ethical leadership in daily practices of shared decision-making, problem-solving, inclusivity, and change implementation.

Community Leadership

Enhancing the public's image of the district and displaying broader community leadership through participating in community life and engaging stakeholders in the life of the school district.

Relationship and Communications Leadership

Inspiring others and building a positive school district climate through development of professional relationships, collaborative partnerships, and effective communications strategies.

Within each of these key leadership competencies several indicators can be identified. Under strategic leadership, competency indicators may include the collaborative development of mission and goals; articulates and models core beliefs; and distributive empowerment.

In another key leadership competency, community leadership, competency indicators may include the ability to mobilize community resources; meeting diverse community needs; and enhancing the district brand.

In each of these leadership competencies, six or seven competency indicators can be identified. We see these repeated in Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, state superintendent competencies, and professional leadership publications.

The trick in regard to key competencies and indicators is to attain alignment between annual goals and leadership qualities. Even more important, a method needs to be determined to produce a written professional document, a way for selected groups of stakeholders to provide honest and anonymous feedback, and a way to pull all of the data together in an understandable and usable manner.

Once a good professional development process is in place, presenting it to a school board can provide the first strong step of evidence to a board so they, in turn, can provide the superintendent feedback on their impressions of success in meeting the key leadership categories.

If this process is known to other administrators and to teaching staff, they will see that their own leader is using a rigorous process, which makes it easier for them to find the value of their own evaluation processes.

A top-performing leader is one who seeks ongoing feedback

***Managing Your Own Annual Evaluation
continued on page 18.***

2016 MASA AWARDS

Congratulations to our 2016 MASA Award Recipients!

2016 MASA Distinguished Service Award

U.S. Congressman John Kline

2016 MASA Kay E Jacobs Memorial

Jennifer Hegna

Director of Information and Learning Technology

Byron Public Schools

2016 MASA Outstanding Central Office Leader Award

Kim Riesgraf

Assistant Superintendent

Osseo Area Schools

Matt Hillmann

Director of Administrative Services

Northfield Public Schools

2016 Regional Administrators of Excellence Recipients

Region 1, Jeff Elstad, Superintendent, Byron Public Schools

Region 2, Tom Bruels, Superintendent, St. Clair Public Schools

Region 3, John Landgaard, Superintendent, Worthington School District

Region 4, Dale Hogie, Superintendent, Lake Park Audubon School District

Region 5, Cathy Bettino, Superintendent, Pine River-Backus Schools

Region 6, James Behle, Superintendent, St. Michael-Albertville Schools

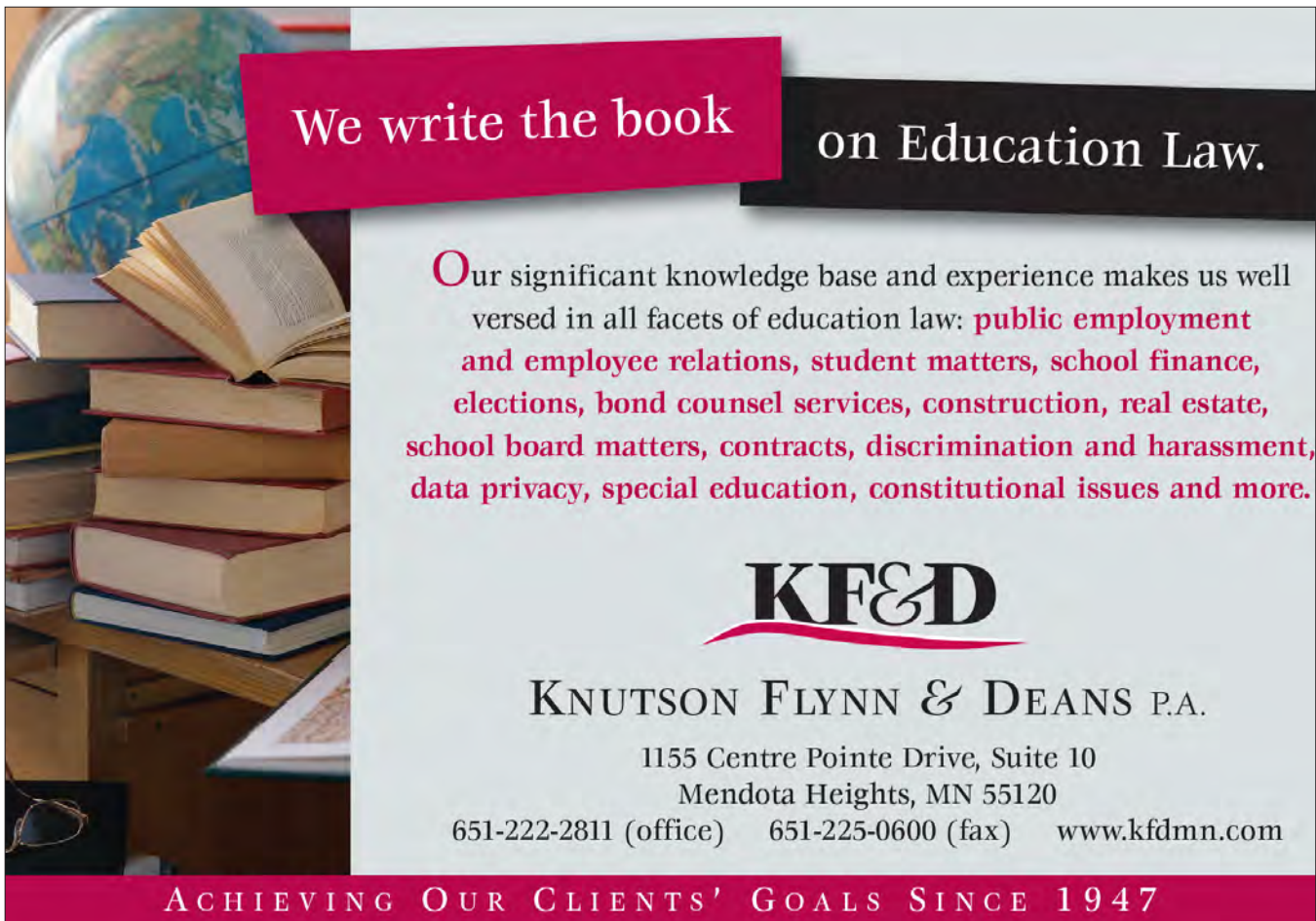
Region 7, Ronald Bratlie, Superintendent, Cromwell-Wright School

Region 8, David Pace, Superintendent, East Grand Forks Public Schools

Region 9, To Be Announced

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.

Our recipients will be honored during the 2016 MASA/MASE Spring Conference. You can learn more about the awards and the accomplishments of the recipients by reading the press releases available in the "newsroom" on the MASA website.



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ACHIEVING OUR CLIENTS' GOALS SINCE 1947

The Basics of Good Board Behavior



Dave Metzen
Leadership Speaker
Dave Metzen Leadership

To paraphrase Joni Mitchell, I've looked at boards from both sides now. Serving as the South Saint Paul superintendent of schools for 18 years and spending the last 11 years on the University of Minnesota's Board of Regents has given me unique insight into the dynamics of board behavior. Mix in 30 years on a bank board and serving as a director on several nonprofit boards, and I've pretty much covered all the board bases. Here are my guidelines for achieving better board dynamics.

Respect boundaries. Board members should never go around the CEO. It's a great temptation to fly solo and drill deeper into the organization, but undermining the CEO like that buys you a one-way ticket to Dysfunction Junction. Soon, the CEO is spending half the day putting out the fires you started.

Embrace diversity. The days of boardrooms stocked with nothing but white males are over. But diversity isn't just about gender and racial balance. It also means diversity of interests, backgrounds, perspectives and skill sets. You make better decisions with people who bring different things to the table.

Build a healthy environment. Watch out for the CBCers – Complainers, Blamers, and Criticizers. They are cancers that rot the boardroom from within. Good people, whether board members or staff, will not work in a corrosive environment. As the poison starts to spread, the eagles will fly away and you'll be stuck with the turkeys.

Be invisible. A good board is like a team of good referees in a basketball game. They set the rules and expectations by which the game is going to be played, but you don't know they're there. A bad referee dominates, crosses boundaries, takes over a game, and suddenly, the players are not the focus, the referees are.

Manage and monitor. The board chair is responsible for managing the board. What does that entail? Overseeing committee assignments, drawing out members' strengths and keeping tabs on boundary issues are some starters. The board chair constructively challenges members and holds them accountable.

Never stop growing. What's a 10-letter word that begins with "S" and ends in disaster? Stagnation. A board needs to be stocked with lifelong learners committed to the relentless pursuit of personal and organizational self-improvement.

Think big picture. The role of the board is visualizing where the organization will be at least three to five years in the future, then articulating the vision and putting policies in place that will get it there. If an issue can be resolved in the next month or the next year, it's likely a management decision.

Build bench strength. One of the first questions a board should ask is, "What happens if the CEO gets hit by a turnip

truck?" If you can't identify at least one person within the organization whom you would consider for the job, you've got a serious problem.

Trust is a must. Absent trust, a board can't effectively resolve the tough issues – information will be withheld, cliques will form and consensus will be undermined. A good board engages in open and candid dialogue, confident that every member is trying to do what's best for the organization.

United as a team. People may think teams always get along. That's not necessarily the case. A true team player will speak up whenever a peer or an idea needs to be challenged. But once the decision is made, you have a responsibility to support the decision.

In my view, the primary characteristic of a good board is that it's always striving to get better. I hope these guidelines spark your board and CEO to take inventory and begin a candid dialogue. No topics should be off limits. You can reach new heights if you're willing to roll up your sleeves and dissect your dynamics, reinvigorate your relationships and iron out the issues. The potential payoff is huge: greater trust, deeper understanding, improved effectiveness and, best of all, happier stakeholders.

The Basics of Good Board Behavior was originally published in the Minnesota Business Magazine, May 2008.

www.minnesotabusiness.com

Dr. David Metzen, CEO of Metzen Leadership, is a speaker, executive coach and board consultant. He can be reached at (651) 455-3020 or dave@metzenleadership.com. For more information, visit www.metzenleadership.com.

Managing Your Own Annual Evaluation from page 16.

to continuously improve performance. Such a leader is always the best role model for those reporting to and working for her/him in a professional capacity. And such a leader fills the school board's very real need to provide systemic performance review and appraisal of its chief district administrator.

Dr. Tom Westerhaus has recently retired after a long career as a school superintendent including ROCORI, Prior Lake-Savage and lastly at River Falls, WI.

Dr. Charles Kyte served for 20 years as a superintendent, last in Northfield and then was the Executive Director of MASA for 11 years (2000-2011). Both Tom and Charlie are associated with PEER Solutions, a company that has developed ProGrow, a professional development process for school leaders.

What Are The Needs In Minnesota? from page 13.

effectively. CAREI can facilitate that. In the following months, we will be sharing the results of the needs assessment with a variety of key stakeholders. We will also work on expanding services at CAREI to meet the unmet state needs. Stay tuned for future developments!

Kim Gibbons, Ph.D., currently is the Associate Director of the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota. Prior to that, she was the Executive Director of the St. Croix River Education District (SCRED) located in Rush City, MN. SCRED has received national recognition for its use of the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. In 2007, SCRED received a legislative appropriation to fund a statewide Minnesota RtI Center for two years. Dr. Gibbons obtained her doctoral degree in school psychology from the University of Oregon where she received extensive training in the problem solving model, curriculum based measurement, and research-based instructional practices. Prior to her role as the Executive Director, Dr. Gibbons has worked as a director of special education, staff development coordinator, and school psychologist. She is active in state leadership and is the past-president of the Minnesota Administrators for Special Educators. Finally, she is the co-author of three books and has numerous other peer-reviewed publications. She is a sought-after consultant who has given numerous workshops throughout the nation.

Public Sector Advisors



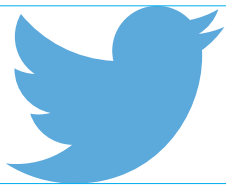
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Twitter Chat for MASA Members

#MNMASA Second Sunday of the Month @ 8 pm

Many of our current members have discovered the power of Twitter Chats through #mnlead, #edtech, #iaedchat and many others. Each of these chats allows participants to share their experiences while also learning from the experiences shared by participating colleagues. **#MNMASA** will provide our members with opportunities to engage and learn from others in district leadership about the experiences being realized.

Our discussions take place the second Sunday of the month at 8:00 pm. Chats are facilitated by Bill Adams, Superintendent at Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (@JWPBulldog) and Teri Preisler, Superintendent at Tri-City United (@TPreisler). Topics will be developed for each week's conversation with future topics coming from those participating in the chats.

Please let us know whether you are interested — go to <https://sites.google.com/site/mnmasatwitterchat> and click on the Twitter Chat Form tab. For details, please click on the "How To" tab at the above address.

REFLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

My Time as Minnesota's Superintendent of the Year



Daniel Bittman
Superintendent
Sauk Rapids-Rice Public
Schools

Serving as a superintendent is an honor and a privilege on which I often reflect. I take my role seriously, and continue to learn with and from others regularly. I am humbled, on a daily basis by the work of our children, staff and community, and I work diligently to reflect not only on our successes, but also how we can improve and make good things happen each and every day.

As Minnesota's 2016 Superintendent of the Year, I have had and continue to have opportunities most people only dream of. I was able to attend President Obama's final State of the Union Address, work with legislators on educational policies that will no doubt have a positive impact on children throughout the state, and work with and learn from my colleagues throughout the state and nation at educational leadership conferences.

I am humbled by the recognition and appreciate the opportunity to represent both the Sauk Rapids-Rice School District and other Minnesota superintendents. After much reflection, I cannot help but think about how my family, childhood, colleagues and educational journey have shaped me both personally and professionally. I think about my childhood and how my parents were adamant I received a quality education, and how characteristics such as diligence, honesty, faith, and perseverance were not options, but expectations. I think about my wife who has always put the needs of others first, and how she never questions the late hours, early morning phone calls, and my constant focus on students, the school district, and community. I think about my colleagues and how worthy they are of commendation as they continuously model how important it is to put kids first, have meaningful and often difficult conversations with children and families, send emails and make phone calls at all hours, and never complain about not having enough time with their own children while being constantly engaged to ensure every child succeeds. They continuously create and maintain authentic relationships and always focus on doing things right, and setting a precedent for others to follow! Finally, I recognize the countless individuals who have believed in me, took a chance on me, and let me succeed and fail, always willing to support, listen and teach. Their and your friendship, mentorship, and willingness to listen have made me a better person, husband, father, and educator.

Thank you fellow superintendents and MASA for your continued support and engagement, and for making Minnesota a great place to live, work, and learn. We are fortunate to be educators in this great state and for having the opportunity to change lives and make communities better through education! I am honored to serve with you and to do everything I can to represent the Office of the Superintendent well!

Communication, Creativity, Collaboration & Critical Thinking



Contact
David Maroney, AIA/NCARB
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Access to Expertise includes access to highly experienced technical assistance staff.

Equipment Services includes discount purchase programs for hardware and software.

Questions? Contact Mary Bettlach
at mbettlach@ucpnet.org



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Awareness Precedes Change



Denny Smith
Leadership and Development
Trainer

Don't do it yet, but just say to yourself, "I am going to move my arm." Now, move your arm. You told yourself to move your arm, then you moved your arm. Here is a deeply philosophical and extremely profound question. Who is the "I" and who is the "my?"

We have located the command center; the area of the brain that sent the signal to the arm to move. We have never, however, located the commander of the command center.

That is your higher self, your higher

awareness, your higher consciousness or whatever you want to call it, but therein lies your power as a human being. Quite frankly it is what makes us different from other forms of life. We can think about what we think about.

Be aware of your awareness. And I did say to be aware of your awareness. Using the power of awareness, some call it "mindfulness," can lead to a lifetime of growth and change in any area of your life.

If you feel yourself getting upset and moving into attack mode, by first being aware that you are in that state you can bring yourself under control and exhibit a civil demeanor and a calm and controlled tone of voice.

If you catch yourself being judgmental about another human being because of his or her race or dress or socioeconomic status, through your own awareness you can change the judgmental thought and see the person as that miraculous creation we call a human being. It doesn't mean you have to agree with them or tolerate any disrespectful behavior from them, but you can develop a true respect for the gift of life that flows through them.

Let's do a quick tour of four levels of awareness. The first is "**Unconscious Incompetence.**" You don't know how to do something but you know you don't know it. It's your blind spot. Or perhaps it is something you don't consider a weakness. In my earlier coaching days, I could give a pep talk with the best of them, but when it came time to deal with problems it was my way or the highway. I didn't see that as a weakness; in fact I viewed it as a strength. My coaching idols were that way and they won championships, so I thought that style was my path to success.

As I analyzed my style I decided that there was maybe another way, so I went to work on it. That moved me into awareness level number two, which is "**Conscious Incompetence.**" You're not very good at something but you know you're not good at it so you go to work on it.

That brings you to awareness level number three, "**Conscious Competence.**" You are working at it and even getting pretty

good, but you have to think about it every step of the way.

With constant practice, your new behavior becomes almost automatic, moving you to level number four, "**Unconscious Competence.**" You are so used to doing something well that it becomes an automatic response. You have achieved self-mastery.

Let me illustrate. I was not always the most cordial when dealing with customer service people on the phone. If my bill was messed up or the shipment was late, I was the customer and you better take care of me and you better take care of me right now. I decided I wanted to change for two reasons. First of all, that was a human being on the other end of the line and they deserved to be treated with respect, at least from me. Secondly, and maybe a little selfish, I would probably get better service if I were calm and cooperative, so I went to work on it. I found it a lot less stressful for all parties concerned when I maintained a calm, resourceful and respectful state. One night as I hung up the phone after resolving a problem my wife said, "You sure were patient." I have not been accused of that too many times in 47 years, but my progress was noticeable; an indication that the system works. These are all learned skills – skills that can be mastered by anyone with the resolve to do so.

Keep in mind that we vacillate between levels three and four. Keep your antennae up and be aware when you are getting upset, then make a conscious effort to pull in the reins and bring yourself under control.

You can apply this to anything that you would like to attract more of into your life. If you want a kinder tone of voice, if you want more confidence, if you want to be more positive and happy, if you want to judge less and accept more, become aware of what you are thinking and doing in the present moment, then advance yourself to a level of "Unconscious Competence."

It works. And I know it works because I have enjoyed more personal growth in the last three years than at any other time in my life.

In our next visit we are going to outline methods for becoming your own best coach and come to grips with the reason why you get upset. In the meantime, if there is something you would like to tweak in your leadership style, work on your "mindfulness," realize that awareness precedes change, be constantly aware of your awareness, then enjoy the good that you attract into your life as you usher in more personal positivity.

Denny Smith is a former teacher and coach, a motivational speaker, and author committed to making our schools and communities safe and welcoming for all people. More information is available at www.dennysmith.com or email denny@dennysmith.com.

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Community and Political Engagement

Shari Prest, InvestMN

“What is community engagement? Community engagement is a two-way street where the school, families, and the community actively work together, creating networks of shared responsibility for student success. It is a tool that promotes civic well-being and that strengthens the capacity of schools, families, and communities to support young people's full development.”

(Community and Family Engagement, Principles Share What Works, NAASP and NAESP sponsored by the Metlife Foundation, 2006)

By the time an American child who has had perfect school attendance reaches their 18th birthday, they have spent only about nine percent of their lives in school. If we exclude the hours that a child spends sleeping and the years prior to their formal education, that same U.S. child spends only 12 to 16 percent of their waking hours in school. In that respect, American children are not unusual. Students in India and China are required to have 1,000 instructional hours per year in the upper grades and less in the lower grades. Top-ranked Finland requires only 608 hours annually. The U.S. meets or exceeds those standards. That reality limits the overall impact that schools alone can have on child development and achievement and indeed supports the African proverb that it takes a village to raise a child.

While Minnesota's system of public education typically functions quite well within classrooms, it will require greater support from families, communities and politicians to adequately improve student outcomes and close the learning gap. It is incumbent upon school leaders to expand their sphere and degree of influence beyond the school walls.

“The purpose of community engagement is to ensure that school improvement is done with the community, not to the community. It recognizes how integral schools are to their communities, and how much parents and communities have to offer as partners when fundamental change must occur in schools.” *(Reform Support Network, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education)*

Many of the changes that take place in our schools are driven by the educators, parents and students involved. Many changes are driven directly or indirectly by our politicians in response to some available research, gut instinct, or partisan pressures. Too often, when political power shifts, so do the laws governing public education.

In a sense, we are all politicians in that we have the opportunity to influence others, form groups, and share opinions. But it is just the governor, the 67 senators and the 134 representatives in Minnesota that have the power to make

laws. Presumably, those laws are designed for the welfare of our children and in pursuit of a prosperous future for all. Our government can only function as intended when the people for whom the government was created are willing to share their perspectives, experiences and expertise.

“While policy makers widely recognize the fact that education serves as an engine for economic growth through the accumulation of human capital, education is also strongly associated with boosting levels of social capital. Indeed, an important justification for the large expenditures on education within many democratic nations is its social, and not just economic, impact – the benefits an educated electorate brings to civil society.”

(David Campbell, Department of Political Science, University of Notre Dame)

All-out sustained school/district campaigns may be required to saturate the community with the message that people, attitudes, and community cultures matter in the quest to raise student achievement.

Some public relations and communication tips follow:

- Have an overall plan and vision, and mark progress and accountability.
- Use available media to promote the importance of stakeholders and relationships in student success.
- Emphasize to parents that their values and expectations impact their children's learning, regardless of the parents' education, language, or culture.
- Provide guidance on early childhood development and opportunities.
- Suggest specific ways parents can support their children's academic achievement and social development. Some examples: trips to the library, conversations about current events, community service opportunities, mapping, etc.
- Create learning communities for parents.
- Develop partnerships with government agencies, faith communities, non-profits, and parent organizations to engage resources that support learning. Some examples: mentorships, speakers, shadowing opportunities, volunteer tutors, afterschool and summer programs.
- Sow hope among parents of low achieving or disinterested students by expanding the definition of post-secondary success.
- Create an atmosphere that provides supportive

**Community and Political
Engagement continued on page 30.**

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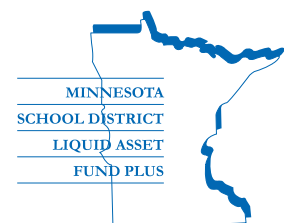
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--**Karla**, manager at a Twin Cities-area McDonald's owned and operated by Shahab Hyder.

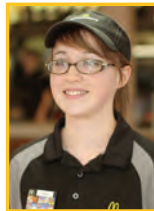


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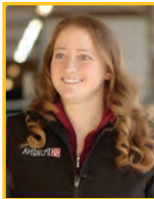


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--**Stacey**, who has a career in Agriculture and is a Brainerd McDonald's alum.



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(L-R) Steve, Bob, and David Baldinger.

--**Steve Baldinger**, president of Baldinger Bakery, a fourth-generation St. Paul family business that's been making hamburger buns for hundreds of McDonald's restaurants in Minnesota and the Midwest since the first Minnesota McDonald's opened in Roseville in 1957.

"We are so gratified that McDonald's appreciates an authentic tortilla."



Cathy Cruz Gooch (center) and her husband Harold (left) became a tortilla supplier to McDonald's in 1991 when the breakfast burrito joined the menu. Catallia Mexican Foods is a family business located in Eagan, Minnesota.



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The Four Essential Roles of Effective District Leaders



Kimberly Sanderson
Client Partner – Minnesota & Wisconsin
FranklinCovey | Education



Eve Miller
Director of Research
FranklinCovey | Education

In the few months since NCLB was laid to rest, much has been made about the greater localization the ESSA provides educators in determining the right measurement of schools and students. Over the next year, more will unfold to determine how local educational leaders will use this greater autonomy to improve factors that led to failed educational improvements in the past. While there are many factors that should be considered, it is important that district leaders examine their own leadership practices as a potential area of growth. In an extensive study of superintendents, the Wallace Foundation reported the following behaviors were a key reason why school improvement efforts have failed in the past.

“In some districts, administrators attempt to exert complete control over every phase of instruction and school operations. They try to own all the problems and enforce all

solutions from the top down. In other districts, administrators turn all the problems over to the principal, offering little or no sense of direction or support — just a demand for results. ... Few principals have the capacity to rise above a school district’s lack of vision and clear purpose.

If district leaders cannot see beyond ‘test-prep’ — if they expend most of the system’s time, attention and energy on getting kids to pass low-level tests and meet minimum standards — then even the most capable principals will likely find themselves trapped in caretaker roles, presiding over schools and faculties that lack the direction, the goals and the belief in themselves necessary to create a powerful learning experience for all their students.”

It is commonly known this highly controlled approach to district leadership is outdated and ineffective and yet it continues to persist in school districts across the country. So what are the roles of leadership that promote positive lasting change in schools and on the principals, teachers, and staff who ultimately determine the success of most district improvement efforts? Let us suggest four imperatives of great leaders in an educational change process: (1) modeling; (2) pathfinding; (3) aligning; and (4) empowering.



Modeling

Low trust is a common problem and costly to school districts. Trust, or the lack of it, affects everything you do as a leader. That’s why the first role of an effective leader is “modeling.” District leaders know they must show they are competent, but competence is not enough to be a great leader.

Look at the comparison of the ordinary and great leader. Who would you rather follow? Both leaders have a certain level of



ORDINARY LEADER
I get things done because I’m the boss (formal authority).



GREAT LEADER
I get things done through personal influence and credibility (informal or moral authority).

competence, but the great leader has a personal maturity and integrity that

comes through in the character he/she models. Character and competence lead naturally to credibility and trust—just think about the leaders who have inspired you and led you to become a superintendent. Chances are they were someone you trusted because of their character and competence, rather than their formal authority over you.

Most likely, this great leader was also someone who likely acted in a way that further built your trust the more you knew him or her. These trust building behaviors, like demonstrating respect and loyalty, clarifying expectations, creating transparency and extending trust are key to deepening relationships over time and developing people who similarly act in a trustworthy way.



Pathfinding

A common frustration we hear from school principals across the U.S. is frustration with district mandated school improvement efforts. When asked why they felt frustrated, most respond that it is not clear what the purpose of the new reform is or how it ties in to a larger strategy. Even the best principals at



ORDINARY LEADER
As long as people have a clear job description, they’ll be fine.



GREAT LEADER
If a clear and compelling purpose exists, people will volunteer their best efforts.

times need to understand the larger vision that will show them

the path they are on and where it is taking them. Effective superintendents are pathfinders. They help their team “find the path” between where the district is now, and where they want to be—their vision for the district. To better illustrate the difference, take a moment to compare the approach to pathfinding taken by the ordinary and great leader. Which leader is more likely to achieve large-scale improvements? Why?

Great leaders do not find the path alone. It’s imperative that superintendents and principals work together to find a common, shared purpose and vision that they can hold in their mind’s eye. This makes it so that the principals have shared ownership in the path to the district’s vision, so they can engage their staff and ensure their school is heading in the same direction; to the same goal. It also creates a natural sense of order and logic for decision-making as a team. It is important for everyone to understand the vision and take ownership in their role in achieving that vision. Superintendents can count on their principals to independently identify barriers and develop strategies to

reach that vision. Superintendents who have made a clear path can let go of control and instead focus their energy on guiding their people on the path. That is why we say that pathfinding creates order without demanding it.

Aligning

Many educators feel like they are being pulled in multiple directions by all sorts of different urgent “must dos.” The third role of effective leaders addresses this chronic problem by aligning the systems in your district to produce and reward results that are aligned with the district’s mission—the shared vision forged by pathfinding. A system is defined as a process, method, or set of procedures for achieving something. Your district has all sorts of systems, especially within your schools. Professional learning, curriculum, hiring, communication, and scheduling are all examples of systems often set by district leaders and implemented within their schools.



Systems not aligned with the vision, look like the diagram on the left. Misaligned systems consume a large amount of district and school resources (time, people and money). As a superintendent, this can feel like you are “herding cats”; not the ideal

job description for any district leader.

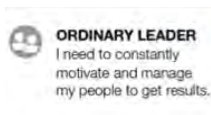
In contrast, when systems are aligned with a shared vision, everything works together to reach that vision. It’s not solely dependent on the superintendent to try to bring all these piece together any more. Great systems do more than help superintendents; they empower and unleash the best in principals and district teams. As Dr. Covey liked to say, “You water what you want to grow.” When great leaders focus on what’s important and decrease/eliminate the unimportant, they begin to more naturally reward what is aligned with the district’s vision.



Empowering

Do you think you have members of your team that possess more skill, talent, and ability than they are using?

One of the chronic problems districts face is underutilized talent and potential. Think of what the schools in your district would look like if everyone were contributing everything they



ORDINARY LEADER
I need to constantly motivate and manage my people to get results.



GREAT LEADER
My job is to release the talent and passion of our team toward our highest priorities.

were capable of! The fourth role of effective leadership addresses that issue by

empowering your team. Empowerment is the fruit of the other three roles.

By comparing the mindset of the ordinary and great leader you can see how empowerment can be a powerful way to build up and not control the people who ultimately drive district improvement. Empowering happens when leaders release control and allow others to take on greater responsibility to

deliver results without micromanaging. Empowering your team with this added level of autonomy increases engagement. Effective leaders use these opportunities to unleash the worth and potential in every member of their team. Leaders strategically build their team through “Leadership Conversations.”

There are three kinds of Leadership Conversations:

(1) “Voice” Conversations are focused on affirming the worth and potential of your team members and provides them the encouragement that ignites great achievement; (2) “Performance” Conversations help team members translate their talents and passion into specific results and objectives in their work; and (3) “Clear the Path” Conversations are a way that great leaders identify how they can help their team members succeed in their jobs and further build a relationship of trust.

Leadership Conversations



In conclusion, organizations of all types – businesses, government agencies, non-profits, schools and districts – continually suffer from four chronic problems: low trust, an unclear purpose and strategy, bureaucratic and misaligned systems, and underutilized talent and potential. By proactively practicing the four roles of leadership – modeling, pathfinding, aligning, and empowering – leaders can overcome these problems and transform the performance of their organizations. Start with yourself and your own staff, and then help building principals practice these same four roles within their schools. In the process, you will have truly found your voice, and will be inspiring others to discover theirs.

Reflection Exercise for Modeling

(For this exercise it is important to reflect on your contribution, good or bad to the relationship, not the other person’s.)

1. List two or three members of your team that you have a high-trust relationship with. What trust-building behaviors have you modeled that may have built that relationship of trust?
2. Now list two or three members of your team that need further work to build a trusting relationship. What behaviors might you have modeled that did not build trust?
3. What is the difference in the trust-building behaviors between the high and low trust people?
4. Identify one high-trust behavior that you can model for those whose trust needs more improvement. Set a specific goal on how you will model that behavior in the next month.

Reflection Exercise for Pathfinding

1. Think about the strategic school improvement plan for your district. Who are the stakeholders? For the exercise to be most effective, list out all stakeholders from the principal up to members of your district-level team.

Four Essential Roles continued on page 30.

Community and Political Engagement from page 24.

relationships among stakeholders.

- Apply the key strategies of **INFORM, INQUIRE, INVOLVE, INSPIRE** (Taken from Strategies for Community Engagement in School Turnaround)
- Communicate regularly with your legislators and ask them to contact you when decisions about public education policies and funding reach their desks so that you can share an informed discussion.

“When you do this work, you become part of the community, and they know who you are and that you are willing to be a part of them. Then we can all work together—teachers, neighbors, senior citizens, businesses, and everyone else—to really leave no child behind.” (Lourdes Vazquez, Martin Luther King Elementary School, Lancaster, PA)

Resources:

- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Nations
- Community and Family Engagement, Principals Share What Works, NASSP and NAESP sponsored by the MetLife Foundation, 2006
- Civil and Social Engagement (CSE)
- <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/CommunityAndFamilyEngagement.pdf>
- education.state.mn.us
- Reform Support Network, Strategies for Community Engagement in School Turnaround, 2014 U.S. Department of Education Grants, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/strategies-for-community-engagement-in-school-turnaround.pdf>

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Four Essential Roles from page 29.

2. Which of the listed stakeholders would you consider “engaged” in implementing their role in the school improvement effort? Put a checkmark by their names. Which of the listed stakeholders would you consider “disengaged” in implementing their role in the school improvement effort? Put an ‘X’ by their names.
3. Now circle the names of the stakeholders who were involved in developing aspects of the school improvement process they are responsible for implementing. Is there a relationship between the people who had a voice in development and the level of engagement you perceive from them? As you read the Pathfinding section, reflect on why this might be?
4. What actions can you take to help more stakeholders have a voice in the school improvement process? Write down two or three specific actions you will take to authentically increase their choice and voice and a timeline you for getting it done.

For more information please contact Kimberly Sanderson at Kimberly.Sanderson@FranklinCovey.com.

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Weather in Minnesota can be unpredictable. There are the inevitable days when school leaders must make weather-related decisions. MASA has been pleased to add an important new resource to our members' toolboxes for monitoring the weather.

StormReady™ is an online resource that provides specific weather data by zip code.

The website is filled with easy to read and relevant graphics and images for superintendents to make data-driven decisions. The "Hourly Weather Forecast Graph" forecasts many weather variables over a 24-hour period, including temperature, snow fall, rainfall, wind chill, and other variables that contribute to seasonal weather hazards. For example, a superintendent can see the temperature, windchill, and snowfall predictions for the start of the school day.

Additionally, the National Weather Service provides thorough education focused on preparing our schools to be StormReady™. On this website you will find a link for "Storm Ready in a Box." This online kit and video provides background for staff or student groups and/or Earth Science classes to prepare their school(s) to be StormReady™.

Get started by visiting www.mnasa.org/stormready.

MASA Calendar

2016

March 9

MASA Board of Directors
MASA Great Start Cohort V
At Ruth's Table
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

March 10-11

MASA/MASE Spring
Conference
Brooklyn Center

March 18-19

MN Aspiring
Superintendents Academy
MASA Offices, St. Paul

March 25

MASA offices closed
Spring Holiday

May 20-21

MN Aspiring
Superintendents Academy
MASA Offices, St. Paul

May 30

MASA offices closed
Memorial Day Holiday

June 16-17

MASA Board of Directors
Retreat
Madden's Conference
Center, Brainerd

August 9-10

MDE Back-to-School
Leadership Conference
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

August 10

MASA Great Start Cohort I
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

September 16-17

MN Aspiring
Superintendents Academy
MASA Offices, St. Paul

October 1-2

MASA Board of Directors
Madden's Conference
Center, Brainerd

October 2

MASA Great Start Cohort II
MASA Golf Tournament
Madden's Conference
Center, Brainerd

October 3-4

MASA Fall Conference
Madden's Conference
Center, Brainerd

November 11-12

MN Aspiring
Superintendents Academy
MASA Offices, St. Paul



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