

Leaders FORUM

Summer 2017

Thank You for a Successful Year

We all are familiar with the saying, “My, how quickly time passes when you’re having fun!” As the 2016-17 school year draws to a close, I hope you take the time to reflect on this year’s successes and challenges as well as opportunities to set new directions for how we support our staff and educate our students. One of my highlights this year has been the honor and privilege to serve as President of MASA.

The strength of our members and your active participation on committees and other initiatives enables MASA to be the leading educational organization in Minnesota. Our initiatives and advocacy for students wouldn’t happen without the extraordinary time spent at the Capitol by our executive director, Gary Amoroso. Gary is highly regarded by our legislators and that is evident when walking the halls at the Capitol.

Our organization would not be effective without a truly outstanding staff working on our behalf. We are very fortunate to have talented, dedicated and enthusiastic staff who support us on a daily basis. Thank you Mia Urick, Stephanie Kastanos, Jeanna Vohnoutka, Deb Larson, and David Christians for making our organization run effortlessly and grow to better serve our members.

MASA’s fall and spring conferences as well as the Great Start Cohort program would not be possible without our business partners. The support of our business partners is invaluable to our members and

our organization. Their support provides MASA resources and the opportunity to deliver exceptional professional development for our members. We are truly appreciative of the expertise they provide our members to help us be more efficient and effective in the day-to-day operations of our schools.



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

As I reflect upon the year, I have seen our organization increase access to committee meetings through video conferencing capabilities and expand personalized learning opportunities through regional professional development funds and Unconference experiences. It has been MASA’s intention this year to support you by organizing and providing dedicated time and space for you to accrue skills and make choices in pursuit of meeting your personal and professional growth and development goals and interests. I want to strongly encourage our members to continue to share their stories of programmatic and institutional success with all of us. Your experiences help multiply the intelligence of our organization and school leaders which ultimately benefits all of our students. Thank you! It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as President of MASA this year. •

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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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MASA Foundation Provides Membership Support



Gary Amoroso
Executive Director
Minnesota Association of School Administrators

At MASA we are very proud of the fact that we are very proactive in supporting our members. The MASA Foundation provides financial support that enables us to operate programs that support the needs of our members. I'd like to share information regarding the programs that are supported by the MASA Foundation.

The first example is the Mentor Program. Within our Mentor program guide, we provide the following philosophy and purpose of the program:

Mentor Program Philosophy

MASA wants its members to be supported well so that they thrive and achieve success. We believe that a strong mentoring program will support administrators new to their roles in building their capacity to lead their schools in student achievement growth. The MASA Mentor Program provides new members with resources to address their specific development needs. We use multiple strategies, including guidance and coaching, networking, training, emotional, professional and social support.

Purpose of the Program

- Ensure that professional development contributes to high quality practice
- Ensure that the experience impacts leadership quality in professional practice
- Provide a base of expertise for people who are emerging leaders in Minnesota
- Introduce administrators to their new roles and to other administrators who can offer support
- Help administrators new to their roles experience a good transition with a guide to assist them
- Provide an experienced colleague to lean on for emotional, professional, and social support
- Reduce a feeling of professional isolation
- Provide a safe and confidential

- environment for candid discussions
- Prepare administrators to be high quality mentors

The MASA Board expanded the program two years ago to include any new member of our association. The feedback that we have received from mentors and mentees has validated the need and success of the program. As an organization we want to do whatever needs to be done to help our new members be successful in their position.

In addition, mentees may now apply for a second year of support if they feel it is a benefit to them.

Professional Assistance Team (P.A.T.)

Another program we are very proud of is the P.A.T. support program. This year Deb Henton, Carl Wahlstrom, Patty Phillips, Jeff Olson and Jerry Nesland made up the P.A.T. The P.A.T. uses their experience to help their colleagues when they need consultation and/or advice when they run into complex situations. This provides our members with an invaluable resource. Sometimes a conversation or simply having someone to listen is a great asset to a person. The MASA Foundation provides all of the financial support for the P.A.T.

Professional Development Grants

The Foundation provides professional development grants of up to \$750 to a few of our members. These grants fund professional development activities that our members would be unable to attend without the support of the Foundation. If interested in applying for a grant, please contact me.

Each time you donate to the MASA Foundation, you contribute to MASA's ability to provide these important programs. Thank you for supporting the Foundation, and thank you for the excellent leadership practices of all Minnesota school leaders!

All of us at MASA are here to support you. As always, please feel free to contact any of the staff at (651) 645-6272. Also, please contact me at (651) 319-1211 if I can be of service.

Best wishes for a successful conclusion to the 2016-2017 school year! •

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2016-17 Officers

President	Scott Thielman
President-Elect	Curt Tryggestad
Past President	Jeff Ronneberg
Treasurer	Jamie Skjveland

2016-17 Board of Directors

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Josh Swanson (2014-17)

Retiree Representative

Mary Ann Nelson (2012-18)

MASA/MASE SPRING CONFERENCE THANK-YOUS

Thank you to everyone who helped make the 2017
MASA/MASE Spring Conference a success!



A special thank you to our premier business partners!



MASA Foundation Spring Fundraiser



Thank you to everyone who participated in the MASA Foundation Spring Fundraiser! With your generous donations we raised \$2,255.94 for the MASA Foundation.

The two regions with the highest giving amounts were Region 6 and Region 4, who respectively received \$400 and \$200 in professional development funds.

A special thank you goes out to Robert W. Baird & Co. for their matching donation!

Save the Date!

2017 MASA Fall Conference
Sunday-Tuesday
October 1-3, 2017

Duluth Entertainment
Convention Center, Duluth

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

Thank you to all of our donors!

Gary Amoroso, Executive Director, MASA, Region 9

Eric Bartleson, Retiree

Daniel Brooks, Retiree

Don Bungam, Retiree

Barbara Devlin, Retiree

Marty Duncan, Retiree

Paul Durand, Superintendent, Rockford, Region 6

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Scott Staska, Superintendent, Rocori, Region 6

Scott Thielman, Superintendent, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose, Region 6

Ed Waltman, Retiree

Eric Williams, Executive Director, Nova Classical Academy, Region 9

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No CLM/TLM Conference in 2017

MASA regrets to announce that there will be no 2017 CLM/TLM Conference this November. Since 2004, MASA has convened education leaders the week preceding Thanksgiving for a conference focused on instruction. The Curriculum Leaders of Minnesota (CLM) Conference offered participants a chance to explore themes and topics of interest to instructional leaders, such as curriculum, instruction, grading, assessment, and standards, as well as leadership topics such as leading change and building equitable learning systems. In 2014, MASA welcomed a new cadre of members, the Technology Leaders Component Group, and the CLM Conference was reframed to include the important perspective of technology leadership in instruction. This has been, and continues to be, an excellent focus for professional learning for our members, and MASA continues to be committed to providing instructional leadership support.

However, attendance for this conference has diminished to a point where it isn't feasible to hold the event. We believe there are several reasons for this, none of them pertaining to a lack of interest in the subject. First, the audience for this event has become much less specific. That is a wonderful thing! Instructional leadership has become a focus for a much larger and diverse group of district leaders. That is good for learning, but it also makes it harder to identify not only a potential audience for the conference, but also leaders who might be active in planning the event. Also, we are excited to have technology leaders as an integral component of this conversation, but this conference has traditionally been offered very near on the calendar to the large state technology conference. In addition, another state association conference has chosen to offer their fall event the same week. And so, this perfect storm has affected the CLM/TLM attendance to a point where we can't economically support the preparation and execution of the event.

Meeting the professional learning needs of our members is an important part of MASA's mission, and as our Executive Development Committee moves into the next year, they will have an opportunity to address those needs. •



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2017 MASA ELECTIONS

Election Results



Deb Henton
MASA President-Elect
Superintendent
North Branch Area Public
Schools

Congratulations to the following candidates who have been elected to MASA leadership positions. Board representatives are elected in a general election by the MASA members and will serve a three-year term beginning July 1, 2017.

President (2017-18)

Curt Tryggestad, Superintendent, Eden Prairie Schools (was President-Elect in 2016-17 and will assume office as MASA president)

President-Elect (2017-18)

Deb Henton, Superintendent, North Branch

MASA Treasurer (2017-20)

Jamie Skjeveland, Superintendent, Crosby-Ironton

Region 5 Superintendent Comp. Group Rep. (2017-20)

Lee Westrum, Superintendent, Wadena-Deer Creek

Regions 1-8 Curriculum Comp. Group Rep. (2017-20)

Rochelle Van Den Heuvel, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, Grand Rapids

Region 9 Curriculum Comp. Group Rep. (2017-20)

Kimberly Pavlovich, Director of Secondary Curriculum, Anoka-Hennepin

Region 9 Special Education Comp. Group Rep. (2017-20)

Renae Ouillette, Director of Special Services, Lakeville

Region 9 Technology Comp. Group Rep. (2017-20)

Josh Swanson, Assistant Superintendent, Eden Prairie

Region 9 Central Office Comp. Group Rep. (2017-18)

John Ward, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Mounds View

Service Provider Comp. Group Rep. Regions 1-9 (2017-20)

Bruce Jensen, Executive Director, Northwest Service Cooperative

AASA Governing Board (2017-20)

Daniel Bittman, Superintendent, Sauk Rapids-Rice

Scott Thielman, Superintendent, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose

Newly elected leaders will participate in an orientation with the full MASA Board of Directors this summer. MASA appreciates these leaders for their commitment to MASA and Minnesota education, and offers them thanks and best wishes as they begin their terms of service.

Special thanks to all MASA members who participated in the election process! •

SAVE THE DATE & BOOK YOUR LODGING TODAY!

Lodging Reservations for August
Conferences Are Open Now!

MSBA Summer Seminar

August 7, 2017

Minneapolis Marriott Northwest, Brooklyn Park

MDE Back-to-School Leadership Conference

August 8-9, 2017

Minneapolis Marriott Northwest, Brooklyn Park

Last day to book: 7/20/17

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complimentary Wi-Fi

**You can find the reservation link at:
bit.ly/MASASummerlodging**



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!

2017-18 MASA TRANSITIONS

Retirements

Nancy Allen-Mastro, Superintendent, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan
James Bauck, Superintendent, Eastern Carver County
Dale Brandsoy, Superintendent, GHEC
Sherri Broderius, Superintendent, A.C.G.C.
Charles Cheney, Superintendent, West Central
Stephanie Corbey, Executive Director of Individualized Student Services, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage
Ric Dressen, Superintendent, Edina
Peter Grant, Superintendent, Owatonna
Nicole Halabi, Director of Special Services, Columbia Heights
Juanita Hoskins, Director of Educational Equity, Roseville
Harvey Johnson, Superintendent, LaPorte
Phil Johnson, Superintendent, Willow River
Mary Klamm, Superintendent, Staples Motley
Julie Ladwig, Director of Special Education, Waseca
Michael Lovett, Superintendent, White Bear Lake
Linda Madsen, Superintendent, Forest Lake
Robert Metz, Superintendent, Saint Louis Park
Roxane Mitchell, Director MSAD, Minnesota State Academies
Steve Niklaus, Superintendent, Annandale
Bernie Novak, Superintendent, Aitkin
Luther Onken, Superintendent, Lake Benton & Fulda
Richard Orcutt, Superintendent, RTR
Larry Peterson, Superintendent, Lac qui Parle Valley
Mark Roubinek, Superintendent, St. Charles
Lisa Snyder, Superintendent, Lakeville
David Sorgaard, Superintendent, Tri-County
Allen Stoeckman, Superintendent, Butterfield-Odin
John Thein, Superintendent, Saint Paul
Bruce Thomas, Superintendent, Grand Rapids
David Thompson, Superintendent, Stewartville
Renae Tostenson, Superintendent, Lac qui Parle Valley
Murray Turner, Executive Director, Pine to Prairie Cooperative Center
James Varichak, Superintendent, Chisholm Public Schools
Deborah Wanek, Superintendent, Pelican Rapids

Thank you for your service to education and congratulations on your retirement!

District Changes

Jeff Apse, Superintendent, Lewiston-Altura to St. Charles,
Ray Arsenault, Interim Superintendent to Superintendent, Butterfield-Odin
Jennifer Backer, Superintendent, Mabel Canton & Lyle to Lewiston-Altura
Randy Bergquist, Interim Superintendent to Superintendent, Osakis
John Bezek, Assistant Superintendent, Shakopee to Principal, Prior Lake
Daniel Bittman, Superintendent, Sauk Rapids-Rice to Elk River
Janey Blanchard, Principal, Cass Lake-Bena to Superintendent, Chisholm
Denny Carlson, Retired Superintendent to Superintendent, MN Transitions Charter School
Clint Christopher, Associate Superintendent to Superintendent, Eastern Carver County
Richard Dahman, Superintendent, Medford to Winona
Jeff Elstad, Superintendent, Byron to Owatonna
Joe Gothard, Superintendent, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage to St. Paul
Scott Hare, Assistant Director of Special Services, Stillwater to Director of Student Support, Mankato
Wayne Kazmierczak, Assistant Superintendent to Superintendent, White Bear Lake
Brad Kelvington, Principal, Foley to Superintendent, Aitkin
Lynn Krominga, Assistant Director of Special Education, Northfield to Executive Director, Cannon Valley Sp. Ed. Coop.
Amy LaDue, Director of Teaching & Learning, Owatonna to Assistant Superintendent, Eastern Carver County
Steven Massey, Principal to Superintendent, Forest Lake
Peter Olson Skog, Assistant Superintendent, Roseville to Superintendent, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan
Nels Onstad, Director, MDE to Superintendent, A.C.G.C. Schools
Astein Osei, Assistant Superintendent, Osseo to Superintendent, St. Louis Park
Joey Page, Principal, Richfield to Superintendent, Byron
Bill Peel, Principal, Willow River School to Superintendent Willow River School
Tim Prom, Principal to Superintendent, Annandale
Chip Rankin, Principal, Pequot to Superintendent, Minnewaska
Jeff Riddlehoover, Principal to Assistant Superintendent Mounds View
Mark Ristau, Principal to Superintendent, Medford
Greg Schmidt, Superintendent, Minnewaska to Lac qui Parle Valley
Barry Schmidt, Principal, Butterfield to Superintendent, West Central Area
John Schultz, Superintendent, Hopkins to Edina
Belinda Selfors, Superintendent, Hayfield to Stewartville
Steve Thomas, Superintendent, Nett Lake to South Koochiching
Bruce Watkins, Interim Superintendent, Elk River to Sauk Rapids-Rice
Ann Wendorff, Principal, SWWC Service Coop to Superintendent, Fulda and Lake Benton
Jamie Wendt, Teacher to Superintendent, Littlefork-Big Falls
Stephanie White, Director of Special Education, Mankato to Executive Director of Individualized Student Services, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage

2017-18 MASA Committee Sign-Up

The 2016-17 MASA Committee Sign-up is now available at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/masacommittees1718.

The sign-up will close at 4 pm on July 1, 2017.

Committee terms are for two years. If you are currently serving your first term year, you will continue on that committee for the second term year. Refer to the 2016-17 committee list at mnasa.org/committees if you are unsure of your current committee standing.



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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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MASA Legislative Resources

Be sure to watch your email inboxes and check out www.mnasa.org/atthecapitol to stay up-to-date on the 2017 Minnesota Legislative Session!

If you are not receiving the session updates please contact members@mnasa.org

www.mnasa.org/atthecapitol has all of MASA's legislative resources including:

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

Are You Receiving Our Communications?

Let us know if you are not receiving any of our following publications:

- Weekly eUpdates
- General emails
- Quarterly newsletter
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Did You Know?

MASA Offers a Variety of Online Professional Learning Opportunities and Resources

Each year, MASA's Executive Development Committee works to identify and address the professional learning needs of our members. In addition to our traditional conferences and workshops, the MASA website is equipped with a variety of just-in-time online professional learning options and leadership resources, including:

Whitewater Learning is not a MASA product, but it's recommended as an affordable online library of high-quality modules that align with state and national competencies and offer pre-approved teacher and administrator CEUs.

ExpertEase. A catalog of short online videos on a variety of education leadership topics. These videos provide certification of participation that can be used when renewing teacher licensure. Videos are available to all MASA members free of cost via the Infinitic website.

What We Are Reading. Our book blog is a great resource for staff development, a team book study, or a recommendation for a good book.

Voice of MN Education blog. Each week we publish a blog post or video from Gary Amoroso to inform our members of organization news, share legislative updates, or feature our colleagues as guest bloggers.

Professional Assistance Team (P.A.T.). MASA members may need advice or consultation as they run into new or difficult situations. The P.A.T. members have offered to use their experiences to help their colleagues navigate these situations. You can find a list of P.A.T. members on the MASA website, and may contact anyone of them as you seek assistance. All contacts are completely confidential



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

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

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

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

Get started by visiting www.mnasa.org/stormready

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



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Carl Wahlstrom
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 cwahlstr@smumn.edu

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

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

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- Communication situations

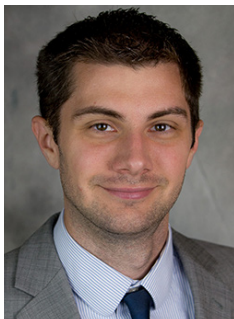
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Supreme Court Revisits Long-Standing Rowley Standard

Will the High Court's Decision Change Substantive Obligations of Schools to Meet the Needs of Disabled Students?



Tim R. Palmatier
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When developing and implementing IEPs for special needs students, special educators have been guided for more than three decades by what is called the Rowley standard. Rowley has been the measuring stick by which courts determine if a public school has met the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's requirement to provide a free, appropriate public education ("FAPE") to a disabled student. The Rowley standard, which was first articulated by the Supreme Court in a landmark decision in 1982, states that a public school must develop and implement IEPs that are "reasonably calculated to result in educational benefit." However, this past March the Supreme Court revisited the Rowley standard in a much-anticipated decision—*Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*.

Many experts anticipated that the *Endrew* decision would be a seismic shift and that Rowley would no

longer serve as the yardstick for public school compliance under the IDEA. However, it appears that *Endrew*—rather than replace Rowley—only provided further clarification for the FAPE standard. In other words, Rowley continues to reflect the law of the land.

In *Endrew*, the Court was asked to decide whether a public school's educational program, which only afforded a student "minimal progress," constituted a FAPE. The Court rejected a lower court's holding that an IEP need only provide "more than de minimis progress." At the same time, it rejected the position of the parents that an IEP must provide "educational opportunities to children with disabilities that are 'substantially equal to the opportunities afforded to children without disabilities.'" Instead, the Court fully embraced its prior holding in Rowley, while providing further clarity to long-standing precedent. Consistent with the holding in Rowley, the Court stated that an IEP should be "reasonably calculated to enable the child to make progress appropriate in light of his circumstances." Importantly, the Court acknowledged that the progress expected for a given child will vary greatly as a result of each child's unique circumstance. In other words, the severity of a child's disability and the child's unique circumstances must

be taken into consideration when determining if the District offered an "appropriately ambitious" IEP. In addition, the Court's decision clearly recognizes that a school's compliance with the FAPE standard should not be analyzed from a retrospective viewpoint (i.e., the fact that a student did not meet expected outcomes does not indicate a denial of FAPE). Instead, the IEP that is designed and implemented need only be "reasonably calculated" to result in educational benefit at the time it was developed.

As is the case with any Supreme Court decision, the impact and meaning of the *Endrew* decision will be debated by attorneys for years to come. However, for schools and special educators who are committed to the success of disabled students, the decision is far from a game-changer. •

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

Tim Palmatier and Adam Wattenbarger are education law attorneys with the law firm of Kennedy & Graven, Chartered. For more information, please contact them at (612) 337-9300 or www.kennedy-graven.com.

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Mike Hubbard

Let's Talk About Poverty



Denny Smith

Leadership and Development
Trainer

The year was 1981. Eugene Lang, a "self-made" millionaire, was returning to give the commencement address at PS 121 in East Harlem, his elementary alma mater. Upon learning that three-fourths of the sixth graders would not graduate high school, he realized that his intended "work hard and you can be successful" theme wouldn't resonate, so he completely altered his approach.

Understanding that the kids needed hope rather than another sermon, he offered to give each student admitted to a four year college upon graduation a scholarship. He also provided mentorship, tutoring, crisis counseling and social opportunities that are not normally available to kids in their financial bracket.

In his book *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty*, a must read for all educators, Paul Gorski explodes so many myths and misconceptions about people caught in its hellish cycle.

He totally explodes the idea that low income parents don't care about their kids' education. They care as much or more than affluent parents, but they can't attend the parent-teacher conferences because the buses don't run at night or they're working their second job just to put food on the table. They're strapped by financial stresses that most of us can't begin to imagine. They can't fathom taking a vacation with their kids. Dinner with the family at Perkins is not even close to being financially feasible. Many can't get their kids to and from school activities because they don't have cars. Extra-curricular opportunities are limited at best.

Most of us wouldn't bat an eye at leaving a \$15 tip for dinner in a nice restaurant. To the family in poverty, \$15 is one-third of their take home pay for a day. Most of us can't begin to imagine the heartbreak parents feel when they can't afford the \$10 field trip for their three children.

We should all try this. Have an administrative team meeting at a venue away from school. Require that they not drive to the meeting but take the bus instead. Schedule it in the winter so all can experience the discomfort of waiting at the bus stop in ten degree weather. Some may find that they had to leave their building 20 minutes early to coordinate with the bus schedule and that they have to leave promptly at 1:00 or wait another 40 minutes to catch the next bus. We would discover first hand that poverty presents its challenges. Perhaps it will help us get out of our bubble of privilege and look at things differently; and teach us to be more understanding and less judgmental.

So what's the solution and where do we start? It seems like an almost impossible task, but we can gain insight from Eugene Lang's legacy.

First of all, we can realize that the "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" speeches don't resonate with people who don't have any boots. We need to give hope, but a pep talk about hope without backing it up with funding is fluff. Let me get up on my soap box and advocate for some things that I think offer a huge return on investment.

Warren Buffet said that one of the first investments America should make is in early childhood education. If we have any hope of closing the opportunity gap, we have to give every student access to preschool, including transportation to and from their education center. I am extremely disappointed that the Governor's proposal for Universal Pre-K was defeated. If we don't fund early childhood education now we will suffer huge social and fiscal consequences down the road.

Imagine this. What if every elementary student knew that if she or he was academically successful, their college education would be funded. I am soap boxing again, but I firmly believe that affordable (in fact, free) college would reap an unbelievable return on investment. We have thousands of bright, intelligent and motivated young people who would flourish as post secondary students, but they can't afford to go to college.

Look at the fiscal return on funding education for all. Our business leaders tell us that one of the biggest deterrents to economic growth is the lack of an educated workforce. Investing in college (both technical and liberal arts) would provide that workforce, grow our economy and pay us back in a heartbeat. And consider the economic status of the graduate five or ten years down the road. The difference in the tax bracket of a person making \$30,000 to \$50,000 instead of working in a low paying job would easily repay the investment. Instead of living in poverty, they would be buying homes and cars and going out to dinner and taking vacations, etc. The money would circulate, our local economies would thrive, and our quality of life in America would be enhanced for all of us. As Paul Wellstone reminded us, "We all do better when we all do better."

We need to understand that much would be required of our low income students, but high expectations would be accompanied by mentoring and tutorial help to assist them in reaching those standards.

Providing educational opportunity for our low income students is not an easy task and it takes a huge commitment of time and resources. But we need to ask ourselves if the richest nation in the world has the will to do it. To re-visit a quote from the 60's, "If you think education is costly, try ignorance." •

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.

School Choice: Public Benefit or Private Promotion?



Shari Prest
President
ARK Associates

There is little doubt that advocates for a wide range of “school choice” programs and the privatization of education hope to make great strides this year. The U.S. Secretary of Education appointed by President Trump, Betsy DeVos, is primarily known for her advocacy of school choice, school voucher programs and charter schools. Unfortunately, her involvement and experience with traditional public schools is remarkably limited.

It is important that all stakeholders have knowledge about the issues and consequences associated with school choice, beginning with a shared definition of school choice.

Definition

School choice is a term for K–12 public education options. It includes a wide array of programs offering students and their families alternatives to the publicly-provided schools to which students are generally assigned by the location of their family residence.

Constitutional Foundation for Public Schools

The Minnesota State Constitution articulates: “The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools. The Legislature shall make such provisions by taxation or otherwise as with the income arising from the School fund, will secure a thorough and efficient system of Public Schools in each township in the State.”

Data

Minnesota Schools

- K-12 public school enrollment in Minnesota was 842,932 in 2014-2015.
- Less than 10% of Minnesota students attend nonpublic schools, including private schools that are both parochial and nonsectarian, and homeschools.
- Pre-kindergarten and early childhood enrollment in Minnesota public schools was 14,977 in 2015.
- There were an estimated 165 charter schools in Minnesota in the 2015-2016 school year with an enrollment of approximately 48,200 students. Although they are publicly funded, charter schools are exempt from many of the requirements imposed by state and local boards of education regarding hiring and

curriculum (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools).

- There were 85,260 students enrolled in 500 private schools in 2013.
- 40,952 students attended Minnesota’s 78 public magnet schools, 63% of whom were racial/ethnic minorities in 2014-2015.
- 68,213 K-12 students were enrolled in non-public schools in Minnesota in 2014-2015.

Options

Students in Minnesota have school choice options by law. These options include open enrollment, charter schools, and approved public online schools. Many public school districts also offer unique program options such as magnets, gifted and talented, targeted services, alternative learning, English Learner (EL), special education, and online or blended learning.

Some other states provide financial assistance to parents who pursue private school options. This assistance may take the form of school vouchers, which support public school students attending private schools; scholarship tax credits; personal tax credits and deductions; and education savings accounts (ESAs), which allow parents to receive public funds directly for educational expenses (Ballotpedia—Public Policy in Minnesota).

Perspective

Critics contend that the range of school choice programs diverts funds from traditional public schools, thereby generating unequal outcomes for students despite a blatant lack of evidence that choice is academically beneficial when comparing students from similar circumstances. In addition, critics argue that school voucher programs wrongly direct tax dollars to religious organizations, which operate many private schools.

Currently, according to EdChoice (formerly the Friedman Foundation), 17 states provide some form of tax-credit scholarships for students. In Florida, for example, corporations can donate money to “tax-credit scholarships” in lieu of paying taxes for the amount donated. In that case, the money does not go through the government and therefore is not subject to church/state restrictions. The Florida model diverts what would be public dollars to private organizations.

One likely point of conflict is President Trump’s pledge to earmark \$20 billion for school choice programs such as vouchers, which could be used to pay tuition at private

School Choice continued on page 19.

School Choice from page 18.

schools. But where that \$20 billion would come from and how it might affect other funds administered by the U.S. Department of Education is troubling to some administrators, even though the bulk of school funding comes from the state (San Diego Union Tribune, March 22,

“The concept of taking money away from public schools that offer a variety of choices to students, and putting it into private schools, would be very destabilizing to the strong education system we have here.”

– Efrain Barerra, Community Assets Management, San Francisco Bay Area

2017).

It is important that stakeholders are informed about the consequences of privatization initiatives, as well as the progress of and choices within public schools. Promotional resources supporting a variety of choice initiatives, public and private, are enormous. Only accurate information and comparisons of school choices can balance the scales of public perception and political support. Your local school district administrators can provide you with specific and accurate information about the choices offered within the public-school system and how public resources can be most effectively utilized to support student achievement and social

“There is a great deal of money flowing freely from billionaires like the Walton family (Walmart), Michael Bloomberg, Bill Gates, Eli Broad, John Arnold and many more to promote privatization.”

– Diane Silvers Ravitchm, educational policy analyst who served under Presidents George H. W. Bush and President Bill Clinton

outcomes.

Important Information

- Any perceived academic advantages of private schools disappear and even reverse in most cases after controlling for demographics (Sarah Theule Lubienski and Christopher Lubienski, Charter, Private, Public Schools and Academic Achievement: New Evidence from NAEP Mathematics Data, University of Illinois, January 2006).
- The costs of an overall voucher infrastructure appear to exceed those of the present system (Henry M. Levin, Educational Vouchers: Effectiveness, Choice and Costs, 1998).
- Evidence suggests that the costs of private schools are not lower than those of public schools (Levin).
- A report comparing 2003 NAEP achievement levels



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.

in public schools and charter schools concluded that students in traditional public schools outscore their peers in charter schools.

When choosing a school to support or for your children to attend – public or private – there are specific characteristics to seek. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, high-performing schools have the following in common:

1. They have a clear and shared focus on teaching and learning.
2. They have high standards and expectations for all students.
3. They have effective school leadership.
4. There are high levels of collaboration and communication.
5. Curriculum, instruction and assessments are aligned with standards set by the state for public schools or by state-recognized accrediting agencies for nonpublic schools.
6. There is frequent monitoring of teaching and learning.
7. There is ongoing and focused professional development.
8. There is a supportive learning environment for students.
9. There are high levels of family and community engagement. •

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Nominations Open for 2018 Superintendent of the Year

Nominate a colleague for the nation's most prestigious award for school system leaders.

MASA invites nominations for 2018 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year. The recipient of this prestigious award will be a candidate among other state winners for National superintendent of the Year. The 2018 National Superintendent of the Year will be announced at the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) National Conference on Education in Nashville, Tennessee, February 15-17, 2018.

Now in its 31st year, the AASA National Superintendent of the Year Program pays tribute to the talent and vision of the men and women who lead our nation's public schools. The program is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active, front-line superintendents. Any superintendent, chancellor or top leader of a school system in Minnesota who plans to continue in the profession may be nominated.

Candidates are assessed on the following criteria.

- **Leadership for Learning:** creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.

- **Communication:** strength in both personal and organizational communication.
- **Professionalism:** constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills, while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.
- **Community Involvement:** active participation in local community activities and an understanding of regional, national and international issues.

Recent recipients include: 2017 Curt Tryggestad, Eden Prairie; 2016 Daniel Bittman, Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools; 2015 Sandra Lewandowski, Intermediate District 287; 2014 Kate Maguire, Osseo Area Schools; and 2013 Jeff Olson, Saint Peter Public Schools. For a complete list of past award recipients, visit Recognition on the MASA web (www.mnasa.org)

Nominations are due Aug. 1, 2017. For more information, please contact quinn@mnasa.org. To place a nomination, visit the AASA website at soy.aasa.org.

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Thank You 2016-17 MASA Mentors!

MASA is committed to supporting the early practice of our newest members through a robust mentoring program. Having an engaged, quality mentor is consistently linked with professional excellence, and we know that strong school district leadership will ultimately support student success. Even the best program framework meets none of the goals without excellent, generous leaders willing to share their knowledge, wisdom, and experience, and we are grateful to our mentors for their leadership and service. Our 2016-17 MASA Mentors are:

Dan Anderson, Superintendent, Maple River Schools
Chad Anderson, Superintendent, Tracy Area Public Schools
Jeff Apse, Superintendent, Lewiston-Altura Schools
Rick Bleichner, Superintendent, Herman-Norcross Community Schools
Sherri Broderius, Superintendent, A.C.G.C. Schools
Randy Bruer, Superintendent, Win-E-Mac Schools
Janell Bullard, Director of Special Education, MAWSECO
Paul Carlson, Superintendent, New London-Spicer Schools
Cliff Carmody, Executive Director, SW/WC Service Cooperative
Jeff Elstad, Superintendent, Bryon Public Schools
James Guetter, Superintendent, Red Lake County Central & Red Lake Falls Schools
Deb Henton, Superintendent, North Branch Area Public Schools
Jim Hess, Superintendent, Bemidji Area Schools
Cheryl Johnson, Executive Director, Goodhue County Education District
Harvey Johnson, Superintendent, Laporte School District
Jim Johnson, Superintendent, Monticello Public Schools
Brad Johnson, Superintendent, Hibbing Public Schools
David Krenz, Superintendent, Austin Public Schools
Pam Miller, Director of Teaching & Learning, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools
Chris Mills, Superintendent, Stephen-Argyle Central Schools
Scott Monson, Superintendent, Marshall Public Schools
Jeff Powers, Superintendent, Dassel-Cokato Schools
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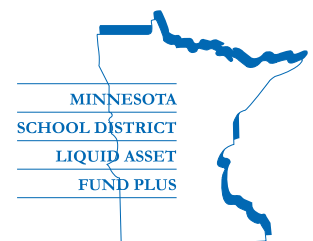
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MASA Calendar

2017

- June 15-16**
MASA & MASE Board of Directors Retreats
Crowne Plaza Minneapolis
West, Plymouth
- July 1**
MASA Membership Renewal
- August 8-9**
MDE Back-to-School Event: ESSA Implementation Conference
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park
- August 9**
Great Start Cohort Session I
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park
- September 30-October 1**
MASA Board of Directors
Pier B, Duluth
- October 1**
Great Start Cohort Session II
Pier B, Duluth

- October 1**
MASA Foundation Golf Tournament
Lester Park Golf Course, Duluth
- October 2-3**
MASA Fall Conference
DECC, Duluth
- November 15**
Great Start Cohort Session III
MASA Offices, St. Paul
- December 6**
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

2018

- January 10**
Great Start Cohort Session IV
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 V
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