

Leaders FORUM

Fall 2017

Push Your Perspective

Welcome to a new school year! It is always great to see the energy and enthusiasm as students and teachers return to our buildings. I hope that each of you had a great start and have had an excellent first few weeks with kids in the buildings. I am sure that most of you have presented to staff and greeted the students and parents as they returned for another school year. Setting the tone and expectations in those initial interactions with staff and community is so important to school leadership.

In the midst of political, social, and international turmoil, one doesn't have to look very hard to find distractions to our purpose and resolve. Our students and families expect that we provide the highest quality education and care in our schools. With those high expectations and all of the kerfuffle (a commotion or fuss, especially one caused by conflicting views) taking place, the manner in which we carry and portray ourselves makes a difference in our organizations. Leadership sets the tone and expectations for the school district.

I am sure that most of you have heard the saying "Is the glass half empty or half full?" Perspective can either push us to a positive or not so positive reaction. Your attitude and perspective plays a large role in how you react to challenges in your professional world. Our staff and parents do watch us carefully and take cues from our words and actions. It is a huge responsibility that I am sure each of you is capable of handling every day.

Minnesota is a great state in which to be an educational leader, but it is not without its challenges: achievement gap, adequate funding, teacher shortages, accountability, etc. However, seeing our situation in a broader context helped me see our state in a different light. I had the great fortune to serve as a representative on the AASA Governing Board for six years. During our regional meetings (Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota) there always was time to share what was happening in our respective states. Most times we were the only state that had any good news to share. Our neighbors talked about reduced funding and wide-ranging policy changes that were not necessarily "public school" friendly. While there is still work to do, when viewed in a broader context I firmly believe we are very fortunate to be school leaders in Minnesota.

My most sincere wish is that each of you had a great start to the year. Remember that your association is here to support you. I hope to see each and every one of you at our Fall Conference in Duluth where we will further explore how to personalize learning for students and adults! •



Curt Tryggestad
MASA President
Executive Director
Perpich Center for Arts
Education

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2017-18 MASA BUSINESS PARTNERS

Special thanks to our 2017-18 MASA Business Partners!

The MASA Business Partner Program provides opportunities for businesses to connect with Minnesota's educational leaders. Our core belief is that MASA's role in engaging business partners is to facilitate a rich conversation that helps our practitioner members understand what resources are available to support their districts, and our business partner members understand the needs of our school districts.

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Opportunity to Restart



Gary Amoroso
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of School Administrators

Welcome back to the 2017-18 school year. I hope you had a relaxing and rewarding summer. I'm sure that your batteries are recharged and you're ready to work each and every day on behalf of the students that you serve!

One of the things that I truly value about our profession is that each and every year, there is the opportunity to RESTART our journey of working with students, families, colleagues and community. This opportunity to restart does not exist in many professions. I was always very excited to start a new year. I would draw on my past experiences to provide the foundation of how I would proceed during the year.

Each year will bring new opportunities and challenges. I believe strongly that as leaders within our school systems we set the tone for how our various constituencies will address or react to these opportunities and challenges. Our behavior provides permission for others to act in a like manner. Regardless of your job title, you have a sphere of influence. Always remember that your words and actions are powerful and have a definite impact on others within and outside of your school community.

With that in mind, I'd like to challenge each of you to consider practicing the following three actions on a daily basis. First bring PASSION to your workplace every day! I think that you are the biggest cheerleader for your students. Demonstrate your belief that every student will learn every day and that as adults, we will make decisions that are in the best interest of our students first, before the other adults in our communities.

Second, strive to GROW every day! If we expect our students and staff to learn and grow each day, we need to be role models in this journey. Supporting professional development initiatives and participating in

those initiatives provides a great example.

Lastly, as you navigate the many opportunities and challenges that you face on a daily basis; focus on your moral compass. Keep your core values and principles in the forefront. I've always felt that if I were not happy with myself, it would be nearly impossible to have a positive influence on others. There will be times when some people will not appreciate your decisions or actions, but if your leadership is in accordance with your core beliefs, that will be enough to see you through the situation.

Always know that all of us at MASA are here to support you in your journey. Never forget how much influence you have over the day-to-day activities that go on in the schools and community. Please feel free to contact me at (651) 319-1211 if I can ever be of service. Thank you for all that you do! •

MASA Committee Meeting Dates

The meeting dates for the 2017-18 MASA Committees have been announced!

Nominating Committee

Thursday, October 12, 2017
11 am - 1:30 pm

Federal Advocacy Committee

Wednesday, November 1, 2017
11 am - 1:30 pm

Legislative Committee

Thursday, November 2, 2017
10 am - 3 pm

Executive Development Committee

Friday, November 17, 2017
10 am - 2 pm

All meetings will be held at the MASA Offices in St. Paul.

Please RSVP to dchristians@mnasa.org.

We will also have video conferencing available for committee members who need to attend remotely!

Visit www.mnasa.org/committees for a full listing of all the MASA Committees!

Leaders Forum

Fall 2017

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MASA FALL CONFERENCE PREVIEW

Visit www.mnasa.org for registration links and full conference details!

On Sunday afternoon, golfers will enjoy the **Dale G. Jensen Classic Golf Tournament** to support the MASA Foundation. The tournament will be held at Enger Park Golf Course. Information for golf and sponsorship registration can be found at www.mnasa.org. See the next page for more details!



Join us from 6-8 pm on Sunday evening at Grandma's Sports Garden for the **Fall Conference Reception**. The golf tournament prizes will be announced at this event!

Monday morning's opening session features "Pumped Up" by the **Unknown Keynote Speaker**. His message will not only leave you pumped up, but he will also challenge you professionally to change how you lead in your school district.

The second keynote speaker is **Vincent Matthews**, Superintendent, San Francisco Unified School District with his presentation, "My Leadership Story: Paying It Forward and Giving it Back."

This year we will once again feature the **Edcamp Sessions!** Edcamp is an opportunity for all of our participants to design their own conference experience by exploring the topics you determine.

The **Exhibit Fair** is a convenient way to visit with representatives of companies offering the latest products and services of value to school leaders. Sign up for the door prize drawing for an Amazon Echo for your district!

Celebrate the service of honored peers at the Monday **Awards Luncheon**. The presentation will include the Polaris Award to Karen Orcutt, Superintendent, Orono Public Schools; the Richard Green Scholarship to Jeff Pesta, Superintendent, Kenyon-Wanamingo Public Schools; and individual recognition for years of service. Sign-up at www.mnasa.org.

Monday and Tuesday will feature an array of **breakout sessions** on a variety of topics. Visit www.mnasa.org for specific topics.

Tuesday morning will feature MASA's 2017 Richard Green Scholar **Jeff Pesta**, Superintendent, Kenyon-Wanamingo Public Schools. Jeff will present his research, "Focusing on the Wrong Gap: Achievement or Assimilation?"

The final keynote speaker is **Barbara Bray**, Creative Learning Strategist, Rethinking Learning/Personalize Learning, LLC, presenting, "Get Started and Go Deeper: Personalizing Your Own Professional Learning."

New this year! The MASA conference app will include a game and everyone is invited to play - try your luck and win a prize for your district!

Participants will use their conference app to access the Booth Sleuth Game! On Monday at the conference, participants who visit our exhibiting partners can find the answers to questions that exhibitors post in the game section of the app.

Each of our conference exhibitors is invited to post one question and our participants find the answers by visiting their booth.

For each question selected, the company name and booth number of the exhibitor asking the question will show up on the app — visit the booth and find the answer. There is only one chance per participant per question to answer correctly, so getting the correct answer straight from the source is important. Our leader board will track the competition, and at 3 pm the game will close. We will announce the winner at 3:15. (In case of a tie, we will draw among the winning players.)

The winner's district will receive an LG 2.1-Channel Sound Bar System with Wireless Subwoofer and Digital Amplifier!

2017 MASA Fall Conference
Personalized Leadership Learning
October 1-3, 2017
Duluth Entertainment Convention Center
Duluth, MN
www.regonline.com/2017masafall

Meet Your Keynote Speakers...



The Unknown Speaker



Vincent Matthews



Jeff Pesta



Barbara Bray

Schedule At-a-Glance

Sunday, October 1

- 9 am-4 pm • MASA Great Start Cohort
- 10:30 am • Foundation Golf Tournament
- 6-8 pm • Welcome Reception

Monday, October 2

(Registration open 7:30 am)

- 8:30-10:45 am • Keynote Speakers: The Unknown Speaker & Vincent Matthews
- 10:45 am-3:30 pm • Exhibits Open
- 11:15 am-12:15 pm • Edcamp Sessions I
- 12:15-1:15 pm • Awards Luncheon
- 1:15-2 pm • Dessert Reception in Exhibit Hall
- 2-3 pm • Edcamp Sessions II
- 3-3:30 pm • Exhibit Hall Break & Prize Drawings
- 3:30-4:30 pm • Breakout Sessions I

Tuesday, October 3

(Registration open 8 am)

- 8:30-9:30 am • MASA Richard Green Scholar Presentation
Keynote Speaker: Jeff Pesta
- 9:45-10:45 am • Breakout Sessions II
- 11 am-12 noon • Keynote Speaker: Barbara Bray
- 12 noon • Conference Adjourns
Please note there is no lunch provided by the conference.



A special thank you to our premier business partners!



2017 Golf Tournament!



If you registered for the MASA Fall Conference be sure to also register to play in the annual Dale G. Jensen Classic Golf Tournament. Register online at: www.regonline.com/MASAFoundationGolf17.

All conference participants are invited to play, no matter your skill level!

The tournament will be held at the **Enger Park Golf Course** in Duluth.

Registration and check-in begins at 10:30 am with the shotgun tee-off at 11:30 am.

Feel like your game is off? Purchase mulligans at the check-in desk. We have putting, open, and power mulligans for purchase! And don't forget to participate in the chipping contest!

Prizes for contests in the tournament include:

- One night stay in the Harbor View Room at Pier B Resort
- Two admissions to the Depot — currently featuring the Lincoln Funeral Car
- Two admissions to Glensheen, the history Congdon Estate
- A Duluth Visitors' Guide with many coupons and ideas for special outings and meals



Thank you to the 2017-18 MASA Foundation Board of Directors!

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Register and Donate Today!

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 2017-18 P.A.T. members on page 16.

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.

You can donate by registering to play in the 2017 Dale G. Jensen Classic Golf Tournament at www.regonline.com/MASAFoundationGolf17.

Leaders Forum to Go Digital!

At MASA, we are committed to delivering timely communications to our members that support their leadership practices. For years, we have published a quarterly newsletter to communicate information such as news from our leaders, lobbyists, partners, and legal experts. We still value all of this information and the wonderful leaders who write for the publication, but with the support of the MASA Board of Directors, we will begin this winter to deliver the publication as a web site.

The rationale for this decision involved a number of considerations, including rising printing and postage costs. More importantly, we are aware that many times when the publication is delivered, the news is stale. There is often a lag time of one month between receiving articles from authors and delivering the publication. This is unavoidable in a printed publication due to the need to give authors adequate turn-around time coupled with production time. We look forward to delivering “fresh” news, and in this age of information-on-demand, that is what our members expect.

Our goals remain the same; only the delivery will be different. We intend to communicate MASA news, disseminate perspective articles by association leaders, and maintain the presence of our MASA brand. In addition, we will continue to communicate via the weekly MASA Member eUpdate, Gary’s blog and Take Five video, our home web site www.mnasa.org, Twitter, and Facebook. In addition, the online Leaders Forum will give us the opportunity to explore additional resources such as a member blog and/or podcast.

For our valued partners in business, we will be transitioning our advertising program to fit this new format and we will be connecting with our partners soon with information about that.

We hope you enjoy this new format. Please bear with us as we “work the bugs out,” and, as always, let us know what you think! •



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 Twitter Chats

#MNMASA Every Third Tuesday of the Month @ 12 noon

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 every third Tuesday of the month at 12 noon. 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.

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Reading and Math Corps Savings to Princeton Public Schools



Julia Espe
Superintendent
Princeton Public Schools

Background information

It is important for the community to know that teaching and learning is seriously *rocket science*. That is, it is a complex system of creating the right environment of student engagement and challenging targets, knowing exactly what students need to learn to meet or exceed the targets, providing that teaching and learning experience for the student, assessing whether the student is making progress, and starting the cycle again.

In the case of students who have difficulty learning, a whole new layer of *rocket science* is needed. Trained professionals need to identify the gaps or needs, provide a targeted intervention to relearn those, decide the approach that will help the learning to “stick”, make a determination how long and intensive the intervention needs to be given to the student, and ascertain when the student is indeed meeting the target. Each child is different, has different needs, and teaching and learning has to adjust to provide those needs.

Our district has a system of Multi Tiered Systems of Supports, and Reading and Math Corps are vital parts of the interventions mentioned above. Title Programs provide additional support for students in need of interventions. We have another program called ADSIS (Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instructional Services) which delivers even more interventions for additional students. Students with the greatest needs receive special education services, which are the most expensive of all interventions. Finally, our teachers strive to differentiate instruction for students as they provide instruction in the core curriculum. It is difficult for lay people to realize the science of teaching, i.e. *rocket science*, that helps students to learn. To the public, all of this may be invisible in a classroom.

In order to put this system together, we need support from the state and federal funding that we currently receive.

Princeton Public Schools does not have a data and research department. We are a small school district with about 3,200 students PreK through grade 12. Here was the way that we measured the cost savings of Reading and Math Corps to our district. We took a simple approach to this, by looking at a three year period (2005-2006 through 2007-2008) prior to implementing Reading and Math Corps. During that time Princeton Public Schools averaged about **fourteen** students with a Specific Learning Disability. Over the past nine years since we implemented Reading and Math Corps, the average number of students identified with a Specific Learning Disability has decreased to **seven** students, a decrease of 50%.

General Information About Special Education

Each school district is responsible for identifying children who are suspected of having a disability, beginning at birth, who attend public or nonpublic school and school age children who are not attending school. This system is commonly referred to as “child find.” The child find system should include the process for receiving referrals from parents, physicians, private and public programs, and health and human services agencies.

Before a school district refers a student for a special education evaluation, the district must conduct at least two research-based pre-referral interventions. A pre-referral intervention is a scientific research-based instructional strategy, alternative, or intervention designed to address a student’s academic or behavioral needs in the general education classroom. The classroom teacher is responsible for implementing the first tier of interventions.

Tiered interventions outside of the general education classroom offer more intensive instruction to students who have not demonstrated marked improvement with general classroom supports. Reading Corp and Math Corp are just two of the supports available to students in the Princeton district.

When a student is evaluated for special education services in the area of specific learning disabilities, multiple staff are required to participate in the evaluation process. For an initial evaluation, a special education teacher will spend roughly 15 hours gathering and reviewing data, evaluating the student, meeting with school staff and parents to review the results, and generating a summary report of the information. In addition, a school psychologist will contribute an additional 5 hours to the evaluation process. A general education teacher and school administrator will also contribute an additional hour as part of the evaluation. For every initial evaluation, licensed school staff are contributing a total of up to 20 hours to each individual evaluation. If the student qualifies for special education services, up to five more hours will be contributed before services can begin.

The most significant benefit of tiered interventions to the student is time. Research-based interventions such as those offered through Reading Corp and Math Corp do not require the time intensive evaluations mandated by federal and state special education regulations and statutes. A data driven analysis of formative assessment data allows general education teachers and interventionists to implement intensive instruction almost immediately.

Authority: Minn. R. 3525.0750; Minn. R. 3525.1100, subp. 2.

Reading and Math Corps continued on page 17.

Inequity in Funding Internet Services in our Schools

As many of you know, geography can play a significant role in the cost and availability of services important to education. Salaries, transportation and food service, for example, all have costs associated with them that will vary by location in the state. Due to travel and shipping distances and cost of living factors, this disparity may be understandable. There are other areas where the differences are harder to justify and reach a level of true inequity. Internet service is one such area.

Based on FY2016 data submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education, the average general fund spending, per student, to provide Internet access in the seven-county metro area was \$6.02 while the average general fund cost per student in Greater Minnesota was \$18.34. What other services within education cost three times as much if your school is in Aitkin County than if it is in Anoka County? There may be a few, but, these are averages. The inequity surfaces when you drill down into the data.

Regionally, if your school is in the Southwest metro area, the average out of pocket cost, that is, costs paid out of general fund sources after all state and federal funding (E-rate, for example) is applied is \$2.98 per student. In Southwest (Greater) Minnesota, the average cost is \$40.26 per student. Geographic location now means the cost is over 13 times as much for the same services. It gets worse.

The lowest out of pocket cost paid by a district in the state is \$0.86 per student. Compare that to the highest cost district who pays 170 times that number or \$146.77 per student and you have an inequity that I don't believe you can find in any other service category within education.

The Telecommunications/Internet Equity Aid (TEA) program was designed in the early 2000's to incent districts to work through cooperatives to drive Internet costs down as well as provide relief to districts who were in high cost areas of the state. The program funds costs AFTER all federal E-rate subsidies are applied. Over the years, over 90% of districts in the state entered into cooperative arrangements for broadband services dramatically reducing their costs and providing high quality service. In 2009 and earlier, the program fully funded all requests for cost reimbursement with a cap of \$7.5 million. In 2010, the cap was cut to \$3.75 million. Since then, costs have risen to nearly \$9.5 million. Thus, today, the fund pays only about 40% of the requests from districts. The other 60% that is paid from district general fund dollars is where the inequity surfaces.

Think about it this way. There are districts in Minnesota that use over 2% of their general education aid to pay for Internet services for their students and staff. That's the extreme high end, but many districts in the state use close to 1% or more for the same service. On the other end, many districts

use 1/10th of 1% or less of their general education aid for Internet services. That said, if the Minnesota legislature would, again, fully fund the TEA program, it would be like giving some districts in the state an additional 1% to 2% increase in their general education aid, above and beyond the funds approved by the legislature in May, and would result in additional funding for all districts. Most importantly, it would eliminate the inequity that exists.

What would this cost? Currently, the program is capped at \$3.75 million. An additional \$6 million would fully fund the program for about 2 years. An additional \$7 million would fund it for at least five years, and possibly more. A bill to increase the funding received a hearing in the Senate last Spring but did not reach the house and was not included in the omnibus bill.

This funding could come back in a supplemental budget bill next Spring. If that were to happen, it would need support from all of us and other educational groups as well. It seems to be a low cost fix to a very large inequity for some districts which still has a benefit to every district in the state. Conversations now with colleagues, board members, legislators and other key education leaders would help to move this issue forward and provide an opportunity to correct an inequity that shouldn't exist. •



Marc Johnson
Executive Director
ECMECC



Registration & Lodging Now Open!

Registration is now open for AASA's National Conference on Education, February 15-17, 2018, in Nashville, TN. Registration can be found online at: nce.aasa.org

Join thousands of superintendents from across the nation for world-class education and networking. Hear from speakers who are championing our nation's school systems, and take home ideas and approaches to invigorate your district. Connect with like-minded leaders and share strategies on improving student outcomes, district performance, and so much more.

Don't forget your lodging reservations - registration open now at: nce.aasa.org/travel-hotels.

SAVE THE DATE

The MASA State Breakfast will be held at 7:30 am on Friday, February 16, 2018, at the Omni Nashville Hotel.

Karen Orcutt Receives Polaris Leadership Award



Karen Orcutt
Superintendent
Orono Public Schools

MASA has named Dr. Karen Orcutt, Superintendent of Schools for the Orono Public Schools, the recipient of the 2017 MASA Polaris Leadership Award. Superintendent Orcutt will be honored for her exemplary school leadership and a lifetime of achievement in education and the wider community at a statewide recognition ceremony at the 2017 MASA Fall Conference, October 2-3 in Duluth, Minnesota.

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, Dr. Orcutt 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 supporting district vision and affecting positive change.

Dr. Orcutt has been the Superintendent of Schools for the Orono Public Schools since 2004. She also served the Orono district as the Assistant Superintendent for Programs from 2000 to 2004, and as Director of Special Services from 1982 to 1998.

Throughout her career, Dr. Orcutt has dedicated her life to helping students maximize their potential in life. In addition to her 34 years of serving students in Orono, she has worked as a speech pathologist in St. Peter Public Schools, a Coordinator of Early Childhood and Speech Services for the Minnesota Valley Special Education Cooperative, and as a speech pathologist at Hennepin County Medical Center.

Her research in resiliency has identified when and how educational leaders need to be positive, communicate with optimism, and recover following difficult times. Even a brief look at her tenure as superintendent demonstrates that she “practices what she preaches.” There will be challenging

Polaris Leadership Award continued on page 17.

Jeff Pesta Named Richard Green Scholar



Jeff Pesta
Superintendent
Kenyon-Wanamingo School
District

MASA has named Dr. Jeff Pesta, Superintendent of the Kenyon-Wanamingo Public Schools, the 2017 Richard Green Scholar. Dr. Pesta will present a paper, “Focusing on the Wrong Gap: Achievement or Assimilation?” which was derived from his published dissertation “Across the Tracks: A Case Study of a Rural Transnational Community” at the MASA Fall Conference, October 2-3, in Duluth, Minnesota.

MASA established the Richard Green Scholars Program in 2006 to honor the scholarly work and professional development of Minnesota school leaders. The program is an annual recognition of the research, writing, and presentation of a paper reflecting the practice of excellent school leadership. Scholar candidates apply for the program and a subcommittee of the MASA Executive Development Committee selects the recipient.

Previous to his 2015 appointment as superintendent in Kenyon-Wanamingo, Dr. Pesta served 18 years as a principal, most recently at Northfield Middle School. Prior to beginning his career as a science teacher, Dr. Pesta served in the U.S. Army and has intermittently conducted field research on North Pacific Fisheries for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) since 1990.

Dr. Pesta earned his doctorate in educational leadership at the University of St. Thomas and holds a master’s degree in science education from the University of Minnesota. He earned a bachelor’s degree in biology and business administration at Minnesota State University-Mankato where he also completed graduate work to obtain his school administrator credentials.

MASA is grateful to Cuningham Group Architecture, Inc. for their ongoing support of the Richard Green Scholars Program. Cuningham Group exists to Uplift the Human Experience, a vision embodying their passion for design and its impact on their clients, communities, and the world. •

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Region 1

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get to KNOW US



“Hi.”

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MASA Plans Second Aspiring Superintendent Academy Cohort

An essential part of MASA's mission is to “empower leaders through high quality professional learning,” and we address that commitment in many ways, supporting the needs of our members at each career phase. In 2016, we had the opportunity to support our colleagues who wished to explore becoming superintendents through the first Minnesota Aspiring Superintendents' Academy. The Academy offered a cohort professional development opportunity focusing on developing a professional practice in the superintendency, grounded in evidence-based knowledge, skills, and dispositions that contribute to successful capstone leadership.

MASA is proud to announce that we will offer our second Academy in 2018, and once again, we are grateful to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the National Joint Powers Alliance (NJPA) for their support in making this program possible.

The rationale for offering the content is to beef up the “pipeline” of future leaders who are prepared to be successful in the superintendency.

We have evidence that the “supply and demand” of qualified superintendents is an issue of concern, and that this has been on the radar for a while. We also know just from our own anecdotal evidence (and member data) here at MASA that turnover is still an issue for a lot of districts, and that the pool of candidates for filling open superintendencies seems to be a bit smaller. The “shortage” is a ubiquitous topic—just do a Google search on “superintendent shortage” and you will find lots of states and organizations weighing in.

So, it seems that it would be in the best interest of districts to support beefing up the supply of well-prepared superintendents, but that is a general, “greater good” kind of application. Where it gets personal is when you talk about succession. School districts tend not to be terribly good at succession planning, for many reasons. Again, the cybersphere is chock full of articles and books on the topic.

Andy Hargreaves writes in his forward to Dean Fink's book on succession planning in education, *The Succession Challenge: Building and Sustaining Leadership Capacity Through Succession Management*.¹

“We are finally waking up to at least some of the challenges of leadership succession in education. After decades of complacency, when we acted as if our leaders would stay at their posts forever, we now realize that the Boomer generation of leaders is moving on and that about half of our existing leaders (the exact numbers depend on the study) will be retiring very soon.”

Hargreaves highlights a culture we all know well — one where mission, initiatives, strategic planning, etc. go by the

wayside with unsustained leadership. And of course there is all kinds of research out there that provides evidence of the benefits of sustained leadership.

Our 2018 Academy will start in January and will consist of five 2-day on-site sessions at the MASA offices in January, March, May, September, and November. Each participant will have a coach who provides individual support and facilitates a smaller coaching group between sessions. Topic focal areas include: System Leadership, Accountability for Student Success, Communication and Political Skills, Finance & Budget, and Career Management.

Participants of our 2016 cohort gave the experience high marks for relevance and capacity-building, and most say they would recommend the experience. If you, or someone you know, would like to apply to participate in the cohort, application materials will be posted on the AASA web site at www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=41516.

1. <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/the-succession-challenge/book233823>



Blog It! MASA Member Blogs

Blog It! is a list of links to our members' blogs — a one-stop shopping to see what your fellow MASA members are communicating about via their blog posts.

Go to www.mnasa.org/blogit to check it out!

If you would like your blog linked on our page, send the name of your blog and URL to quinn@mnasa.org and we will post it on the Blog It! page.

Turn Your T-Shirt Inside Out: Regulating Student Speech at School



Gregory S. Madsen
Education Law Attorney
Kennedy & Graven, Chartered

School officials who encounter students coming to school with tasteless or objectionable messages or words on their t-shirts often respond by informing students to turn them inside out or remove them.

If the student complies, that usually ends the discussion. However, if a student refuses to comply—and claims to have a First Amendment right to wear, for example, a t-shirt depicting a Confederate flag—what

seems like a run-of-the-mill dress code dispute may ripen into a constitutional challenge to the school's authority to suppress the message on the student's t-shirt.

The First Amendment prohibits rules that suppress freedom of speech merely because the speech is offensive or disagreeable. However, sometimes student speech clashes with the rights and responsibilities of schools to keep students and staff safe from disruption that may be created by certain types of speech.

Fortunately, the courts have identified some types of speech that are off-limits for student expression at school, whether on t-shirts or otherwise. Students have no constitutional right to use “fighting words” — words that advocate or threaten violence toward others—just as they have no right to wear t-shirts emblazoned with profanities, obscenities or words that harass, threaten or denigrate other students or members of the school community.

Apart from these types of speech, however, exactly what crosses the constitutional line is not nearly as clear, especially where the t-shirt's content constitutes political expression.

Courts that are asked to resolve First Amendment challenges by students to actions taken by schools to restrict their content-laden t-shirts or other clothing most often have done so by following the standards set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Cmty. Sch. Dist.*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969).

In *Tinker*—the 1969 case that gave us the ubiquitous reminder that students “do not shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the school house gate”—students were suspended and not allowed to wear black armbands to school in protest of the Vietnam War.

The Supreme Court in *Tinker* rejected the school's right to suppress such political expression because it was judged not “necessary to avoid material and substantial disruption with school-work and discipline” and because it did not “intrude upon” or “collide with” the “rights of other students to be secure and to be left alone.”

Deciding when a particular political message may cause material or substantial disruption or whether the message intrudes upon or collides with student rights is not always easy.

Most cases involving school prohibition of the Confederate flag on t-shirts or other apparel have upheld a school's right to do so, but not necessarily because the content or symbol is itself subject to suppression. Instead, courts have usually upheld suppression of such expression by making a fact-specific inquiry using *Tinker* to determine if a school's forecast of material disruption is reasonable. Where a school can show evidence of, for example, a school history of racial disruption or violence triggered by the Confederate flag—a symbol associated by many with support of slavery—courts have found such evidence to be sufficient to justify stopping students from wearing t-shirts displaying the Confederate flag at school, or imposing discipline on those who refuse to remove them. See *Hardwick v. Heyward*, 711 F.3d 426 (4th Cir. 2013) and *Defoe v. Spiva*, 625 F.3d 324 (6th Cir. 2010) (substantial disruption was shown by evidence of race-related fights; OCR complaint alleging disparate treatment of black student in fight with white student; racist graffiti with slurs and threats; “hit lists” with student names; increase in black student absenteeism; and school lockdown resulting from threat of race-related violence).

On the other hand, efforts by a school to prohibit a student from wearing a t-shirt stating the “Top 10 reasons you might be a redneck sports fan” was blocked by a federal appeals court in *Sypniewski v. Warren Hills Reg'l Bd. of Educ.*, 307 F.3d 243 (3rd Cir. 2002). The school argued that the term “redneck” was barred by its policy prohibiting apparel that is “racially divisive or creates ill will or hatred.” The Third Circuit responded by acknowledging that the school's history of racial incidents would have supported banning clothing with the Confederate flag because of the substantial risk of disruption. However, the court stated that there was conflicting and ambiguous evidence of whether the term “redneck” had any direct association with racial conflict or hostility. “[W]hen a school seeks to suppress a term merely related to an expression that has proven to be disruptive, it must do more than point to a general association. It must point to a particular and concrete basis for concluding the association is strong enough to give rise to a well-founded fear of genuine disruption in the form of substantially interfering with school operations or with the rights of others.”

Stated another way, the *Tinker*, *Hardwick*, *Defoe*, and *Sypniewski* decisions demonstrate that when it comes to the suppression of student political speech, courts usually

Legal Issues continued on page 17.

Building Relationships



Valerie Dosland
Government Affairs Director
Ewald Consulting
MASA Lobbyist

The 2017 legislative session was a busy one, with a lot of changes and a focus on passing a two-year state budget. Because of election changes, there were many newly elected representatives and senators and a switch again in political power. Representing you at the Capitol, we worked to develop or strengthen our legislative relationships but this is only impactful when legislators also hear from you, their constituents.

Although the beginning of the 2018 legislative session, February 20, seems far away, there is important work you can now do to solidify your relationships with your legislative delegation. Fall is an excellent time to build and strengthen relationships with your elected officials, educate them on your issues and rally their support for future legislative efforts.

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

- If you have not done so yet, be sure to thank them for their work during the 2017 legislative session.
- Invite them to tour the district, speak at a school board meeting or participate in a specific event in your district.
- Ask them to meet you for coffee or lunch so you can get to know them better.
- You could also respond to legislative updates and legislative surveys so they get feedback in a number of ways or attend a legislator's town hall meeting and ask questions of their plans for the 2018 session.

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

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 2017-18 P.A.T. are listed below...



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

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.

Reading and Math Corps from page 9.

Authority: Minn. Stat. § 125A.56, Subd. 1(a).

Authority: Minn. R. 3525.1341

Our Findings:

- Reading Corps and Math Corps services have been available to Princeton students for five years.
- Over the same period of time, the number of students requiring special education services has been declining:
 - ▶ 23 fewer students over the same time period.
- Each student costs roughly \$13,000 per year for specialized instruction.
- This totals approximately \$300,000 per year.
- This equals approximately \$1,500,000 in savings over five years.

In short, Reading and Math Corps have not only helped our students to learn how to read and perform better in math, these programs have also saved our district in costs. Occasionally we hear that these programs may be reduced in support. They are supported through Americorps funding. Our state legislators just increased funding for the programs, and we thank them! The federal government has supported our programming ever since its inception. As the federal government works on budget, we are advocating for continued financing.

Thanks to our Reading and Math Corps Members for their fine work! •

Legal Issues from page 15.

are not willing to take a school's word for it that the t-shirt expression being suppressed is constitutionally permissible. A school instead must provide a direct connection between the message being suppressed and the likelihood that the same message will substantially disrupt school operations or the rights of others. •

This article is intended to provide general information with commentary. It should not be relied on as legal advice. If required, legal advice regarding this topic should be obtained from district legal counsel.

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

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Polaris Leadership Award from page 11.

times, but perseverance, strong communication and community engagement will bring the desired results.

In 2005, a "vote no group" defeated an Orono referendum with four questions. With perseverance and a strategy, each element of that referendum was approved in subsequent elections. The district's most recent community survey (June 2016) found that 97 percent of respondents rated the quality of Orono Schools as "good" or "excellent."

In 2008, Dr. Orcutt was named a Richard Green Scholar by MASA for her research, "Characteristics of Resiliency in Leadership: Implications for Personal and Organizational Coping and Adapting Abilities."

Dr. Orcutt holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership from St. Mary's University, a specialist's degree in Educational Administration from St. Cloud State University, a master's degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology from Mankato State University, and a bachelor's degree in Communication Disorders from the University of Minnesota.

MASA is grateful to Ehlers for their ongoing support of the Polaris Award program. Ehlers works collaboratively with clients to create a plan that meets their unique needs. •

MASA Legislative Resources

Visit www.mnasa.org/atthecapitol to see our MASA legislative resources!

MASA Legislative Platform

2018 Legislative Contact Plan

Directories for the MN House and Senate

Legislative Updates

MN Capitol Complex Parking Map

2018 Education Related Bills

Affiliated Associations' Legislative Platforms

2018 Federal Delegation Contacts

Referendum Response Plan Information

Let's Honor ALL Intelligence



Denny Smith

Leadership and Development
Trainer

As a geometry teacher I thought I knew a lot about angles. My neighbor, Dave, is a finish carpenter. Although I can prove a theorem with the best of them, my “angular intelligence” wouldn’t hold a candle to his.

My wife and I were helping a neighbor with a plumbing project and quickly discovered that our limited knowledge put the project far beyond our pay grade. We solicited Dave's expertise and found that our methodology was

a disaster waiting to happen. We marveled at his knowledge and innate intelligence.

Zig Ziglar once said that a society that considers a philosopher intelligent because he or she is a philosopher and a plumber less intelligent because he or she is a plumber, has neither philosophy nor plumbing that will hold water. Intelligence has nothing to do with how many letters you have behind your name or whether your degree is from an ivory tower or a trade school or whether your training is formal or informal. Intelligence comes in a variety of shapes and sizes.

The auto mechanic who diagnoses your engine with thousands of moving parts and then proceeds to fix the problem is an absolute genius. The electrician that planned and wired your home has knowledge and insight beyond belief. The custodians in your building are some of the brightest people on your staff. We would be well served to recognize and honor all forms of intelligence and all levels of education.

A quote from one of our previous discussions brings us to the point of this article. “For most students, brick and mortar schools with rows of desks and traditional teaching methods are wonderful...But we really need to look for alternative educational venues and curriculums for those who perhaps will never succeed in a traditional setting.” With an alternative curriculum and a different approach they could flourish. The social and economic benefits would astound us.

Our first step is to recognize that the student in your auto mechanics class who can tune an engine but may not be too excited about diagramming a sentence is an intellectual dynamo. The person enrolling in the plumbing course at the Technical/Community College will accumulate knowledge and a phenomenal skill set that will be very much appreciated when your drain is clogged.

Consider accelerating a paradigm shift that has already gathered momentum. Not everyone needs (nor desires) a liberal arts education. Those who pursue a career in the trades are no less intelligent nor less motivated than their counterparts who seek bachelor's degrees. As the title suggests, let's honor all intelligence and encourage our students to pursue educational goals that will bring them career satisfaction, financial well-being and personal happiness.

Business leaders tell us that one of their major challenges is the lack of a qualified workforce. Imagine the impact on America's quality of life if we evolve into an educational system that prepares all of our students for career and economic success. We often hear that students entering the trades are finding meaningful and well paying jobs at a sometimes faster rate than those with four year degrees. That in no way diminishes a traditional liberal arts education, but rather shows respect for the educational goals of all of our students. We can honor the intelligence and ambition of students seeking a Technical/Community College education with the same fervor as those pursuing four-year degrees.

Time for the soapbox. The effect of changes in curriculum and delivery systems in education will be minimal without systemic changes that view educational funding differently. In the mid 1800s, Horace Mann had the hare-brained idea that all kids should be given free public education. “Education...beyond all other devices of human origin, is a great equalizer of conditions of men -- the balance wheel of social machinery,” he said. “Education is best provided by schools embracing children of all religious, social and ethnic backgrounds.” Through investment of resources and implementation of his hare-brained program of free public education for all, America prospered.

What would happen to our economy if we expanded this radical idea to include free college? We have thousands of talented and motivated students who could thrive educationally but can't afford college. Imagine the fiscal benefits of tapping into this vast talent pool by investing in their education. Instead of low paying jobs they would command earnings of \$30,000 to \$50,000 or more per year, moving them into a higher tax bracket. The tax dollars we invest in their education will come back to us in a heartbeat. They could then buy cars and homes and afford to go on vacations, stimulating our local and national economies beyond our wildest imagination. Is free college really such a “hare-brained” idea?

It is imperative that we in education take the lead in promoting the economic advantages of affordable (even free) college for our academically qualified students. If other countries do it, perhaps we too can discover the academic, financial and social advantages of doing so.

As food for thought, let's conclude with two more ideas from Horace Mann -- ideas that are as relevant today as they were in the 1800s. “Jails and prisons are the complement of schools; so many less as you have of the latter, so many more you must have of the former.”

And finally, “Let us not be content to wait and see what will happen, but give us the determination to make the right things happen.” •

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 dennysmith.com or by email at denny@dennysmith.com.

Evidence-Based Interventions and Practices: Improving Implementation and Supporting Schools



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

For the past decade, there has been a great deal of emphasis on implementing interventions and instructional practices grounded in research to improve student outcomes. In fact, “scientific research-based interventions” (SRBI) interventions became codified into law in the case of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. With NCLB

being reauthorized as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the term SRBI has been replaced by “evidence-based interventions” (EBI). This shift was made to help increase the impact of educational investments by ensuring that interventions have been proven to be effective in leading to the desired outcomes.

So, what does the term EBI mean? In a nutshell, evidence-based intervention are programs or practices that have evidence to show that they are effective at producing results and improving outcomes when implemented. Under ESSA there are four tiers of evidence:

- Tier 1 – Strong Evidence: Practices supported by one or more well designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies.
- Tier 2 – Moderate Evidence: Practices supported by one or more well designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.
- Tier 3 – Promising Practice: Practices supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented correlational studies with statistical controls for selection bias.
- Tier 4 – Demonstrating a Rational: Practices that have a well-defined logic model, are supported by research, and some effort underway by an SEA, LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

While selecting an EBI is an important first step, it is critical to evaluate implementation in your setting and context. Good strategies validated by research often fail at the local level for many reasons including:

- Diverse populations: Many educational research studies are based on relatively homogeneous samples

making it difficult to generalize to diverse classrooms and schools.

- Resources: EBIs with strong research support may require resources that would be difficult for a classroom teacher or a building to obtain
- Match to school culture: Schools need to determine the fit between their school culture and the EBI to see if the theoretical orientation, teacher preparedness, and openness to change of the EBI match with their culture.
- Sustainability: Implementing an EBI is only effective if the practice is sustained over time. Sustainability requires a focus on fidelity of implementation, coaching and support, and leadership. Effective intervention practices or models coupled with ineffective or inefficient implementation will result in ineffective, unsustainable program and outcomes!

CAREI understands that many districts do not have the internal capacity to evaluate the both the impact and the implementation of EBIs. CAREI continues to provide support to Minnesota School Districts in their implementation and evaluation efforts through membership in the CAREI District Assembly. Last year, 51 school districts joined the assembly. This year, we hope to double that number! We have three membership options available to better meet your needs and have added a variety of services to assist you in your quest to improve outcomes. For more information on CAREI or joining the CAREI District Assembly, please visit our website at www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/ or contact me at kgibbons@umn.edu.



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MASA Calendar

2017

September 30-October 1
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
Pier B, Duluth

October 1
Great Start Cohort Session 2
Pier B, Duluth

October 1
MASA Foundation Golf Tournament
Enger Park Golf Course, Duluth

October 2-3
MASA Fall Conference
DECC, Duluth

October 12
MASA Nominating Committee Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

November 1
MASA Federal Advocacy Committee Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

November 2
MASA Legislative Committee Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

November 15
Great Start Cohort Session 3
Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

November 17
MASA Executive Development Committee
MASA Offices, St. Paul

December 6
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

2018

January 10
Great Start Cohort Session 4
MASA Offices, St. Paul

February 15-17
AASA National Conference on Education
Nashville, TN

March 7
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
Great Start Cohort Session 5
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

March 8-9
MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

June 21-22
MASA Board of Directors Retreat
Madden's Conference Center, Brainerd

July 1
MASA Membership Renewal

September 29-30
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
Madden's Conference Center, Brainerd

September 30
Great Start Cohort MASA Foundation Golf Tournament
Madden's Conference Center, Brainerd

October 1-2
MASA Fall Conference
Madden's Conference Center, Brainerd