

Leaders FORUM

Winter 2011

Richardson Named MN's 2012 Superintendent of the Year

The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) has named Superintendent Lynn Christopher (Chris) Richardson, Superintendent for the Northfield Schools, the 2012 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year.



Chris Richardson
Superintendent
Northfield Schools

"I am very proud and at the same time honored and humbled to be recognized by my colleagues with this honor," said Richardson.

"During my 30 years as a superintendent, I have always been guided by one simple yet powerful question, 'Is this in the best interest of all the students in my district?' I hope that in some small way I can represent my fellow Minnesota superintendents who on a daily basis strive to provide the best possible educational experience for the children and school districts they serve. Our communities expect it and our students deserve it."

As the Minnesota honoree, Superintendent Richardson is a candidate among other state winners for National Superintendent of the Year, to be announced at the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) convention on February 16, 2012 in Houston, Texas.

Superintendent of the Year nominees are evaluated on how each candidate demonstrates:

- Leadership for learning—creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.
- Communication skills—strength in both personal and organizational communication.
- Professionalism—constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills, while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.
- Community involvement—active participation in local community activities and understanding of regional, national, and international issues.

Superintendent Richardson was selected for this honor by a panel of representatives from a variety of Minnesota education organizations. "I am thrilled the committee has chosen Dr. Chris Richardson for the 2012 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year," says MASA Executive Director Dr. Gary Amoroso. "Dr. Richardson is truly a passionate educator who works on behalf of every student in his district on a daily basis."

Superintendent Richardson has been superintendent for Northfield Schools since 2004. With an enrollment of 3,900

2012 SOY...

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LEADER'S NOTES

Leaders of Learning or Learning Leaders? Both!

Two books that are consuming some of my time right now are “Leaders of Learning” by Richard Dufour and Robert Marzano and an older book called “The Learning Leader” by Douglas Reeves. The titles of the books, though similar, have caused me to reflect on the current role of school leaders and how that role has evolved over the past years. Shortly after the start of my first full time superintendent position, I had a visit from a retired superintendent who still lived in the school district. I am estimating that he had retired in the early 1980’s and I know that he had been very well regarded as superintendent. He shared with me some of the ways he kept the district running smoothly. One of his suggestions that I remember quite clearly was “that all teachers must lower their blinds and close them completely at the end of the day,” (if this did not occur, a note from the superintendent would greet the teacher the following day informing them of their mistake).

Now I am sure that practice and his other suggestions helped him lead the school district to success during his tenure, but I am not so certain that they would make much of an impact on the academic performance of the district. The role of the superintendent at the time was that of a fiscal manager, with limited focus on the academic functions of the district. The transition from managers of resources during the 1980s and perhaps even 1990s to leaders of learning during the 21st century has come quickly and emphatically. As school leaders today, regardless of our position within our districts, we are expected to be “leaders of learning” and “learning leaders”, not just a manager of the overall system.



Kelly Smith
MASA President and
Superintendent
Belle Plaine Schools

Throughout the MASA organization, we have talented individuals serving their districts as curriculum leaders, special education directors, assistant superintendents and superintendents. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that all of us, regardless of position within the district, be engaged in the academic growth of the district. While it still is important to manage the district finances, the real measuring stick that our public uses to determine

a successful district is the academic achievement of all students throughout the district.

As Dufour and Marzano state in the earlier referenced book, “Leadership from the central office matters – both in terms of raising student achievement and in terms of creating the conditions for adult learning that lead to higher levels of student achievement.” (2011, pg. 45) Regardless of the financial condition of your district, or the current level of academic achievement within your district, our school districts need strong “learning leaders” who are truly “leaders of learning” within their districts today.

Thanks for everything that each of you does on behalf of students across Minnesota. We have a great challenge ahead of us as we strive to improve academic performance for all students. I am grateful to be working with such outstanding colleagues as we collectively seek to meet the challenge!

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

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2012 SOY...

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students, the Northfield School District is located approximately 40 miles south of the Twin Cities in what is considered a “rural” community. The district has a long history of academic and co-curricular excellence as well as strong collaboration with their community and Carleton and St. Olaf colleges.

The Northfield Board of Education Chair, Kari Nelson, nominated Superintendent Richardson for the Superintendent of the Year Award. “Dr. Richardson is a gifted administrator with the ability to see both the forest and the trees,” explained Nelson. “He is a long range planner, yet he deals sensitively and thoroughly with day-to-day challenges. He plants, nurtures and prunes the small seedlings that are essential for cultivating district-wide success. A real leader, Dr. Richardson is proactive, anticipating and preparing for issues that might arise.”

“As a board member, I see and experience Dr. Richardson’s leadership in ways that can’t be articulated during the course of any given day,” wrote Noel Stratmoen, a member of the Northfield School Board. “To me, Dr. Richardson demonstrates that leadership is a concept, a science and an art. Leadership provides vision to help others establish realistic goals. Leadership exercises faith but does not ignore the facts. Leadership defines effectiveness so others can be efficient. Leadership expects the best and influences the average to become better. Leadership provides direction and establishes the parameters of control and leadership thrives on finding opportunities so others can thrive on accomplishments.”

When asked to describe a strategy Northfield Schools has employed to close a system-level gap in ethnicity, Richardson explained that as a school district, Northfield has a graduation rate of over 91%, with 85% of high school graduates enrolling in postsecondary institutions. But in 2005, the district recognized that the community’s Latino students were not enjoying the same success. Working collaboratively, Northfield Schools and a number of community partners reviewed existing dropout prevention and college access models and submitted a proposal. With a \$40,000 grant, the Northfield Tackling Obstacles and Raising College Hopes (TORCH) initiative set out to provide academic and social support, mentoring, career exploration and connections with post-secondary education opportunities for Latino youth in grades 9-12. Dr. Richardson is proud to report, “Over the past five and a half years, TORCH has seen remarkable results. Today, the Latino graduation rate in Northfield has climbed to

over 90%. In the past 12 months, over 80% of TORCH high school students and over 90% of TORCH middle school students showed academic gains on standardized tests or overall GPA. By the spring of 2012, five TORCH graduates will have earned a bachelor’s degree, seven will have earned an associate’s degree and six will have received a postsecondary certificate!”

Northfield Schools is entering its third year of full implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in every building. Each PLC is responsible for identifying the building student achievement target(s) that they can best support, reviewing existing data about their students, determining essential learnings, and creating additional formative assessments to measure how students are achieving in mastering the essential learnings. “We believe PLCs provide the best form of quality staff development. It supports teachers in working collaboratively to analyze student data, identify student needs, implement best practice strategies, evaluate the impact of their teaching on student learning and make changes in their practice to better meet the needs of all students,” said Dr. Richardson.

Superintendent Richardson is very active on the state and national level with education advocacy, funding and budget issues. He emphasizes the importance for communities to have a clear picture of the financial status of their district, “A key district strategy is demonstrating good stewardship in managing our finances.” Richardson explains, “In 2004-05, the district was deficit spending and entered statutory operating debt. In 2005-06 and 2006-07, the district reduced expenditures by 14% using program-based budgeting and in 2006, the community supported a seven year operating levy. Since then, Northfield Schools has maintained programs and staff, rebuilt the fund balance, and now holds AA+ bond rating.”

Superintendent Richardson received his Ph.D. in Education Administration from the University of Iowa and his master and bachelor of science degrees from Iowa State University. Before becoming Superintendent for the Northfield Schools, he was Superintendent for the Osseo Area Schools and prior to that held administrative positions in other districts throughout Iowa and Nebraska. Dr. Richardson is Treasurer on the MASA Board of Directors as well as an active member in the Minnesota Alliance for Student Achievement, Minnesota Council on Economic Education and Schools for Equity in Education.

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MASA's 2012-2014 Strategic Vision



Gary Amoroso
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of
School Administrators

On December 7th the board of directors approved the 2012-2014 MASA Strategic Vision Plan. I want to sincerely THANK all of you who helped us get to this point! Following is a copy of the plan:

Statement of Beliefs: a formal expression of the Organization's fundamental values, deep and abiding convictions, non-negotiable ethical principles and moral imperatives.

MASA believes...

- A world-class education for all students is our highest priority.
- Public education is the cornerstone of American democracy.
- Leadership significantly impacts student opportunities, achievement and future success.
- Quality professional support and development for all of our members is critical.
- Equity in resources is necessary to ensure success for all students.
- Diversity enriches the experiences of students.
- Minnesota must close its achievement gap.

Mission Statement: a broad statement that identifies why the organization exists...purpose, function, client, market niche.

MASA's Mission

•AS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN, MASA shapes and influences the State and Federal education agenda, serves as the preeminent voice for public education, and empowers all members through high quality services, support and professional development.

Goals: the Organization's desired results stated in terms that are measurable, demonstrable and observable.

Strategies: broad statements that describe how the Organization's resources will be deployed to achieve the mission and objectives.

MASA's Goals and Strategies

By 2014, MASA will deliver a multi-tiered system of professional development that meets the individualized learning goals of all members.

- We will allocate sufficient resources to build internal and external capacity to meet the professional development needs of all members.
- We will research, develop and implement the components necessary to deliver multi-tiered professional development.

By 2014, all members will affirm that MASA is the unifying force for Minnesota public education.

- We will foster committed relationships with all members by reaching out to determine their needs, empower them with a common message, and earn their support in implementing the mission and vision of MASA.
- We will strengthen relationships with other Minnesota educational associations and policy makers to develop a common education agenda.

In January, we will be convening an action team for each of the 4 strategies. I hope you consider being a contributing member to one or more of the action teams. We need your involvement to make this plan a vibrant living document. Look for an email in early January requesting your assistance.

I am very very excited about the future that we are building at MASA!

Core Planning Team: Nancy Allen-Mastro, Assistant Superintendent, Bloomington Schools, Sherri Broderius, Superintendent, A.C.G.C. Schools, Tim Caroline, Superintendent, Moose Lake Schools, Dave Fjeldheim, Superintendent, Sebeka Schools, Matt Grose, Superintendent, Deer River Schools, Larry Guggisberg, Superintendent, Roseau Schools, Jay Haugen, Superintendent, Farmington Schools, Luther Heller, Superintendent, Montevideo Schools, Jim Hess, Superintendent, Bemidji Schools, Wayne Kazmierczak, Assistant Superintendent, Moorhead Schools, Darren Kermes, Executive Director, MN River Valley/Carver Scott Education Coop, David Krenz, Superintendent, Austin Schools, Pam Miller, Director of Teaching & Learning, Buffalo Hanover Montrose Schools, Jerry Ness, Superintendent, Fergus Falls Schools, Jeff Olson, Superintendent, St. Peter Schools, Karen Orcutt, Superintendent, Orono Schools, Nan Records, Director of Special Education, Sherburne-N Wright Cooperative, Chris Richardson, Superintendent, Northfield Schools, Jamie Skjeveland, Superintendent, Crosby-Ironton Schools, Kelly Smith, Superintendent, Belle Plaine Schools, Scott Thielman, Superintendent, Buffalo Hanover Montrose Schools, Mia Urick, Director of Professional Development, MASA, Kevin Wellen, Superintendent, NRHEG Schools, Deirdre Wells, Superintendent, Inver Grove Heights Schools, Gary Amoroso, Facilitator, Aimee Ranallo, Note-taker

2011 Elections - Results and Impact



Valerie Dosland
EWALD
MASA Lobbyist

The 2011 elections saw the highest number of school district levy questions on ballots statewide in more than a decade. Over a third of the school districts had levy questions on the ballot – some were levy renewals and some were multiple questions which included a renewal and a levy increase.

According to the Minnesota School Boards Association, 90 districts passed an operating levy question

and 24 districts failed to pass a question. That is a 79 percent passage rate for operating levies! Out of 114 districts seeking an operating levy, 58 were asking for levy renewals of which 57 passed. MSBA also shows 9 of 12 capital lease levies were approved, and four out of nine building bonds were approved.

These results reinforce the well-known fact that school districts are increasingly relying on local levy dollars to fund basic educational programming. Local taxpayers are filling the gap for the lack of state funding increases. It is important to state that levy referenda are not the answer to the challenges school districts are facing – these results show we need a systemic change to how schools are funded so that the need for levy elections won't exist at the level they exist today. Be assured that MASA, along with many other education organizations, will continue to fight for stable and predictable funding.

A significant issue that arose is that for the first time, influential state legislators actively opposed some of these ballot measures and in the process, misrepresented the reality you all are facing. Over the

course of the summer, several key legislators argued that school districts received significant funding increases this session. That argument, however, needed to be put in proper context – the funding referenced accounted for all education funding, including local school district referendum, projected enrollment increases, and federal aid. Their arguments did not present the real impact of the funding because these increases were due to things beyond the Legislature's control and in reality did not amount to additional funding. This created confusion among the public but in retrospect it also provided great opportunities to educate taxpayers on the needs in your local communities.

In the end, legislators did not weigh into most specific referendum but instead shifted the debate to the timing of elections. Proponents will argue that odd-year elections have lower voter turnout and voter engagement. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, referendums held during odd-year elections pass at a rate of more than 70 percent. During even-year elections, that passage rate falls to 52 percent. These facts are interesting but they ignore the reality that school elections get lost in all the campaign noise during even-year elections. As you know, for school districts to try to get their message out in that atmosphere is really difficult if not almost impossible. Expect to see proposals during the 2012 legislative session to move levy elections to even-year elections when statewide elections are held for state or federal offices.

Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of the children of Minnesota!

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FEDERAL ADVOCACY

MASA's Federal Advocacy Committee Annual Washington, D.C. Trip

On October 11 through October 14, 2011, Gary Amoroso, Executive Director of MASA, along with five members of MASA's Federal Advocacy Committee traveled to Washington, D.C. to voice MASA's position on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Committee members who took part included Kelly Smith, Superintendent of Belle Plaine Schools; John Cselovszki, Superintendent of Sleepy Eye Schools; Paul Durand, Superintendent of Rockford Area Schools; Jeff Peura, Superintendent of International Falls Schools; and Wayne Kazmierczak, Assistant Superintendent of Moorhead Area Schools.



Pictured above, left to right: Gary Amoroso, Kelly Smith, Wayne Kazmierczak, Janos Cselovszki and Paul Durand

Group members met with Noelle Ellerson, AASA's Assistant Director of Policy Analysis and Advocacy, to discuss AASA's position on both the House and Senate versions of ESEA. The timing of the trip was fortuitous as ESEA was being discussed quite extensively. While the group was in Washington, the Senate Education Committee passed the bill that was approved on October 20 by the same committee, which will ultimately make its way to the Senate floor for a vote, possibly before the end of December.

The group met with the following members of Congress or key staff members: Senators Al Franken (staff) and Amy Klobuchar; Representatives Collin Peterson (staff), Erik Paulsen, Tim Walz, Betty McCollum (staff), Michelle Bachmann (staff), John Kline (staff), Chip Cravaack, and Keith Ellison. The group also met with Deputy Secretaries Massie Ritsch and John White from the U.S. Department of Education and Governor Mark Dayton's Federal liaison.

The group's primary message was simple: Put partisan politics aside and reauthorize ESEA. The group made it clear that it is essential to eliminate the law's signature accountability measure known as adequate yearly progress, or AYP. Among other things, the group also shared concerns that an appropriate balance of Federal involvement and local control is necessary, and that,

generally, local control is preferred.

As would be expected, Congress members' beliefs about what is most important varied greatly. Views ranged from abolishing the U.S. Department of Education to increasing the Federal Government's role in areas such as teacher and principal evaluation. There appeared to be little agreement as to when members felt ESEA might be reauthorized. Some were optimistic that it would occur prior to the 2012 general election, others were not so optimistic.

While in Washington, the group was afforded a tour of the U.S. Capitol building by one of Senator Franken's staff members and also visited Arlington

National Cemetery, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Vietnam Memorial. By all accounts, the trip was successful and MASA was and will continue to be part of the national discussion on education issues impacting Minnesota students.

*Written by Wayne Kazmierczak,
Assistant Superintendent, Moorhead Schools*

MASA Awards Recognize Outstanding Leadership

Administrators of Excellence Award
Kay E. Jacobs Award
MASA Distinguished Service Award
Richard Green Scholars Program
Outstanding Central Office Leader Award
Polaris Leadership Award

Each year, the MASA/MASE Spring Conference provides an opportunity to recognize outstanding members who are dedicated leaders and advocates for children and Minnesota education. We encourage you to consider nominating yourself or a colleague for recognition. Nominate someone who you feel reflects the qualities of a leader who is committed to education and who is an exemplary representative of MASA. Information packets with award nomination forms will be emailed to all members. Award background information is also available on the MASA web site (www.mnasa.org).

Nominations are due by January 9, 2012.

A slap in the Facebook: Does the First Amendment Protect Off-Campus Mis-use of Social Media?

In the wake of students using social media on their home computers or smart phones to ridicule or demean school officials or fellow students, courts throughout the country have grappled with balancing student First Amendment free-speech rights and the rights of schools to maintain a respectful, educationally-appropriate environment. Because the courts have issued different decisions even when faced with very similar facts, the U.S. Supreme Court may soon decide to resolve the conflict.

Most of us are familiar with the U.S. Supreme Court's declaration that students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech at the schoolhouse gate." Equally important, however, is that the Court also has recognized the rights of schools to regulate certain student speech at school, even though the government could not censor similar speech outside of school.

Students therefore may not engage in speech at school that is a "material and substantial disruption" of school activities, is vulgar, lewd, sexually explicit or obscene, or promotes drug use. Schools also have a right to limit speech in a school-sponsored communication—such as a school newspaper—that is at odds with the school's basic educational mission.

While it is reasonably well-settled what students can be prevented from saying at school, courts have issued seemingly inconsistent decisions on the extent to which schools may sanction disruptive speech using social media outside of school.

In June 2011, the Third Circuit decided two cases that involved students who used home computers to create fake profiles of their principals on MySpace. In *Layshock v. Hermitage Sch. Dist.*, a student-created profile mocked a school principal's weight by calling him a "big steroid freak," a "big drinker" and a smoker of "big blunts." In *J.S. v. Blue Mountain Sch. Dist.*, a Pennsylvania middle school student used her principal's actual photo to create a fake profile depicting an Alabama middle school principal who described himself as a pedophile and sex addict.

In defending their disciplinary actions against the



Greg Madsen
Shareholder
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students creating the fake profiles, the schools argued that the profiles were lewd, obscene and offensive, and disrupted their school environments. The students claimed the profiles were parodies and protected as free speech under the First Amendment.

The Third Circuit agreed with the students in both cases and overturned the discipline. The court acknowledged that students have no First Amendment right to use lewd, vulgar or obscene language at school. However, the Third Circuit concluded in each case that the schools could not, consistent with the

First Amendment, discipline for speech occurring off campus that did not result in substantial disruption or "creat[e] a reasonable apprehension of substantial disruption."

In explaining its decision in the *J.S.* case, the Third Circuit stated that the profile, "though indisputably vulgar, was so juvenile and nonsensical that no reasonable person could take its content seriously and the record demonstrates no one did." The court also observed that no student viewed the profile at school because the social networking site was blocked, and concluded that no school disruptions occurred, "beyond general rumblings, a few minutes of talking in class, and some officials rearranging their schedule" to deal with the profile issues.

Within weeks of the *J.S.* and *Layshock* decisions that sided with the students, two other federal appeals courts issued decisions upholding a school's right to impose discipline for off-campus misuse of social media.

The first of these decisions was issued in July 2011 by the Fourth Circuit. *Kowalski v. Berkeley County Schools* involved a high school student, Kara Kowalski, who was suspended for using a home computer to create a social network group called "Students Against Sluts with Herpes" that targeted a specific classmate and displayed her photo. Kowalski invited 100 MySpace "friends," including many classmates, to join the group,

Facebook...
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Facebook...

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which used the webpage to engage in bullying and harassing speech toward the targeted classmate. The court found that Kowalski's actions were "sufficiently connected to the school environment" to justify discipline because the "targeted, defamatory nature of Kowalski's speech, aimed at a fellow classmate, [] created an actual or nascent substantial disorder and disruption in the school."

In *D.J.M. v. Hannibal Pub. Sch. Dist.*, the Eighth Circuit was faced with a case involving a 10th grade student who used a home computer to send instant messages to another student that described the student's desire to obtain a gun and kill other students. The school intervened and took disciplinary steps to remove the student from school. Despite the student's protest that he was not being serious, the Eighth Circuit held that, where school officials spent considerable time dealing with concerns from parents about D.J.M.'s threats and ensuring appropriate safety measures were in place to protect against the threat, there was a sufficient showing of "substantial disruption" to warrant discipline. The court also concluded that D.J.M.'s speech constituted a "true threat" not protected by the First Amendment. It should be noted that the Eighth Circuit is the federal appeals court whose decisions govern the federal courts of Minnesota and therefore have greater precedential value for cases involving Minnesota public schools.

The Minnesota state courts also have recently weighed in on the issue. In what appears to be the first decision by a Minnesota court involving discipline resulting from a social networking posting, the court of appeals in July 2011 considered the appeal of a University of Minnesota mortuary science student who was disciplined as a result of a social network posting. The student in *Tatro v. University of Minnesota* posted a Facebook message stating "who knew the embalming lab was so cathartic! I still want to stab a certain someone in the throat with a trocar though. Hmm . . . perhaps I will spend the evening updating my 'Death List #5' and making friends with the crematory guy." Tatro's Facebook setting allowed "friends" and "friends of friends," which amounted to hundreds of people that included other mortuary science students, to view her postings.

Based on the complaints and expressions of fear of other students and faculty members concerning Tatro's posts—and despite her claim she was joking—the Minnesota Court of Appeals stated that "[b]ecause Tatro's Facebook posts materially and substantially

disrupted the work and discipline of the University, we conclude that the University did not violate Tatro's First Amendment rights by responding with appropriate disciplinary sanctions." (Although it did not apply in Tatro, the Minnesota anti-bullying statute (Minn. Stat. §121A.0695) requires that public school districts address in their anti-bullying policies "electronic forms and forms involving Internet use.")

Some courts seem to have recognized that, as we move forward into a world of ever-changing communication technologies, the line between off-campus and on-campus speech is blurred.

In the words of a justice who dissented to the majority opinion in *J.S.*,

"For better or worse, wireless internet access, smartphones, tablet computers, social networking services like Facebook, and stream-of-consciousness communications via Twitter give an omnipresence to speech that makes any effort to trace First Amendment boundaries along the physical boundaries of a school campus a recipe for serious problems in our public schools."

We may soon find out whether the U.S. Supreme Court agrees with that commentary. The unsuccessful parties in *J.S.*, Layshock and Kowalski have all requested the Court review the decisions and provide clear direction on the boundaries of student social media use that adversely affects members of the school community.

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.

Greg Madsen is an education law attorney with the law firm of Kennedy & Graven, Chartered, and is certified as a Labor and Employment Law Specialist by the Minnesota State Bar Association. For more information, please contact him at (612) 337-9305 or www.kennedy-graven.com.

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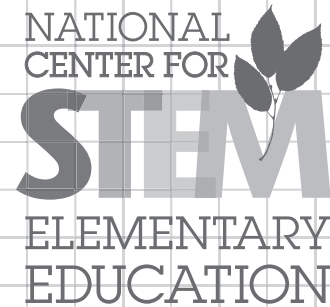
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Tools of the Trade

My Grandpa always had a set of pliers in his pocket...and he knew how to use them!

Grandpa and Dad farmed together for nearly fifty years, managing 500+ acres and a 250-head dairy herd. I was the oldest grandchild and my Dad the oldest in his family, so only about twenty years separated each of our generations. I spent a lot of years working with both of them until I finished college and went off to work. What a learning experience!

Those two were the “Kings of Cobble”. It seemed that we were always trying to be mechanics, carpenters, plumbers, or electricians cobbling (fixing) something on the farm. They seldom bought anything new—when a fix would do. They could fix anything, and most often it was on the fly using Grandpa’s pliers, wire, twine, or any other material that would solve the problem. Most of the time the fix wasn’t pretty, but it always got the job done.

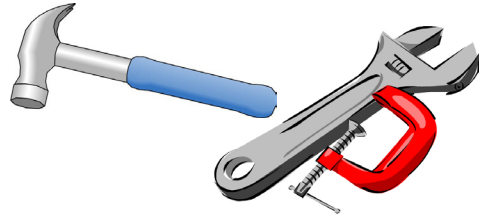
That small tool in Grandpa’s pocket could do anything! It was a wrench, a hammer, a pry bar, a wire cutter... well you get the idea. The uses for this simple tool were only limited by the imagination (and sometimes stubbornness) of the person using it. My Dad, as a member of younger generation, preferred to use a small vise-grip wrench as his pocket toolbox. He considered it an “upgrade” to the pocket technology of my Grandpa’s generation.

So what does my Grandpa’s pliers and Dad’s vise-grip have to do with using technology in our schools?

The analogy is that technology is just an inert “tool” until you figure out how to use it effectively—just like the pliers or vise grip in a farmer’s pocket. The challenge for education is to incorporate technology tools and transform educational practices to improve student achievement.

So often, educators fixate on identifying the technology “tool” that will immediately transform student education. It’s not that simple. Without changing teaching practice or adapting how that tool is used, little academic or life skill improvement can be expected.

Basic knowledge must be taught and mastered, for without it students will not be able to use those skills to solve more complex problems. Our challenge as leaders and educators is to promote and model technology as a tool to ensure that students master the basics, while systematically transforming our educational process to



meet the needs of 21st century learners.

Today’s students are preparing for a world that we can only imagine. Think about how our lives have changed in the past 30-40 years. In 1971, the only personal technology available to consumers was the telephone, phonograph, radio, and television. In 1981, IBM introduced the first “recognized” personal computer. It had 16k of memory and cost over \$10,000. The Internet “Revolution” begins in 1993. Since that time, technology and its tools have changed our society and the world. What will the world be like in ten years? How about twenty or thirty years?

Gone are the days when any working adult can assume that they have learned their trade and will practice those same skills unchanged during their career. Futurists anticipate that our children will change jobs/careers at least ten times during their working life... and seven of those jobs/careers haven’t been created yet. So it is vital that we give our children the grounded education (basic skills and knowledge) to be life-long learners and the ability to adapt their work skills as the economic needs of our country and the world change.

It is staggering to think what technologies and tools the next decade or two will bring to the world. Many of us carry more computing power in our pocket, in the form of a smart phone, than was required to send man to the moon in 1969. We literally carry the knowledge of the world in our pocket these days via the Internet.

My Dad and Grandpa, both passed on now, taught me great lessons about meeting professional and personal challenges those many years ago on the farm....the ability to understand the basics of problem, to form multiple solutions, to use available tools and materials, and most importantly, to work together to fix the problem.

I can think of no greater gift to our children than to prepare them to use the “tools” in their pocket along with the necessary personal skills to be successful in life now...and well into the future.

*Written by Curt Tryggstad
Superintendent, Little Falls Schools*

TECHNOLOGY

Empowering the 21st-Century Superintendent through Technology

TIES Superintendent Technology Leadership Academy is dedicated to helping superintendents and district leadership teams build their knowledge, skills and confidence as effective technology leaders.

TIES has held two cohorts of the Academy over the past two years, which have been facilitated by Mark Robertson, Superintendent, NWSID. Over the course of ten sessions, superintendents work with each other in some sessions, with their administrative teams in others and with a personal coach to develop technology skills. The academy's leadership teams are comprised of the chief technology officer, curriculum director, principal, media specialist, tech-savvy teacher and others.

A national initiative:

The academy is based on the program, Empowering the 21st Century Superintendent, which was originally developed by the Consortium on School Networking (CoSN) and expanded by TIES staff and Mark Robertson. This program uses a powerful approach that includes measurements against ISTE .NETS standards, national speakers, hands-on technology demos, and action steps for superintendents and district leadership teams around five themes:

1. Strengthening leadership and communication
2. Raising the bar on 21st-century skills
3. Transforming pedagogy with compelling learning environments
4. Supporting professional development and communities of practice
5. Creating balanced assessments

Successes are measurable:

Based on his evaluation of the academy, independent consultant Mike Hopkins reported, "The project has been very successful. The ability for superintendents to share their experiences freely among themselves, without risk of criticism, was significant."

One participant, Inver Grove Superintendent Deirdre



Betty Schweizer
Executive Director
TIES

Wells, said, "Bringing people together at the top across districts greatly enhances their ability to share best practices and learn from each other's successes and mistakes."

"The person at the top needs to be aware of and involved in technology," she added. "It permeates everything we do in the district: finance, human resources, public relations, curriculum, communications, changing pedagogy—all are infused with technology."

In addition to the superintendents, the leadership teams clearly demonstrated success as a result of their participation in TIES Academy, said Hopkins. "Those who fully participated in the project have made significant strides in integrating technology in teaching, learning and leading in their districts."

The project has led to significant increases in superintendents' and their teams' understanding and application of technology as measured by the assessments.

As Mark Robertson often says, "Leadership Matters."

New cohort to start in 2012:

If you are interested in participating in a future academy, please contact TIES Executive Director Betty Schweizer at betty.schweizer@ties.k12.mn.us or Mark Robertson at mrobertson@NWS.k12.mn.us.



NOMINATIONS OPEN!

Nominations are open until January 9, 2012 for the MASA offices of:

2012 - 2013 MASA President-Elect

The President-Elect serves one year, followed by one year as President and one year as Past President. In the year of presidency, a student from the President's district will receive a \$1,000 scholarship. All members located in the "Metro" districts (Region 9) are eligible.

In addition, candidates must:

- be a MASA member, in the "active" category
- be a practicing administrator
- have five years of successful administrative experience in Minnesota
- be committed to MASA and its goals
- have time available to represent MASA for three years (2012-2015)

Accountabilities of this office include:

- participate in MASA Executive Committee and Board meetings
- assist the President in providing general leadership to the organization
- perform all duties of the President, in absence of the President
- recommend appointments of all standing committee members, including Chairs-Elect

Superintendent Component Group Representative to the MASA Board of Directors for Region 2, Region 4, Region 6, Region 7 and Region 9

The Component Group Representatives to the MASA Board of Directors serves a three-year term representing their region. This Representative will replace the Component Group Board Representative who are completing their term June 30, 2012.

Greater Minnesota Special Education Component Group Representative to the MASA Board of Directors (Must be from Region 1-8)

The Component Group Representative to the MASA Board serves a three-year term. This Representative will replace the Component Group Board Representative that is completing their term June 30, 2012.

Retiree Component Group Representative to the MASA Board of Directors

Retiree Component Group Representative to the MASA Board serves a three-year term. This Representative will replace the Retiree Component Group Board Representative that is completing their term June 30, 2012.

AASA Regional Governing Board Representative

Represent Minnesota on the AASA Regional Governing Board. Representatives must be a joint MASA/AASA member and also have been an AASA member for a least three consecutive years. This representative will replace the representative who is completing his term June 30, 2012.

The Nomination Process:

MASA officers have the opportunity to influence education in Minnesota and serve their fellow colleagues.

We encourage you to nominate yourself or a colleague who you feel would be a strong leader for MASA. If you nominate a colleague, please contact your nominee to ask them whether or not they are interested in running for the position and so that they know you have nominated them!

Nomination forms and the lists of eligible candidates are available on the MASA web site (www.mnasa.org). Fill out your nomination and return it to the MASA office via mail or fax by January 9, 2012. You may also email your nomination to aranallo@mnasa.org.

26 districts and 150 district leaders have participated in the TIES Technology Leadership Academy...

Brooklyn Center	North Branch
Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose	North St. Paul
Columbia Heights	Northfield
Esko Schools	Osseo
Forest Lake	Pine City
Fridley	Randolph
Hastings	Rush City
Hopkins	South St. Paul
Intermediate District 287	St. Anthony
Intermediate District 917	St. Louis Park
Inver Grove	St. Michael
Mahtomedi	Stillwater
Mounds View	West St. Paul

Grade your district technology leadership skills on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being an A+

Visionary leadership: To what extent do your administrators share a vision for comprehensive integration of technology for organizational transformation?

Digital age learning culture: How well do administrators create and sustain a rigorous, digital-age learning culture that engages all students?

Excellence in professional practice: Do your administrators promote professional learning to enhance student learning through the infusion of contemporary technologies and digital resources?

Systemic improvement: To what extent do administrators provide digital-age leadership and management through the district's effective use of information and technology resources?

Digital citizenship: How well do your administrators model and facilitate understanding of social, ethical and legal issues and responsibilities related to an evolving digital culture?

This test is a modified version of the ISTE.NETS for administrators.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Next Step for "Green" in Schools and Society: Standardized Recycling Labels for Bins



Dr. Don Draayer
Retired Superintendent
Minnetonka Schools

When a group of south metro school districts in Dakota County started using consistent recycle labels in their buildings, they collected 47% more recyclables, which reduced landfill (fee/tax) costs for waste by 47%. Now imagine the impact of consistent labels throughout the rest of society.

containers in buildings, outside of buildings, and at athletic events. The bad news is that every label under the sun is used – and frequently no label at all.

One of my retirement activities is serving as chair of the non-profit Environmental Advancement Foundation, which is the parent organization for the Recycle Across America standardized label initiative. Charlie Kyte gave his wholehearted endorsement to the use of standardized recycle labels, and now Gary Amoroso and his staff at MASA asked me to write this article.

- The standardized recycle labels were designed, developed, and copyrighted here in Minnesota with input from recycling industry leaders, business leaders, government agents, public school authorities, and consumers. (Note: A standardized label has been created to meet every sorting requirement.)

Imagine if every “stop sign” has its own, unique design on every corner, in every state. Yet, that is what is in play in the recycling business, giving rise to confusion, frustration, and a high volume of valuable recyclables being dumped into landfills that add to the earth’s contamination!

Minnesota took the point position on “no smoking”. Now Minnesota can take the point position in use of national standardized labels for recycling bins. In effect, it is public education at its best: leading smart and by example.

I have visited hundreds of Minnesota schools, colleges, and universities in a multitude of capacities. The good news is that, across the board, Minnesota schools have waste

- Recycle Across America and the standardized recycling labels were launched in September 2010. Now there are now businesses, schools, universities, governmental offices, and households throughout America using the standardized recycling labels.
- Although standardized labels might sound inconsequential, they are the primary instruction for recycling! With all the variables of sorting and package labeling – having effective and consistent instructions on recycling bins is critical.
- Human population has now passed the 7 billion mark. It is timely to be aggressive in reducing finite natural resources use and our CO2 emissions. Recycling is a proven solution: it improves our environmental impact on the earth, stimulates our economy, reduces landfill waste, and can yield significant budgetary cost savings.
- To learn more or to order standardized recycle labels for your schools, visit: [www: recycleacrossAmerica.org](http://www.recycleacrossAmerica.org) Or see the “link” on the MASA site.

Here is the BIG IDEA behind the use of standardized recycling labels: recycling must become an automated response, like stopping at a stop sign. And recyclable materials need to be seen as the valuable commodity that they are!

There is good school PR and cost saving potential in use of standardized recycling labels. In this extremely difficult economic climate, our constituency expects schools to turn over every leaf for possible savings as well as to do the right things for our environment.

Become a pragmatic leader; increase recycling, reduce school waste costs, and help the environment. How?

- Implement standardized recycle labels on all of your bins;
- Communicate your recycling program; enlist student, staff, and community support.
- Monitor your recycling capture rates and then schedule a meeting with your hauler to discuss a cost-reduction plan as a result of your improved recycling rates*.

* Note: Tax rates for solid waste hauling and services to landfills in some counties are 50-60%, whereas there are no imposed taxes for recycling hauling.

The cost of standardized recycling labels is negligible; the benefits last forever!



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Call Kim or Luanna at 1-800-713-4439

Supporting Our Military Families



Charlie Kyte
Retired
MASA Executive Director

While many families struggle in these difficult times, one group of families carries an even larger burden. These are the families of our men and women serving in the military. As we all well know, this small percentage of individuals, and their families, have seen disruption in their lives over the past ten years and this disruption is likely to continue. We as education leaders should do our part to help make their

lives just a little bit easier.

Recently, a coalition of organizations and associations came together from across Minnesota to strategize about ways to help support the families and children of those in military service. Led by Frannie Franken, spouse of Senator Franken, and former US Congressman Jim Ramstad, this group engaged in a group effort to plan how to provide more support.

I was proud to see the involvement of many of the education associations standing together with civic and business groups from across the state. Included were MSBA, MASA, Ed MN, MDE, MASSP, MESPA MCEA and the MN PTA.

Every city and town in Minnesota has seen the effects of military deployments. In addition to the young men and women enlisting in the active military forces, we have thousands of Reservists and National Guard troops who have been called to active duty. Many of them have seen more than a single deployment.

Many of those in military service are in marital relationships and many have school age children. Think about the effect on the whole family as they await announcements about deployments, the actual deployment of a parent, the family's adjustment to one parent and often the loss of income. And most of all, they worry about safety and the return of the serving member.

Often the return of the military parent is even more confusing for the children than the actual deployment. They have to navigate a returning parent, the rebuilding of a marital and parental relationship, worries about jobs and after-deployment stresses that

affect the whole family.

We as educators must care for every child and there is no shortage of challenges for caring about students and families these days. Yet it is imperative that educators become aware of the challenges of our military families and go a little extra distance to help them make it through the emotional rollercoaster that often accompanies these military experiences.

So what can we do?

As school board members and superintendents you can create a policy to encourage staff to keep the children of military members under extra care. You can, within the guidelines of data privacy, let your principals and teachers know which families are affected. You can reach out to other community agencies and groups and ask them to be partners with you in your efforts. Superintendents especially can use opportunities to speak to community groups to ask them for support for these families.

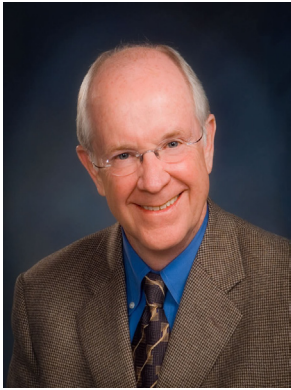
Principals can have a list of the children of military families available so they and counselors can check in with them frequently. If there are groups of affected children, creating support groups helps them to share their challenges. When children of military families act out, be ready to recognize that their home situations may play a role in their behaviors. Be especially watchful for bullying and insensitive remarks from other children.

All schools can enlist the support of veteran's organizations in their communities. These organizations are always supportive and often have some extra funding that they can provide to the schools which can be used to help fund extra opportunities and fees that are required for participation. These connections not only can help the children, but also build good will with the veterans' organizations.

Caring happens in little ways. As an educator, you are a person of influence in your community and your caring can result in a child (or children) having a better chance to grow and learn successfully. I ask you to take a step forward and engage yourself in helping your school system help our military families and their children. Together we can help to build a better America.

NOTES ON THE NEWS

The Bullied Brain



David Walsh
Ph.D.
Author

Many of you know a kid like Tyrone. Tyrone, age twelve, came home from school crying, shaking and barely able to speak. “What happened?” his mother screamed. Between sobs he was finally able to tell his mother about the terrifying ordeal he had endured on the way home from the park.

“Three kids jumped me and forced me into a ‘PortaPotty,’” he explained.

“They wouldn’t let me out, beat on the walls and told me they were going to shove my head into the tank. I think they would have, but they ran when a jogger came along.”

“How long were you in there?” his mother asked.

“I don’t know. Ten, fifteen minutes, maybe,” Tyrone replied.

“Do you know the boys?” she asked as she hugged her son.

“Yeah,” he answered. “They’re a year ahead of me in school and always picking on us younger kids.”

Tyrone’s mother then calls you upset and looking for answers.

Bullying incidents like Tyrone’s have been getting a lot of attention lately. And well they should. Even though bullying has been going on for many generations we are learning just how devastating its effects can be.

Some bullying tragedies make national headlines. It turned out, for example, that Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the Columbine High School murderers, had suffered years of bullying. Massachusetts teenager Phoebe Prince committed suicide after months of being victimized by older students.

Tyrone’s story won’t make cable news nor will the stories of the students who come into your office distracted, depressed and possibly failing classes. But knowing what is happening in the bullied brain can inform your approach to helping your students.

What is happening in the bullied brain?

Brain science is showing us how serious and long term the damage from bullying can be. Studies reveal that there are long lasting chemical and structural brain changes that account for the cognitive and emotional damage that can be as severe as the harm done by child abuse.

Canadian psychologist Tracy Vaillancourt, for example, reports that the levels of the stress hormone cortisol are higher in bullied boys, meaning that their stress reaction system is in constant overdrive. Curiously, cortisol levels are below normal for bullied girls, perhaps meaning that their stress response systems are hampered.

McLean Hospital researcher Martin Teicher scanned the brains of bullying victims and found significant shrinkage in the corpus callosum—the brain tissue connecting the left and right hemispheres. This makes it difficult for victims to process what is happening around them and to respond appropriately.

The amygdala is the brain’s alarm center. When it is repeatedly activated the brain is in a constant state of arousal. It’s as if the radar is finely tuned, always ready to pick up the slightest hint of a threat. It is very difficult to concentrate, remember and learn when the brain is always scanning for danger.

These brain changes are the explanations for the symptoms bullying victims have: avoidance behaviors, anxiety, depression, appetite and sleep problems, feelings of helplessness and suicidal thoughts. Bullying also causes cognitive problems like impaired memory, attention and concentration. It’s hard for the bullied brain to learn when it’s always in a state of high alert, prepared for the next attack. Bullying victims and PTSD sufferers have a lot in common. The hypersensitivity makes it very hard to relax and enjoy activities.

Life for bullied youngsters can be miserable. Bullies are often smart enough to avoid the types of physical attacks that could get them into trouble. So they resort to threats, insults or ridicule. Victims have to endure being ignored, excluded, insulted and laughed at.

The same technology that can entertain, educate and bring young people together also provides the bully with a new set of weapons leading to an epidemic

Bullied...
Continued on Page 18

Bullied...

Continued from Page 17

of cyber-bulling, a word that wasn't even in our vocabularies a few years ago. Instead of waiting by the door after school, cyberbullies do their damage via text messages, emails and Facebook posts from a remote location. Cyberbullies send insults and threats electronically, often many of them. They circulate humiliating pictures or post demeaning descriptions on websites. Victims are often taunted on home computers or cell phones and feel there is no escape from torturers. Research shows that three times as many kids are cyberbullied as are bullied face to face.

What you can do in your school?

Brain science lends even more urgency to confronting the scourge of bullying. There are studies suggesting that the brain changes are long term and, therefore, can create emotional scars that last for a lifetime.

One trusted resource among many Minnesota schools is Youth Frontiers' character retreat programs and classroom curricula. Since 1987 Youth Frontiers has worked with more than 1,000,000 students. They partner with schools to build cultures of respect where students thrive socially, emotionally and academically. In a recent study by the University of Minnesota's Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, after participating in the Respect Retreat for 9th or 10th graders, five percent more students reported that students at their school "mostly resolve conflicts without fighting, insults or threats." Youth Frontiers heightens students' awareness of disrespectful behaviors and engages bystanders (those who stand by and watch bullying happen) to stand up against disrespect. They teach empathy and perspective-taking skills to help students understand how bullying hurts, and they empower students to stand up for what is right and good. You can learn more about Youth Frontiers retreats for students and staff at www.youthfrontiers.org.

Youth Frontiers is only a piece in the puzzle for helping to solve this complex issue. The federal government recently launched a website called [Stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov) to give students, educators and parents resources to identify and take action against bullying. There is an excellent list for educators to assess how your school is doing in terms of tackling this issue. <http://www.stopbullying.gov/educators/index.html>.

Brain science clearly shows the long-term harm of bullying on victims' brain. Yet understanding what is happening in the brain can help us better support suffering students.



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The Wealth Gap and How It Affects Children



Shari Prest
Ark Associates

International academic rankings of U.S. schools often disappoint us when we consider those rankings (test scores) in isolation. In truth, those rankings may not only give us a narrow profile about how our students do in school, but may more importantly be an indicator of how our students are supported (or are not supported) out of school.

A 2010 UNICEF report ranks 24 of the world's wealthiest nations in three key areas that appear to be linked to the academic outcomes for kids.

Numbers to know and share:

- In the category of our children's material well-being, the United States ranked 23rd of the 24 wealthy nations.
 - 20 percent of American children live in poverty
 - More than 40 percent of American children live in low-income housing.
 - Over the past decade, the percent of impoverished children has grown by one third
- On measures of health, U.S. children ranked 23rd of the 24 wealthy nations.
- On measures of education, the U. S. ranked 19th among the 24 wealthy nations.

Although there are other variables, such as which students are tested or language and cultural alignment, there appears to be a strong correlation between the support children experience and the academic accomplishments of those children. (The preceding data is taken from Ken Mitchell, The School Administrator, October, 2011.)

The changes in average household income for Americans over the past three decades have increased the wealth gap, and therefore, the childhood well-being gap.

Numbers to know and share:

- The bottom 80 percent of average household incomes have remained relatively constant.
- The top 20 percent of household incomes have doubled.
- The top 1 percent of household incomes have quadrupled.

- The top 20 percent of Americans own 80 percent of the wealth.
- The bottom 80 percent share the remaining 20 percent of the wealth.

A Pew Research Center study – based on U.S. Census data – revealed growing wealth inequity between races that has occurred during the current recession (Perspective: Tricia Rose on America's growing inequality, July 29, 2011). Considering the correlation between socioeconomic status and school success, this is a clear and compelling threat to the future prosperity of our country and our state.

Numbers to know and share

- Median wealth in white households has dropped 16 percent.
- Median wealth has dropped 53 percent in African-American households.
- Median wealth has dropped 54 percent in Asian households.
- Median wealth has dropped 66 percent in Hispanic households.

Often our means as a state or nation is referred to as if it is a static number—never to change in response to the needs or dynamics of our evolving circumstances. We talk about means as a limitation – “we must learn to live within our means” – but rarely as an opportunity to invest in a more prosperous future. In reality, our means are defined by politicians, often to reflect a specific political platform including how much and who our lawmakers are willing to tax.

Research has shown, confirmed, affirmed and reaffirmed that the best possible investment of our tax dollars—with the greatest monetary return—is in early childhood education. Research also shows that high school and college graduates will earn more, contribute more and experience greater life-time success than non-graduates. We will all be richer if we take seriously our constitutional responsibility to provide a high-quality and equitable education to all of our children, and if we logically invest in the fundamental support systems necessary for those children's success.

We will not have the means to sustain our quality of life as a state or a country if we do anything less.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Welcome New MASA Members!

Chad Anderson, Assistant Superintendent, Tracy Schools

Jeff Apse, Superintendent, Lewiston-Altura Schools

Jennifer Backer, Superintendent, Cromwell-Wright Schools

Kathy Belsheim, Superintendent, Ogilvie Schools

Mark Bonine, Associate Superintendent, Minneapolis Schools

Tracy Bowe, Executive Director of Human Resources, St. Cloud Schools

Andrew Collins, Assistant Superintendent, St. Paul Schools

Barb Doyle, Executive Director, Region V Computer Services

James Dusso, Superintendent, Lyle Schools

I.V. Foster, Superintendent, Duluth Schools

Sharon Freeman, Assistant Superintendent, St. Paul Schools

Beth Giese, Superintendent, Cannon Falls Schools

Jimger Gustafson, Interim Associate Superintendent, Anoka-Hennepin Schools

Richard Hanson, Superintendent, Le-Sueur-Henderson Schools

Willie Jett, Assistant Superintendent, St. Paul Schools

Larry Kauzlarich, Interim Superintendent, New Prague Schools

Richard Keith, Superintendent, Fillmore Central Schools

Brian Lentz, Associate Principal, West Metro Education Program

Brandon Lunak, Superintendent, Waubun-Ogema-White Earth Schools

Hertica Martin, Executive Director of Elementary & Secondary Education, Rochester Schools

Mark Matuska, Superintendent, Kasson-Mantorville Schools

Jeff McGonigal, Associate Superintendent, Anoka-Hennepin Schools

Jane Mortenson, Assistant Manager/Principal, NE Metro 916 Intermediate District

Michael Munoz, Superintendent, Rochester Schools

John Peterka, Superintendent, Osakis Schools

Robert Peterson, District Support Services Coordinator, Minneapolis Schools

Robert Prater, Superintendent, Hinckley-Finlayson Schools

Denise Quinlan, Assistant Superintendent of Middle Schools, St. Paul Schools

Debra Schipper, Executive Director, West Metro Learning Connections

Allison Schmidt, Superintendent, Martin County West Schools

Cynthia Sherar, Director, Aspen Academy

Lori Simon, Executive Director of Education Services, Robbinsdale Area Schools

Tony Simons, Superintendent, Zumbrota-Mazzeppa Schools

Brian Siverson-Hall, Executive Director, Osseo Schools

Lisa Snyder, Superintendent, Lakeville Schools

Teresa Strong, Superintendent, St. Louis County Schools

Paul Sundholm, Superintendent, GHEC Schools

Michael Thomas, Associate Superintendent, Minneapolis Schools

Brittany Thomforde, Director of Special Education, Innovative Special Education Services

Brian Thygeson, Superintendent, Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton Schools

Renae Tostenson, Assistant Superintendent, Lac Qui Parle Schools

Laurie Wig, Director of Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction Technology, Pequot Lakes Schools

Eric Williams, Superintendent, Holdingford Schools

Alice Woog, Executive Director, Seven Hills Classical Academy

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CONGRATULATIONS!

Jack Almos Receives MASA's 2011 Polaris Award



Jack Almos receiving the Polaris Award at the MASA Fall Conference.

The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) has named Jack Almos, retired Superintendent for the Hinckley-Finlayson Schools, the recipient of the MASA Polaris Leadership Award. Mr. Almos was honored for his exemplary school leadership and a lifetime of balanced achievement inside and outside of education at a statewide recognition ceremony to be held at the MASA Fall Conference, October 2-4, 2011, at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center in Duluth, Minnesota. This award is presented with the support of Ehlers and Associates.

Polaris, the “North Star”, themes this award because, just as exemplary administrators serve as definitive leaders, Polaris is constant and unmoving in the sky. A navigator’s benchmark, the star marks “true north”, the fundamental direction that defines east, west and south. With this award, Mr. Almos is recognized for qualities such as; professional courage, creation of a legacy of excellent leadership, fostering innovation, contribution through example and mentoring, exemplary conduct reflecting integrity and bearing emulation, and significant tenure in each position to support district vision and affect positive change.

Mr. Almos recently retired from the Hinckley-Finlayson schools, where he had been superintendent since 1993, curriculum director from 1992-93, and high school principal from 1981-1992. Mr. Almos holds master’s and specialist’s degrees in School Administration from the University of Minnesota, Duluth and a bachelor’s from Bemidji State.

Candace Raskin is MASA's 2011 Richard Green Scholar

The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) has named Candace Raskin, Associate Professor at Minnesota State University, Mankato, the 2011 Richard Green Scholar. Dr. Raskin will was honored and presented her work at the MASA Fall Conference, October 2-4, 2011, at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center in Duluth, Minnesota.

MASA, with the support of Cuningham Group Architecture, established the Richard Green Scholars Program in 2006 to honor the scholarly work and professional development of Minnesota school leaders. Dr. Raskin was recognized for her research, writing and presentation of her paper reflecting the practice of excellent school leadership, entitled “Barriers & Challenges to Implementing Educational Change.” Dr. Raskin’s work is a fitting model of the dedication to scholarship that is at the root of innovation in the intellectual and pedagogical practice of education leadership.

Dr. Raskin is an Associate Professor at Minnesota State University, Mankato. For twenty years before



Judy Hoskins, Cuningham Group, presents Candace Raskin with the Richard Green Scholar Award in Duluth.

coming to Mankato State, she was a leader in Austin Minnesota schools, holding the positions of High Potential Coordinator, Director of Educational Services, Elementary and Middle School Principal, and, for her last four years in Austin, Superintendent. Dr. Raskin holds a doctorate from the University of Minnesota, specialist’s and master’s degrees from Minnesota State University, Mankato and a bachelor’s degree from Ohio State University.

A Brief Look at the History of the MASA Foundation

I write this article as President of the MASA Foundation Board. Since I have been involved with MASA for more than 40 years, as a member, a member of it's Board of Directors, it's Treasurer and it's President, I wish to share with the reader how the foundation originated and how it evolved. Hopefully, this information will assist current MASA members to more fully understand, appreciate and support the Foundation.

The Foundation was created during 1985 just prior to the time MASA purchased its building at 1884 Como Avenue. Before this purchase, the Association had rental facilities in St. Paul and subsequently Roseville. The foundation's origin primarily was the result of two individuals efforts. These two individuals were 1985-86 MASA President, Don Bungum and Norm Maguire, MASA Executive Director.

Don, the Superintendent of Chisago-Lindstrom Schools, had just created a foundation in his school district, as many other schools districts were beginning to do. Therefore, he felt that MASA should develop one also. Norm readily agreed since MASA had just purchased its Como building and were in need of funds to remodel, furnish and equip the offices. Articles of Incorporation were developed, the Foundation was publicized, and contributions were sought.

The cost of preparing the Como facility for occupancy took most of the foundation's funds and subsequently the foundation became semi-dormant until the early 1990's.

In 1988, Dr. Dale Jensen from Worthington was employed as MASA Executive Director. During his initial years in office, he received a proposal to revitalize the Foundation from Don Bungum and Dale Birkland, then Superintendent of Intermediate School District 916. Dr. Jensen reactivated the Foundation's Board, submitted Don and Dale's proposal to them and the Board approved.

Immediate publicizing occurred and contributions were sought. Lifetime Memberships of \$1,000.00 were made available. In addition, a Foundation Golf Tournament was established which preceded the Association's Annual Fall Conference and a Silent Auction was included in the Annual Spring Conference.

The revitalized Foundation initiated Annual Scholarships for high school seniors who were planning to pursue teaching as their college major. One Scholarship was provided in each of MASA's nine regions. After a few years it was decided to replace the Scholarship Program with one for:

- Enhancing the leadership development of educational administrators
- Encourage and supporting careers in teaching and educational administration
- Enhancing the role and image of educational administrators
- Conducting research and providing information to policy makers and the public at large.

Since Dale Jensen's retirement in June, 2000, Dr. Charles Kyte has served as MASA's Executive Director until 2011. Dr. Kyte has continued to very actively support the Foundation. Upon his retirement, he was voted a member of the MASA Foundation's Board. Dr. Gary Amoroso will continue to support the Foundation.

I hope that this historical review of the Foundation's origin and growth has provided the reader with helpful information. In closing, permit me to wish you a thoughtful and thankful Thanksgiving. A blessed and joyful Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

*Written by Dr. Chris Huber
MASA Foundation President*

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 or email Gary Amoroso, and the Foundation Grant Committee will consider it in a timely manner.



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MASA Offices, St. Paul*

In our Great Start series, you will receive information and develop practical skills designed to help you be successful right away in your first year of your new position. Our second session will focus on communicating with community stakeholders and legislatures. Superintendents will also learn how to use influence to create successful programs and followers as well as financing options and legal hot topics.

Registration materials available on the MASA web site:
www.mnasa.org

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3rd Friday at MASA brings smaller groups of our members together with experts for presentations and conversations about topics our members have asked us to cover. In the 2011-12 school year, we will explore subjects such as:

- Social Media
- Excellent Group Facilitation
- New Educational Context for School Boards
- Succession Planning
- Collaborating with Principals
- Dealing with Difficult People
- The Human Side of Budget Reductions
- and more!

Registration for our fourth session will be available on the MASA Web site soon! Each workshop will be held at the MASA offices, from 9 am - 3:30 pm and will offer 6 CEU's. A minimum of 10 and a maximum of 25 participants will be accepted.

Save the Date!

- December 16
- January 20
- February 17
- No March Session (Spring Conference)
- April 20
- May 18



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March 14-16, 2012

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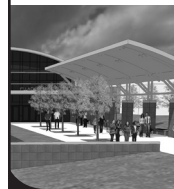
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2011...

December

16
3rd Friday @ MASA Workshop
MASA Offices, St. Paul

23-26
Christmas Break
MASA Offices Closed

30
New Year's Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

2012...

January

5
Foundation Board of Directors Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

12-13
MSBA Winter Conference
Minneapolis Convention Center

20
3rd Friday @ MASA Workshop
MASA Offices, St. Paul

26
Great Start Series Workshop
MASA Offices, St. Paul

27
School Finance Elections Workshop
Cray Plaza, St. Paul

February

16-18
AASA National Conference on Education
Houston, Texas

17
3rd Friday @ MASA Workshop
MASA Offices, St. Paul

March

14
Great Start Series Workshop
DoubleTree, Bloomington
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
DoubleTree, Bloomington

15-17
MASA/MASE Spring Conference
DoubleTree, Bloomington

April

19
Foundation Board of Directors Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

20
3rd Friday @ MASA Workshop
MASA Offices, St. Paul

May

18
3rd Friday @ MASA Workshop
MASA Offices, St. Paul

June

15
3rd Friday @ MASA Workshop
MASA Offices, St. Paul

21-22
MASA Board of Directors Retreat
Maddens, Brainerd

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Gary's Typepad Blog: Voice of MN Education



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