

Leaders FORUM

Spring 2017

MASA Regional Grants Make a Difference for Members

Professional development and growth opportunities for members are the primary focus of MASA's Fall and Spring conferences. The executive development committee and MASA staff have sought to provide thought provoking speakers and breakout sessions to stimulate productive conversations about improving our schools and communities for decades. Additionally, conversations about how best to deliver professional growth opportunities for regional needs occurred at the MASA Board level. Dating back to December 2010, members from Region VI requested support for regional professional development. The support was granted by the Board and each region that requested the \$750 grant received it. Flash forward to June of 2015, and again Region VI requested additional support for regional professional development but at a much more robust level. Through the recommendation of the Executive Development Committee and the approval from the MASA Board, grants were established to support regional professional development on a rotating basis.

Last year, Region VI had the opportunity to access the regional training fund established by the MASA Executive Development Committee and approved by the MASA Board. The grant provided \$5,000 for the training opportunity and Region VI representatives will present information about the professional development experience at the MASA Spring Conference. The professional development opportunity was targeted for school superintendents and central office administrators, and focused on the use of feedback, rubrics, and coaching to promote continued growth and learning. The

professionals who superintendents and central office administrators supervise and evaluate are not usually teachers, rather they are principals, directors, or other direct reports in need of coaching that is not readily provided.

Jim Roussin, education author and Cognitive Coaching trainer, provided the professional development sessions for Region VI and offered this description for the training opportunity; "Adults grow, learn and change through reflective practice opportunities. Reflective practice is understood as the process of learning through and from experience for gaining new insights about ourselves and/or our professional practice (Boud et al 1985; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Mezirow, 1981, Jarvis, 1992). This often involves examining assumptions that inform our everyday work. The point is to recapture professional experiences and mull them over critically in order to gain new understandings that will improve future practice. This is understood as part of the process of life-long learning."

The training Mr. Roussin provided for Region VI was in three half-day sessions with opportunities to practice learned strategies and skills between meeting times.



Scott Thielman
MASA President and
Superintendent
Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose
Schools

Regional Grants continued on page 9.

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2016-17 MASA BUSINESS PARTNERS

Special thanks to our 2016-17 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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Leading In Challenging Times



Gary Amoroso
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of School
Administrators

As we woke up on November 8, Election Day, there was a sense of anticipation. When we woke up on November 9 there were many questions about what the results meant for public education and I heard from many of you that there were students that were concerned about their

futures. There were staff members concerned about how their professional lives might be impacted by future policy decisions.

Since November, I would suggest that we are facing challenges as leaders of addressing the concerns of our students, staff and at times our communities. We all look to our leaders for answers and at times comfort.

Commissioner Cassellius demonstrated strong leadership when she issued a Special Notice for Superintendents and Directors on February 1. The Commissioner stated in part: "Every student, irrespective of their race, religion or ethnicity, has a place in our classrooms and the right to an excellent education. We are devoted to ensuring that".

What can each of us do within our communities to effectively lead our schools and communities? Patrick Sweeney, in an article entitled *Effectively Leading Through These Tough Times*, which appeared in the September 2010 issue of Leadership Excellence, identified three important things that leaders must do.

First, Sweeney said that leaders must know the people they work with. Focus on the strengths that your staff brings to the table. Reflect on your strengths and determine how the strengths of your staff can best be utilized to accomplish your mission.

Second, work to replace fear with confidence! Sweeney states, one of the most important aspects of effective leadership is the power to set a positive tone. During challenging times is not the time to complain about the challenges. An effective leader lets his/her staff know that he/she believes in them and that they can create a

brighter future.

Lastly, an effective leader establishes and grows a culture of collaboration. Sweeney suggests that you are able to encourage conflicting opinions, while creating collaboration. Effective leaders are able to establish a positive tone and establish feelings of confidence in challenging times.

Always remember that your staff and community are looking to you for reassurance and guidance during challenging times. Regardless of the challenge, stay focused on your district mission and work continuously to meet the ever-changing needs of your students!

As always please contact me at (651) 319-1211 or gamoroso@mnasa.org if I can ever be of service to you! •



Blog It! MASA Member Blogs

We are pleased to announced a new feature on the MASA website, Blog It!

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!

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MASA/MASE SPRING CONFERENCE PREVIEW

A “best practice” is a method that reliably leads to desired results. Great school leaders create effective systems that adapt to rapid and pervasive change, provide a culture supporting risk-taking and experimentation, and nurture a climate of possibilities. A best leadership practice in school districts manifests itself in strong systems that support those targets and therefore excellence for all students. Join your colleagues this spring as we share our own regional best leadership practices.

Friday will feature a keynote address from **Kim Gibbons**, Associate Director of Innovation and Outreach, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota and **Jim Rickabaugh**, Senior Advisor, The Institute for Personalized Learning, A Division of CESA #1 who will present "Cross-walking the Approaches of Explicit, Data Driven



Instruction and Personalized Learning: A Leadership Conversation." We will also hear from the **MASA Region 6 Leadership** about their professional development grant usage in "Reflective Conversations that Enhance Professional Practice with Jim Roussin." The final keynote speaker is **Derreck Kayongo**, Business Visionary, Global Soap Project Founder & CEO of the Center for Civil and Human Rights who will present "Harnessing Your Power to Create Change."

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

Join us for our eighth annual “**At Ruth’s Table**” conversation on Wednesday, March 8 (refreshments at 12:30; program at 1). This is an opportunity for education leaders who are women to gather for learning, networking and idea sharing. Each practicing education leader is encouraged to bring a guest who is a woman considering a career in education leadership. On Thursday from 4:30-6 pm, everyone is invited to attend the **Riley Reception**. This event is in honor of our MASA retirees, an opportunity for retirees and others to gather for homecoming and networking. *These both are ticketed events - please register on the conference registration form.*

Thursday will feature a variety of **EdCamp** sessions providing an opportunity for all of our participants to design their own conference experience by exploring the topics you determine. Our Edcamp subcommittee will be on hand to help participants arrange for the conferencing spaces and to extend invitations to the discussions. Our members ARE our experts, and here is a great chance to share knowledge and ideas.

We are featuring 10 **breakout sessions** on topics of particular interest to our members. These hour long sessions address topics such as instructional leadership, community engagement, strategic planning, improvised leadership, equity analysis, school finance, and more! See all the sessions online at www.regonline.com/2017MASAMASE.

Be sure to visit Thursday’s **Exhibit Fair!** With more than 80 exhibitors offering innovative products and services, you’ll discover the latest educational technology available for your students and communities.

Throughout the conference we will be **celebrating the service** of our colleagues. In addition to celebrating our 2017 retiring members, we will present the Kay E. Jacobs Award, Distinguished Service Award, Outstanding Central Office Leader Awards and the Regional Administrator of Excellence Awards.

The MASA and MASE conferences are digital, featuring program information, session handouts, contact lists and more on our conference app. Please bring your computer, tablet or smartphone with you to stay connected!

2017 MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Our Best Leadership Practices
March 9-10, 2017
Minneapolis Marriott Northwest
Brooklyn Park, MN
www.regonline.com/2017MASAMASE

Meet Your Keynote Speakers...



Kim Gibbons



Jim Rickabaugh



Derreck Kayongo

Schedule At-a-Glance

Wednesday, March 8 - Pre-Conference Events

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

Thursday, March 9

- (Registration open 7 am)
- 8:30-9:30 am Conference Welcome
MASA Foundation Fundraising Kickoff
Awards Presentation
EdCamp Topics
 - 9:45-10:45 am Breakout Sessions I
 - 10:45 am-3:30 pm Exhibits Open
 - 11:15 am-12:15 pm Breakout Sessions II
 - 12:15-1:15 pm Lunch
 - 2-3 & 3:30-4:30 pm EdCamp Sessions
 - 4:30-6 pm Riley Reception

Friday, March 10

- (Registration open 8 am)
- 8:30 am-12 pm Awards Presentations
Retiree Recognition
MASA & MASE Officer Candidates
Keynote Speakers:
Kim Gibbons
Jim Rickabaugh
MASA Region 6 Leadership
Derreck Kayongo

A special thank you to our premier business partners!



MASA FOUNDATION SPRING FUNDRAISER

Donate at the Spring Conference!

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

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

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

The MASA Foundation is proud to sponsor MASA's Professional Assistance Team (P.A.T.). The P.A.T. program directly supports the Foundation's mission of leadership development and individual support by meeting the immediate need of MASA members to confidentially discuss issues, seek advice, and receive valuable coaching from experienced and trusted MASA colleagues. Meet the 2016-17 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.

Donate at www.mnasa.org/donate

Thank you to the 2016-17 MASA Foundation Board of Directors...

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Ed Waltman
Gary Amoroso, Executive Director*



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

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

Donate at www.mnasa.org/donate

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



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2017 MASA AWARDS

Congratulations to our 2017 MASA Award Recipients!

Superintendent of the Year - sponsored by AT&S&R Planners/Architects/Engineers

Curt Tryggestad, Superintendent, Eden Prairie Schools

2017 MASA Distinguished Service Award

Ken Dragseth, President, School Exec Connect and Retired Superintendent, Edina Schools

Charlie Kyte, Senior Consultant and Business Development Expert, Charles Kyte Consulting; Former MASA Executive Director; and Retired Superintendent, Northfield Schools

2017 MASA Kay E Jacobs Memorial

Julie Critz, Superintendent, Alexandria School District

2017 MASA Outstanding Central Office Leader Award

Joshua Swanson, Assistant Superintendent, Eden Prairie Schools

Pam Miller, Director of Teaching & Learning, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools

2017 Regional Administrators of Excellence Recipients

Region 1: Beth Giese, Superintendent, Cannon Falls Area Schools

Region 2: Jeff Bertrang, Superintendent, New Ulm Public Schools

Region 3: Chris Sonju, Superintendent, Glencoe-Silver Lake Public Schools

Region 4: Lynne Kovash, Superintendent, Moorhead Area Public Schools

Region 5: George Weber, Superintendent, Pierz School District

Region 6: Ray Queener, Superintendent, Cambridge-Isanti Public Schools

Region 7: Gregg Allen, Superintendent, Mesabi East School District

Region 8: Tim Lutz, Superintendent, Kelliher Public School

Region 9: Lisa Snyder, Superintendent, Lakeville Area Public Schools

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

Our recipients will be honored during the 2017 MASA/MASE Spring Conference. You can learn more about the awards and the accomplishments of the recipients by reading the press releases available in the "newsroom" on the MASA website.

2017 MASA Board of Directors Elections!

Electronic ballots for elections for the following positions will be sent to all active members the week of March 13, 2017.

President-Elect (2017-18)

MASA Treasurer (2017-20)

Region 5 Superintendent Component Group Representative (2017-20)

Metro (Region 9) Curriculum Component Group Representative (2017-20)

Metro (Region 9) Special Education Component Group Representative (2017-20)

Metro (Region 9) Technology Component Group Representative (2017-20)

Greater MN (Regions 1-8) Curriculum Component Group Representative (2017-20)

Service Provider Component Group Representative (Regions 1-9) (2017-20)



2017 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year Celebration

Pictured (left-right): Gary Amoroso, MASA Executive Director; Jenifer Loon, MN State Representative; Curt Tryggestad, Superintendent, Eden Prairie Public Schools; Cathy Tryggestad; Peter Lacey, RIBA/LEED-AP - Architect and Associate Partner, AT&S&R; Brenda Cassellius, Minnesota Commissioner of Education

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Regional Grants from page 1.

Participants learned about four support functions regarding Cognitive Coaching and Learning Focused Supervision. Attendees were taught how to discern between coaching, collaborating, consulting and evaluating when working with staff. A main focus of the training was to help participants recognize when to use the support functions as a way of helping staff to be more self-directed.

The Region VI leadership team received feedback from the professional development sessions, and here are a few of the responses. "I have really thought more deeply and intentionally about making my questions more reflective when working with other administrators... The reaction has been very positive. I often get, 'Wow, that's a good question. Let me think about that for a minute.'" Another participant offered this comment: "The strategy I have worked on is to reframe evaluation meetings to focus more on coaching conversations. I have been impressed with how much the staff I supervise have grown because they are identifying growth areas and together we find support and growth opportunities. In the old evaluation model, we would see growth but the coaching model has shown more dramatic growth. Additionally, I have found people holding themselves more accountable for their own professional

growth."

The grant made it possible for Region VI to provide a high quality, just-in-time, professional growth and development opportunity for forty-four (44) members in a personalized learning setting. The training focused on strategies and practices that attendees implemented in coaching conversations with administrative staff to aid them in their own self-reflection, which led to new insights and more effective action in the future. Based on the response samples from the feedback the region received, the region leadership team was appreciative of the financial support and felt the training was valuable and provided professional growth opportunities for the members and their staff. I truly appreciate the vision of MASA which allowed Region VI members to have this tremendous experience. I look forward to hearing and seeing what other regions will experience with this professional development opportunity. •



Infinitec
infinite potential through technology

The mission of Infinitec is to advance independence and promote inclusive opportunities for children and adults through technology. We are a member-based organization currently supporting school districts in Minnesota, Illinois, Kansas and Pennsylvania.

Infinitec offers four pillars of service:

Training and Education includes online professional learning with **paraprofessional required trainings** and testing for credit. Districts can utilize the **Private Content** feature to integrate internally developed trainings into the online platform. The **ENGAGE** tool helps districts create, administer and track online learning paths as assignments or recommendations.

Information Services consists of extensive web and hard copy assistive and instructional technology resources, including a database analysis system for selection of mobile device apps and InfiniTEXT, a searchable instructional materials collection for qualified K-12 students with print disabilities.

Access to Expertise includes access to highly experienced technical assistance staff.

Equipment Services includes discount purchase programs for hardware and software.

Questions? Contact Mary Bettlach
at mbettlach@ucpnet.org

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Seventh Annual 21st CENTURY Teaching and Learning Conference

Featuring Keynote Speaker **Roni Ellington, Ph.D.**

Keynote Address: Moving Diversity and Inclusion from the Margins to the Center of STEM Classroom Practice: Transformative Strategies for Teaching Across Disciplines

When: Tuesday, June 20, 2017

Where: The College of St. Scholastica, Duluth campus

For more information or to register, please visit go.css.edu/MEdConf.



2017 Session is Upon Us



Valerie Dosland
Government Affairs Director
Ewald Consulting
MASA Lobbyist

For the 2017 session, which began January 3, everyone's attention is focused on the passing of a two-year state budget. The state is currently sitting with a \$1.4 billion budget surplus. However, half of that is considered to be one-time funding so legislative leaders are advising caution as they work to develop their budget priorities.

The February forecast will provide legislators with the last evaluation of the state's fiscal picture before deciding on a two-year state budget. Once the February forecast is released, committees will receive their budget targets before beginning to compile their major budget bills. Budget bills will be passed out of committee by March 31.

First out in the budget process is the Governor's budget recommendations. Governor Dayton's 2017 education budget recommendations total a \$609 million increase over current level spending. His proposal includes increasing

the per-pupil formula by 2 percent per year for a total of \$370 million. Gov. Dayton also invests heavily to expand voluntary pre-kindergarten — a \$74 million investment. He also proposes to invest additional funding to cover unfunded special education costs, increasing special education aid by \$40 million as well as \$68 million to cover employer contribution increases as part of a TRA proposal to sustain the fund.

A number of policy issues will be also be addressed this session. Most notably, the House and Senate majority would like to expand tax credits for private schools, a proposal MASA opposes. Another priority of this Legislature is to address the confusing and complex teacher licensure structures. Look for proposals to restructure teacher licensing, which hopefully will also provide more flexibility to attract and retain teachers.

I know many of you have been reaching out to your local legislators and participating in the MASA regional lobby days. Thank you! Your efforts make a difference in helping advance the MASA priorities. •

MASA Legislative Resources

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

MASA Legislative Platform

2017 Legislative Contact Plan

Directories for the MN House and Senate

Legislative Updates

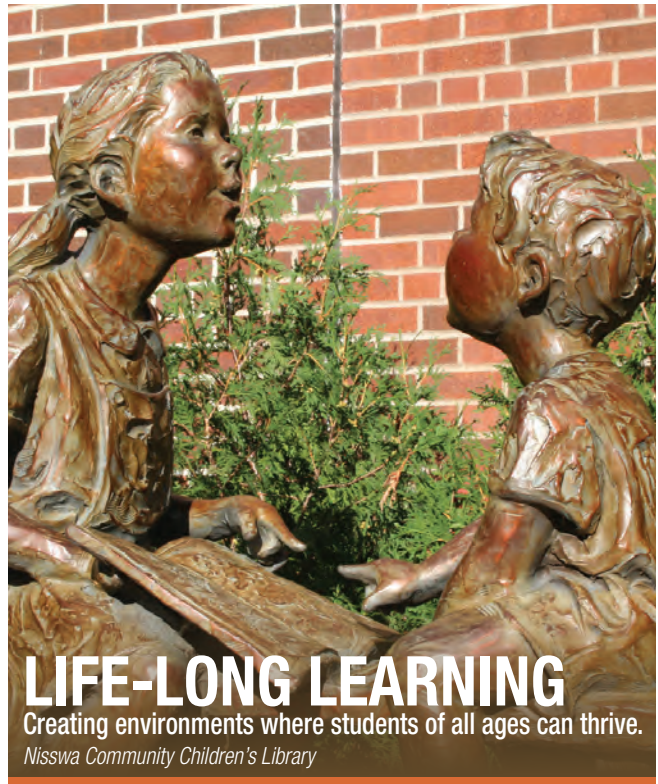
MN Capitol Complex Parking Map

2017 Education Related Bills

Affiliated Associations' Legislative Platforms

2017 Federal Delegation Contacts

Referendum Response Plan Information



LIFE-LONG LEARNING

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Nisswa Community Children's Library



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Technology as the Accelerator in Learning

As you look at 1:1 student device implementation plans across Minnesota, equitable access to technology is usually a driving goal. It's important. If our kids do not have access to technology (with high-speed bandwidth) we cannot provide the visionary education of our future. However, getting devices into the hands of our students is only one piece of the puzzle. Michael Fullan is quoted as saying, "Pedagogy is the driver, technology is the accelerator." If we are truly going to get the most bang for all of our tech spending bucks, we must continue to focus on learning and how technology can support, accelerate and amplify it.

We know that classrooms that solely rely on didactic teaching (one size fits all - I lecture you listen) do not work for all kids. Simply digitizing these classrooms will not improve results either. Putting content online may provide 24-7 access, but if students are still only left to memorize or regurgitate the facts from videos/resources, learning will have very little chance of being deep and lasting.

Student-centered instructional design is a great avenue for learning today with today's tools.

Below are examples of pedagogical best practices that support learner-centered instruction.

- Clear learning goals
- Student choice and voice
- Assessment of, for, as learning
- Feedback - student:student, teacher:student, student:teacher
- Collaborative learning groups
- Active/authentic learning
- Metacognition

I have had the opportunity to observe many powerful learning experiences designed by educators who continue to drive innovation to engage students and deepen learning. One such story comes to mind from this past fall.

In 8th grade, ELA teachers @JanelleGroehler and @Mrs_Ausman4 asked their students "How can we, as 8th graders, educate our community on the importance of a positive digital footprint?" In collaborative groups, the students selected target audiences and presented their project ideas to a team (teachers, principal, and other students) for feedback. Once they received the green light, students began working on their project and would conference with their teachers on a bi-weekly basis to receive formative feedback on their projects as well as to check for understanding of lesson outcomes. All projects would come to life during Digital Citizenship Week in October. All students were required

to research and then advocate for positive footprint for a variety of audiences. Some students presented to elementary students; others presented to high school or middle school students. One team presented to district parents and another presented to staff. The social media team created accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to share their message and share the work of their fellow students. Other collaborative projects included a game called "Byron Go" with a digital citizenship theme, the development of an online video game, newsletters to email, creating a coloring book with a story and original artwork for elementary students, and posting public service announcements via Youtube, etc. The culminating event was a project by several student groups that created a school wide retreat with digital footprint theme-based activities for their peers.



Jen Hegna
Director of Information and Learning Technology
Byron Public Schools

After the project was complete, students posted their learning artifacts to their ePortfolios and were provided prompts to reflect on their learning. After observing the work of our students, I believe many of our kids already have resume ready artifacts and experiences as 8th graders! Imagine if these students were able to continue to build upon and master these skills over the next 4-5 years?

While there were numerous ELA standards embedded and assessed in this project - how well do you think students met the following essential learning outcome? I can produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. It will be important, as with any innovation, that we don't get so caught up in the excitement of the innovation, that we forget to assess the learning target(s) we set out to teach our students.

As I reflect on this project, pedagogy clearly was the driver. Educators were able to take their standards and make them come to life for their students. I observed very high student engagement, especially during the Digital Citizenship Week, when all of the work of our students came to fruition. Why? Because their work mattered. Not just to their teachers or classmates but to their local and digital communities.

So what about technology? In what ways did technology accelerate or amplify student learning? If you were to remove technology from this project, would it have had the same success? If this project would have been more didactic-aka lecture, listen, worksheet, test-would it have had the same

*Technology as the Accelerator in Learning
continued on page 13.*

*Technology as the Accelerator in Learning
from page 12.*

lasting results? I will let you come to your own conclusions.

Don't get me wrong. I still believe there is a place for lectures, there is a place for worksheets (not packet after packet!), and there are ways to design INCREDIBLE active learning experiences that require no technology at all. We cannot dismiss the powerful face to face learning strategies that still work today, but we also cannot ignore the opportunities that technology brings to learning either. It's about balance and trying to unlock the art and science of today's teaching and learning!

One final thought - It's important to also reflect on the culture of the classroom, school, and district that allowed this powerful learning experience to happen. As with any innovation, there is a degree of risk and uncertainty. What if this fails? Well, what if it doesn't? Even if it does fail, what does revision 2, 3, 4 look like for our students? Within a culture of learning and innovation, there must be a high degree of trust and transparency between administrators, teachers, and students. No matter what role we have in education, we must continue to support and foster a culture that allows powerful learning experiences for our students to happen. •



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My Time as Minnesota's Superintendent of the Year



Curt Tryggestad
Superintendent
Eden Prairie Schools

It is an honor to be selected as the Minnesota Superintendent of the Year (SOY). To be recognized by my peers is one of the most gratifying experiences of my career. Thanks to ATS&R for their ongoing sponsorship of this program, to MASA for supporting this recognition, and to the leaders within Minnesota's education community for their annual

participation in the selection process. I truly am humbled to be joining past recipients of the SOY, many of whom are my guides, mentors, and role models.

I was asked to reflect upon my experiences and thoughts about being the SOY. Where does one begin? Memories come flooding in...those of people, places, events, and family. I have a great deal to be thankful for in my life.

Many of you know that my formative years were spent on our family dairy farm. I learned so much growing up with my extended family nearby, but am really thankful that my parents recognized that I was not necessarily inclined or interested in being a dairy farmer. They found a way to send me to college and give me a different path. I also had great public school music teachers and coaches that nurtured my skills that helped me find success in college and later as a teacher and administrator.

Role models shaped who I am and what I do everyday... from the values and work ethic learned from my family, the educators who believed in me, and those I have worked for and with over the years. All left an indelible mark on my life.

Three educators stand out in my life. Fred Nylind, the Band Director and Gary Davis, a Music Professor (Luther College, Decorah, Iowa) saw potential and believed in me when I could have been written off several times over. I probably would not have graduated from Luther without their support and friendship. Jack Almos was my first principal and my mentor when I became a superintendent. He involved me in staff leadership roles early on in Hinckley, and many years later continues to be my mentor and friend.

Over the past 36 years I have had the privilege to serve in 7 different school districts. Since the announcement of the award, students, friends, and acquaintances have reached out to me. It was especially gratifying (and sobering) to hear from my Hinckley "kids". I worked in Hinckley for ten years and was their band director for eight years (grades 5-12). We built special bonds that are still strong today. The sobering part is that my "kids" are all approaching 50 years old!

Where did the time go? I cherish those relationships formed with friends, colleagues, and "my kids" over the years, and am so thankful that they have endured throughout my life.

I have had the opportunity to work with outstanding professionals from all over the state during my career. It is not uncommon for a conversation to lead to seeking a resource or consultant to help our work. Most times, I know someone that can help. My colleagues tease me about knowing a lot of professionals across the state, and my response is that it's all a consequence of not being able to hold a job! In reality, those personal and professional connections are in large part of any success that I have enjoyed.

I also appreciate the opportunity to have served on the AASA Governing Board, as well as the MASA and Minnesota Rural Education Association Boards. That work has helped me gain a broader perspective of the work at home and how we as leaders and spokesmen can make a difference in our state and nation.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I didn't thank my family. My wife Cathy, an exceptional administrator in her own right, has followed me through ten homes in eight different communities over the past 27 years. We took turns going to graduate school, sacrificing parts of our personal lives to improve our skills and knowledge. When times have gotten tough, her support and belief in me has always made the difference. However, know that she also is quick to let me know when I am feeling sorry for myself or perhaps a little overconfident—everyone needs tough love once in a while! I am also very proud of our kids, all educated, gainfully employed, and most importantly good people. Despite some of their comments to contrary over the years, they did survive into adulthood despite having to change schools three or four times. I often remind them that rather than one hometown, they have four hometowns with that many more friends.

I will close where I began...thanking MASA and ATS&R so much for this honor. I stand on the shoulders of giants and look forward to doing my part to represent our profession and support the next generation of Minnesota superintendents. Make excellence your legacy--and your efforts will live on forever. •

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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 2016-17 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.

Burks v. Metropolitan Council: Has the Minnesota Supreme Court Thrown Private Student Data Under the Bus?



Greg Madsen
Education Law Attorney
Kennedy & Graven, Chartered

A recent Minnesota Supreme Court ruling that a Metro Transit bus passenger may access the video recording of an incident in which the passenger was a data subject—even if the video includes private data about others depicted in the video—threatens the right of students and parents to have their private education records and data be kept private by the schools they attend.

In *Burks v. Metropolitan Council*, 884 N.W.2d 338 (Minn. 2016),

Robert Burks, who is blind, had an argument with a Metro Transit bus driver about the obstacles he encountered as he attempted to board a bus. In the wake of the dispute, Burks requested a copy of the video. Claiming that the video contained private personnel data on the driver, Metro Transit declined to produce it. A lawsuit ensued.

The Supreme Court focused not on whether the video was public or private data, but whether Burks was an “individual subject of the data” under Minn. Stat. § 13.04, subd. 3 of the Data Practices Act. Metro Transit argued that, even though Burks was “a subject of the data” shown on the video, so was the bus driver, and the driver’s right not to disclose private personnel data overrode any right of access Burks would have.

The Court disagreed. It held that an individual’s right to access data in which he or she is a data subject applies to “stored private or public data on individuals,” so it is “irrelevant whether the recording in question is public data . . . or private personnel data.” Therefore, “so long as at least one individual is identifiable as a subject, it does not matter that other individuals may be identifiable as well.” Based on that analysis, passenger Burks was entitled to the data regardless of whether it was the driver’s private personnel data.

The Supreme Court’s decision in *Burks* is problematic, because it also would seem to apply to requests by data subjects to access school surveillance videos or other investigative data at issue in disputes or altercations between or among school employees and students. Moreover, the *Burks* decision did not address redaction, and whether redacting personally-identifiable data about others from a video would still comply with a requesting data subject’s rights to the data. Provisions of both the state Data Practices Act (Minn. Stat. § 13.32) and federal law—the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)—treat most

educational data (termed “education records” under FERPA) as private data not subject to disclosure without parent or student consent or a court order.

As a result, prior to *Burks*, when a school district was asked by a data subject for his or her data in circumstances where the data contained private data about more than one person, a district was expected to attempt to separate the data and provide the requestor with his or her data without releasing private data about the other data subjects. If redaction could not adequately prevent disclosure of private data about other students or employees, the entire document or video sometimes could be withheld.

After *Burks*, however, an employee involved in an altercation or other misconduct with students can argue that, as a data subject, he or she is entitled to all video or investigative data regardless of whether “other individuals may be identifiable as well,” even if those individuals are students and even if the data is classified as private educational data.

Even though *Burks* may represent current Minnesota law, it remains to be seen whether school districts will have to provide unredacted video footage or unredacted data to such an employee or whether it must follow its FERPA obligation not to disclose such private educational data without consent. If the Data Practices Act and FERPA are held by the courts to be in conflict on this issue, *Burks* will likely have to yield to the supremacy of federal law as set forth in FERPA. •

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 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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The Ends of the Ham



Denny Smith
Leadership and Development
Trainer

A little girl asked, "Mommy, why do you always cut off the ends of the ham?" The mother answered, "Well, I've always done it that way. That's what my mother taught me." So the girl went to her grandmother and queried, "Grandma, how come you always cut off the ends of the ham before you bake it?" "I've always done it that way," grandmother replied. "My mother taught me to do it that way." So the little girl quizzed her great grandmother. "Why did you always cut off the ends of the ham?" Great grandmother smiled and said, "My roaster was too short."

The moral of the story is pretty simple. We don't have to do things a certain way just because that's the way we've always done them. We can change the way we do things in education, and the results may astonish us. You don't have to change for change sake, but if your roaster is too short, you either have to cut off the ends of the ham or buy a new roaster.

"White out" was the best thing since sliced bread when it first came upon the scene. We still use it occasionally, but the innovative thinkers of the world have made its regular use a thing of the past. Not too many years ago our backs ached as we lugged heavy bags through the airport. Then some creative engineer came up with the marvelous idea of putting wheels on our suit cases and we wondered why it took so long to think of that. We went one better and realized that four wheels would make life even easier. Discovering and implementing new ways of doing things propelled us from the horse and buggy to our modern day motor vehicles, which will probably someday be obsolete.

A recent Facebook post showed pictures of a rotary dial phone from the 60s next to one of an I Phone, a 1962 car next to one of today's automobiles and a manual typewriter from that era next to an iPad. What massive change has taken place in just 50 years. Then it pictured a classroom from the 60's to a classroom of today. Except for maybe a Smart Board instead of a chalk board, not much had changed.

Think of the rapid change in even the past 10 years, and realize that the old saying, "We ain't seen nothing yet," reminds us to fasten our seat belts and get ready for an exciting ride.

One of the things we could and maybe should consider is a different way to educate and connect with students who don't function well in the traditional school setting. This would start with the paradigm that the students who aren't inclined to succeed in mainstream academia are not inferior when it comes to intelligence. Your auto mechanic is brilliant. Your electrician is tremendously knowledgeable.

Some of the smartest and most creative people on your staff are your custodians -- they can fix anything.

America is crying for educated and competent welders and builders and factory workers. Factory workers of today don't simply turn a wrench for eight hours, but skillfully program robots to do the job. They're brilliant.

We're not going to turn our educational structure around in one short article, but I invite leaders to take the bull by the horns and become truly creative and innovative in revamping our educational structure. I am convinced it will improve the performance of students at all levels, it will alleviate some of the discipline problems we face today and it will stimulate growth in our nation's economy.

We cited creativity and innovation as key components of change. There is a third: courage. It will not be an easy sell and it will take strong leadership and significant funding, but the results may astound us. •

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

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Shari Prest
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Did You Know?

- Millennials earn 20% less (after accounting for inflation) than Baby Boomers did at the same stage of life.¹
- Millennials with a degree have better paying jobs, are more likely to own a home, and have more retirement savings than their non-college graduate peers, the report finds.²
- While income has gone down for young people across the board, white millennials are still earning

significantly more than their African-American and Latino peers.²

- In addition, young people's net wealth declined by 56 percent in the span of 25 years, partly due to the rising cost of a college education.²
- The earnings gap between college grads and everyone else has reached its widest point on record.³
- College graduates, on average, earned 56 percent more than high school grads in 2015.³
- Non-college grads have experienced an overall 3% decline in income. (EPI/AP)
- Just two-thirds of high school-only grads ages 25 through 64 were employed in 2015, down from 73 percent in 2007.³
- High school-only grads are less likely to own homes. 64 percent are current homeowners compared with 77 percent of bachelor's degree holders.³
- College grads are more likely to contribute to 401(k) style retirement plans even when both groups had similar incomes.³

Rural Advantage (taken from the December 29, 2016 StarTribune article Opportunity seeded in small towns by Adam Belz)

- Rural Minnesota has better schools than the U.S. average.
- Rural Minnesota has less income inequality than the U.S. average.
- Of the 100 best U.S. counties in which to grow up poor, 77 are in the Midwest. Most of those are in farm-country.
- Children from low and middle-income families in rural areas are more likely to reach the middle class than their urban counterparts.
- Children that grow up in small, rural towns are less likely to grow up in single-parent households.

Options and Opportunities

- White children do worse in poor, segregated places.

- Children of color do better in integrated places.
- Overall, children do best if they grow up where different economic classes live together.
- In cities, the rich and poor live largely separate lives.
- In the country everyone grows up together.

Typical adult incomes based on area (StarTribune, based on a Harvard study)

- \$49,400 typical adult income of those who grew up poor in Red Lake County.
- \$30,200 typical adult income of those who grew up poor in Hennepin County.

Costs of Childrearing (U.S. Department of Agriculture projections as reported by Mary Clare Jalonick, Associated Press)

- It will cost parents of children born in 2015 an average of \$13,000 annually to raise those children or about \$233,610 for 17 years.
- Housing accounts for about one third of that cost.
- The costs went up 3% last year, outpacing inflation.
- The costs are higher in urban areas than they are in rural areas.
- Lower-income families are expected to spend around \$174,690 per child from birth through 17; higher-income families will spend an average \$372,210.
- These costs do not include college.
- According to the College Board, the average cost of tuition and fees for the 2016–2017 school year was \$33,480 at private colleges, \$9,650 for state residents at public colleges, and \$24,930 for out-of-state residents attending public universities.

FYI

The federally mandated state accountability law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) deadline has been extended for Minnesota. MDE will be submitting a draft for approval in September of 2017.

Quotes and Quotables

Rural results

- “This out-migration of our kids is actually a really good thing. You don't necessarily get upward mobility in the community you're raised in. You get upward mobility because your community raised you well.” – Ben Winchester, University of Minnesota Extension school sociologist
- “The rural areas seem to produce really good outcomes for kids from low-income families.” – Raj Chetty, Stanford economics

Connections

- “Love has nothing to do with what I get. It has to do with what I give.” – Bertice B. Berry American sociologist, author, lecturer, and educator

Bits n' Pieces continued on page 21.

Bits n' Pieces from page 20.

- “No one can stop you but you.” – Walter Bond, former University of Minnesota and professional basketball player
- “Confidence is arrogance under control.” – Walter Bond, former University of Minnesota and professional basketball player

Random Fun Facts

1. Pteronophobia is the fear of being tickled by feathers!
2. Cherophobia is the fear of fun.
3. When hippos are upset, their sweat turns red.
4. A flock of crows is known as a murder.
5. “Facebook Addiction Disorder” is a mental disorder identified by Psychologists.
6. Human saliva has a boiling point three times that of regular water.
7. After reading this post you will not recognize that the brain doesn’t recognize the second ‘the’.
8. If you somehow found a way to extract all of the gold from the bubbling core of our lovely little planet, you would be able to cover all of the land in a layer of gold up to your knees. •

1. *USA Today, January 13, 2016*
2. *Jim Tanner/Reuters analysis of Federal Reserve data, January 14, 2017*
3. *Economic Policy Institute data as reported by Christopher S. Rugaber, Associated Press as reported in the January 13, StarTribune*



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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Does Heroic Intervention Come at Cost to Sustained Improvement?



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

In his recent New Yorker article “The Heroism of Incremental Care,” Atul Gawande discusses how medicine has a savior complex that rewards heroic intervention while ignoring the value of incremental care. He notes, many physicians are drawn to medicine by the chance to charge in and solve a dangerous problem. In fact, the highest-paid specialties in medicine are orthopedics, cardiology, dermatology, gastroenterology,

and radiology. Specialists in these fields receive an average income of \$400,000 per year. They are the “interventionists.” Most of their income is generated through defined procedures such as surgeries, conducting and reading MRIs, and other diagnostic procedures. They intervene with a procedure and then move on. On the flip side, the lowest paid specialties in medicine are pediatrics, endocrinology, family medicine, infectious disease, and immunology. Physicians in these fields earn about \$200,000 per year. They are the “incrementalists.” These practitioners focus on a person’s health over time – often for months or even years. They collect data, evaluate the impact of various treatments, and continually adjust treatment in response to the data. For incrementalists, success isn’t judged by momentary victories, rather by steps that result in sustained progress. And interestingly enough, there is research that demonstrates the value of primary-care physicians including lower rates of general mortality, infant mortality, and mortality from heart disease and strokes.

Gawande goes on to provide another example of incremental vs. heroic intervention. In 1967, The Silver Bridge that spanned the Ohio River collapsed, killing 46 people and injuring many more. The National Transportation Safety Board investigated the collapse and determined that corrosion along with an outdated design had caused the collapse. Inspection could have caught the issue, but until 1967, officials regarded these catastrophes as random and unavoidable. They found that investments in maintenance and improvement could extend the life of old bridges by decades and at a much lower cost than replacement. So, why do we still have over a hundred thousand problem bridges despite knowing that preservation is cheaper? Gawande argues that we continually raid funds intended for incremental maintenance to pay for new construction. He says “It is obvious why. Construction produces immediate

and viable success; maintenance doesn’t.”

How does all of this relate to education? I would argue that parents, educators, and policymakers often put heroic intervention over an incremental approach. Education has long been known for embracing the fad of the day and then moving on to the newest “intervention” without really giving things time to work. Huge investments are made in curriculum, instruction, and technology without ever evaluating the impact. Most districts now have systems to monitor student progress to evaluate the impact of interventions. When progress monitoring data show a lack of progress, interventions are abandoned and replaced with something else without finding out whether the intervention was being implemented with integrity. Today, many districts examine student data and allocate resources to provide extra help to students without looking at the implementation of universal instruction. If large numbers of students are below grade-level standards, providing extra instruction to large numbers of students is not only economically unfeasible, it also doesn’t fix the underlying issue.

The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) is partnering with districts to take an incrementalist approach to system improvement. We are working alongside districts and non-profit organizations to improve programs and practices. Not only do we collect information on whether a program, practice, or framework works, we also collect information to figure out how to make the program better so that it can be maintained over time and enhance student outcomes. We are also engaged in collaborative partnerships to try to secure legislative funding to support districts in the areas of research, evaluation, and assessment. We want to support school districts to conduct needs assessments to pinpoint areas for improvement, build tools to assist in the needs assessment and monitoring student achievement, engagement, and teacher/leader effectiveness. We also want to support districts to conduct their own program evaluation through templates and protocols. Finally, we hope to provide school districts with resources, professional development, and technical assistance. We are open to your ideas and input! Feel free to e-mail me at kgibbons@umn.edu •

The Heroism of Incremental Care: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/01/23/the-heroism-of-incremental-care>

The Meditative School Administrator



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Leading schools has always been a stressful profession. Educational administration is by its very nature a challenging vocation that requires one to balance the needs of various stakeholders (e.g., students, educators, legislation, finances) in an equitable and innovative manner in response to ever growing demands for accountability (Klocko & Wells, 2015). The result may be the rise of a culture of stress (Queen & Queen, 2005) that promotes

fatigue, turnover, and burnout. The situation is further exacerbated by the technological trappings of 21st-century leadership with its constant barrage of information from smart phones, social media, and the 24-hour news cycle. The school administrator consequently may have little room to psychologically breathe during the typical work day.

Such a state of affairs is important for at least two reasons. First, ongoing and unremitting stress can negatively affect physical and psychological health. It wears down the body and clouds the mind. Second, stress has the potential to interfere with one's ability to make sound decisions. It can prohibit educational administrators from seeing the big picture during times of challenge. The outcome is that those who are faced daily with unscripted problems large and small may be at risk of making compromised decisions with far-reaching implications for the students, staff, and communities they serve.

The prime directive of a school administrator is to deliver sound decisions amidst a sea of information. Yet, making decisions that have real consequences for students and staff can prove stressful. It is all too easy for the stressed school administrator to lapse into a habit of decision-making that offers expedience at the cost of long-term positive change. Such situations exemplify how stress can overwhelm higher-order thinking and result in impulsive decision-making.

We are all familiar with impulsive thinking. Processed in the more primitive parts of the brain, it is characterized by a tendency to react to events in the moment (e.g., abruptly ending a heated meeting) in order to mitigate immediate discomfort. Alternatively, reflective thinking is processed by the frontal lobes, the highly advanced areas of the brain that make us most human. Reflective thinking serves as the seat of decision-making so necessary to function as an effective change leader. It is characterized by an awareness of long-term outcomes and an ability to balance competing information (e.g., inviting a problematic stakeholder to

comment on a project so as to solicit eventual support). The reflective system thus offers a more nuanced stance from which to make decisions. Importantly, it can be strengthened through the meditative practice of attention and relaxation.

Meditative Practice

Training in attention offers school administrators an opportunity to take a more deliberate, reflective stance so necessary to leadership. Strengthening the ability to slow one's thoughts and focus in the moment forms the core of attentional training. The goal is not to eliminate all extraneous thoughts, but instead to turn down the background chatter driven by anxiety or a hectic schedule. However, only learning to be mindful will likely prove insufficient. Focused attention must be coupled with a state of relative relaxation for maximum benefit to leadership.

Relaxation training bolsters the ability to calm one's thoughts. In so doing, it promotes a greater sense of well-being for the school administrator that may also translate into an improved organizational climate. Research has begun to clarify what educators have known for decades; the climate set by a school administrator has a direct effect on the development of students (Berson & Oreg, 2016). This practice of attention plus relaxation promotes an improved ability to make decisions.

Putting these skills into practice can be as simple as making a habit to set aside the first few minutes of each morning to prepare for the day's events. Some individuals may find it better to practice at home, whereas others may find the office more conducive to practice. Regardless, the goal is to build resilience in both attention (e.g., remaining focused) and relaxation (e.g., keeping calm) to produce more informed and effective decisions. What follows is a brief set of instructions to begin your own practice. Consider recording yourself while reading them aloud.

Instructions for Meditation

Allow your eyes to close, and take in a deep breath through your nose. Slowly exhale through your mouth. Inhale through the nose, exhale through the mouth. Just allow yourself to relax, from the top of your head down to the tips of your toes. Perhaps you already notice how your eyelids are becoming heavier. Just allow yourself to relax. Thoughts are going to come and go, and that's just fine. Imagine your mind as a whiteboard, and with a large eraser quite literally erase any thoughts. Ignore all sounds. Instead, allow any noises to enhance your feelings of worth and well-being as you allow yourself to become more deeply, deeply relaxed.

Now, with your eyes still closed, imagine next to you is a golden beam of healing energy coming down from above.

*Meditative School Administrator
continued on page 25.*

Meditative School Administrator from page 24.

Step into that golden beam of energy, allowing it to come down over you as it moves from the top of your head down to the tips of your toes. Allow that golden beam of healing energy to relax the top of your head. Notice it becoming warmer and heavier. Allow that golden beam of healing energy to move down and relax your forehead, down over your heavy eyelids, nose, mouth, and jaw. Allow that golden beam to relax one side of your head, and now down the other side of your head. Allow it to move down and relax the back of your head. Now, allow that golden beam of healing energy to relax your neck. Just allow those muscles to release. Allow that golden beam of healing energy to relax one shoulder and shoulder blade, down through that arm and hand and warm fingers. Allow that golden beam of healing energy to relax the other shoulder and shoulder blade, down through that arm and hand and warm fingers. Allow that golden beam of healing energy to relax the chest, down through the abdomen. Feel that golden beam of healing energy moving down the length of your back, from the base of the neck down to the tip of the tailbone. Let it relax the hips, down through one leg and foot and warm toes. Allow it to move down through the other leg and foot and warm toes. Within that golden beam of healing energy, allow yourself to relax, from the top of the head down to the tips of the toes.

Now, count up from 1 to 5 as you return to full awareness. One. Imagine yourself stepping out of that golden beam of healing energy, knowing you can return at any time simply

by closing your eyes and exhaling. Two. Continue with a sense of improved attention and deepened relaxation as you return back to the room. Three. Return back to the room ready to face the day reflectively and ready for change. Four. Become increasingly aware of your surroundings as your eyelids become lighter and lighter. Five. Now, allow your eyelids to open and return to full waking consciousness.

Practicing for Change

Meditative practice offers a brief, no-cost avenue to improve educational leadership. Becoming a more meditative school administrator takes little time or effort, with practice as simple as the steps outlined above. The resulting development of improved attention and relaxation skills can quiet our tendency to respond impulsively to events and foster a habit of making better decisions for positive change. By creating the internal space to stop and think, we can become more attuned to the daily realities before us. The result may be schools and systems that prove more compassionate and inclusive for all students. •

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Dr. Rod Thompson reflects on National Certification from AASA / Howard University Urban Superintendents Academy



Rod Thompson
Superintendent
Shakopee Public Schools

Shakopee Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Rod Thompson was selected as a national representative to study and earn Urban Superintendent National Certification. Efforts to improve the leadership in our public schools took a major step forward when this first-ever cohort of educators successfully completed the AASA Howard University Urban Superintendents Academy, which is recognized as one of the premier programs in the country. Drawing on strengths of its members and partners,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association brings the most effective and inspiring thought leader practitioners to serve as instructors, mentors, and presenters. Howard University's deep and historical commitment to academic and lifetime excellence inspires participants through the university's faculty and other leaders.

"My vision for leadership work serving diverse suburban and urban districts and the students I represent is based upon the philosophy that we do not have the luxury of time to wait for things to change...we must be the advocates for change ourselves," said Rod. "About a decade ago, it became clear to me that my work lacked the true meaning of equity for all students and so I decided to make it my life's ambition to change the system. I have since had the opportunity to work in diverse experiences that allow me to create and implement a complete systems approach of reform."

"The year I spent in the inaugural AASA / Howard University Urban Superintendents Academy changed my life. Not only did I get to deeply study large urban district work from the perspectives of my 30 cohort colleagues from around the country, I was able to be taught by and learn from the nation's best educational mentors, professors and superintendents," said Rod. "This program was a major commitment of time and energy but I would recommend it to anyone who is considering working in large diverse urban or suburban schools – it will be worth it."

After this past year of study, nearly 30 participants from around the nation graduated from the program created to develop thought leaders who will represent the vast number of children in urban communities across the country.

"With roughly half of America's children living in low-income households, it is critical that our nation provides solutions to ensure that each and every child receive a quality education. Our Urban Superintendents Academy is one solution," said Daniel A. Domenech, Executive Director

of AASA. "We congratulate the 2016 graduates who will represent the next generation of effective urban district leadership. The partnership between AASA and Howard University is a formidable step to bolster urban school systems."

"The members of our inaugural cohort are to be commended for their dedication to become impactful superintendents," said Leslie T. Fenwick, Dean, Howard University School of Education. "We are grateful to partner with the nation's premier superintendents association in an effort to provide the best possible learning experiences for those striving to become urban superintendents. There is a yawning diversity gap between our students and the school personnel serving them. Our Academy will help narrow that gap."

Launched in 2015, the Urban Superintendents Academy prepares individuals for certification and success in urban and increasingly diverse suburban settings. The AASA / Howard University partnership is also designed to expand the pool of underrepresented superintendent groups. The Academy also offered prospective and in-service superintendents a revolutionary new approach to ensuring success in urban settings. •

For more information about the AASA/Howard University Urban Superintendents Academy, visit the AASA website. For questions, contact Mort Sherman, AASA Associate Executive Director, at msherman@aasa.org or Bernadine Futrell, AASA Director, Awards & Collaborations, at bfutrell@aasa.org.

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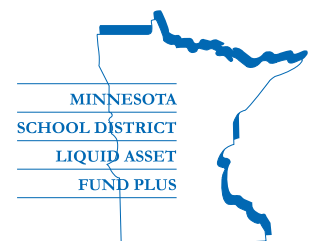
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MASA Calendar

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March 2-4
AASA National Conference
on Education
Ernest N. Morial Convention
Center, New Orleans, LA

March 8
MASA Board of Directors
MASA Great Start Cohort
At Ruth's Table
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

March 9-10
MASA/MASE Spring
Conference
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

April 20
MASA Foundation Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

June 15-16
MASA & MASE Board
of Directors Retreats
Crowne Plaza Minneapolis
West, Plymouth

July 1
MASA Membership Renewal

August 8-9
Back-to-School Event:
ESSA Implementation
Conference
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

September 30-October 1
MASA Board of Directors
Duluth, MN

October 1
Great Start Cohort
MASA Foundation
Golf Tournament
Duluth, MN

October 2-3
MASA Fall Conference
Duluth, MN

2018

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