

# Leaders FORUM

Fall 2008

## How Hard Do We Push? Time to Rethink Minnesota Nice

**H**elen Keller reminded us to take risks: "Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding change is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."

These thoughts have continued to float somewhere in the inner recesses of my brain since our June MASA Board meeting. The Board developed three great strategic goals for 2008-09, all of which will involve some level of risk for each of us individually and certainly collectively for our Association, if we are to continue to promote student opportunity and achievement at its highest level. However, one element of Goal #2 has for years stood out in my mind as the key to a successful superintendency.

At one point in our Board retreat Charlie led us in a discussion of our direction as an Association. The essence of which was: How do we balance Minnesota "nice" and our many efforts at collaboration with the Department, Legislators, Governor, et al, with the need to truly advocate for the needs of the children in all of our public schools? How hard do we push in supporting significant and fundamental change in the funding of public education in Minnesota? Will it take the second coming of Skein vs. the State of



Dan Brooks  
Superintendent  
MASA President

Minnesota (1993) to force our state's leaders to understand and help us meet our goal? The answers to these and related questions will involve risk for us individually and collectively.

Charlie, with his response to the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce in the Tribune (Friday, August 22) has provided us with a gentle nudge in the art of "pushing back." As we move into this

next legislative session I am afraid that gentle nudges may not be enough. If not, then we must collectively commit to taking the risks necessary to achieve this element of Goal #2.

Unfortunately, as Minnesota administrators you know Ms. Keller was all too right in that "security is mostly a superstition" in the superintendency.

Therefore, may I submit we might as well take the risks and invite you to join us in asserting an appropriate level of righteous indignation over the course of this year as we seek to: "Articulate the rationale for providing adequate, equitable, and sustainable funding for education."

Please allow me to express a debt of gratitude to and thank Past-President Tom Westerhaus for his friendship of many years, but most importantly for his leadership in modeling what it takes to be a risk taker on behalf of student opportunity! If as Tom shared, "The Best is Yet to Come," we'll all need to heed Keller's thoughts.

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## Preparing for the 2009 Legislative Session...the Work Begins Right Now

**T**he 2009 legislative session does not start until January and we won't even know who the elected leaders of the state legislature will be, especially for the House of Representatives, until after the November election. However, the time to build relationships is NOW!



Charlie Kyte  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Association  
of School  
Administrators

Every school district has at least one, if not several, legislative districts within its boundaries. These are the legislators upon which you will have most influence and impact once the legislative session begins. It is important now to invite candidates to meet with you. Ask them for their positions on education, ask them for their commitment to your school district and also what other issues are the greatest importance to them once they become elected. Also offer to help each candidate have interaction with education faculty and others in your community.

Once the election is completed the new state legislators will be preparing for the next legislative session. This is the second time you want to be meeting to share the legislative agenda for your district. Many of you will have legislative agenda ideas coming from MASA or a number of the other education associations.

In any case, articulating these views to your state legislature with an expectation that they will help to accomplish what is necessary in education is very important. Ask for their support of rigor and progressive educational change, as well as financial support for that change and the community's educational mission.

Finally, once the 2009 legislative session begins in January, plan on coming to the Capitol. MASA will be asking you, as a regional representative, to come in at least twice. There will also be opportunities to interact with your legislators when they are back home. Your active involvement and participation can make a big difference when finally the education bills are passed out of both the house and the senate.

### Have you renewed your membership?

Membership materials have been mailed. For more information or additional membership materials, contact the MASA office at 651-645-6272/866-444-5251 or [members@mnasa.org](mailto:members@mnasa.org) or visit our web site at [www.mnasa.org](http://www.mnasa.org).

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## Political Activity of School District Employees An Election Year Q & A

**N**ovember elections, particularly when the Presidency is at stake or a referendum is on the ballot, create unique dilemmas for public school districts. They must remain politically neutral without impermissibly infringing upon their employees' rights to free speech and association. This sometimes delicate balance can be maintained if certain legal principles are followed.

Public school board members and school district employees should understand that state statute limits, to some degree, their political expression. State statute prohibits school district funds from being used to support political candidates, parties, or issues. The Minnesota fair campaign law precludes school district board members and employees from using "official authority or influence to compel a person to apply for membership in or become a member of a political organization, to pay or promise to pay a political contribution, or to take part in political activity."

The same law, however, specifically prohibits school districts from imposing or enforcing additional limitations on the political activities of their employees. Board members and employees may otherwise engage in political activities on the same basis as other citizens. The First Amendment guarantees all citizens the right to free expression on matters of public concern. Campaign literature and speech regarding political issues presumably address matters of public concern and thus constitute protected speech.

Given this framework, school districts often face the following questions:

**Q:** What may teachers say to parents or students at school regarding the election?

**A:** At school, teachers may provide parents and students with factual information, such as when and where to vote. They may not, however, tell parents or students how to vote (i.e., "yes" or "no" on an issue or for a particular candidate) while working in their official capacities as teachers (i.e.,

during instruction, before or after school activities, and conferences).

**Q:** Where and when may teachers wear buttons?

**A:** School districts may not prohibit employees from making statements of personal preference. Thus, teachers may wear buttons at school just as they would anywhere else provided that the buttons



Charles E. Long  
Attorney at Law  
Kennedy & Graven,  
Chartered

do not result in any kind of disruption to the educational environment or do not have a coercive influence on students or other staff.

**Q:** May teachers place signs in their lawns.

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** May school district employees engage in political fund raising activities?

**A:** School district employees may participate in private fund raising activities. However, as state law makes clear, they may not use their official authority or influence to coerce others to take part in the fund raising activities.

**Q:** May teachers write letters to newspapers?

**A:** Teachers have the right to express their personal opinions and may do so by writing letters. While they may identify themselves as school district teachers, they should also make it clear that the letter expresses only their own personal beliefs. The letter should not be written on school district letterhead and if sent by e-mail should not come from a school district computer. School district funds may not be used to support a political candidate or promote a position on an issue. Using school district supplies or equipment would be tantamount to using school district funds.

**Q:** May school district employees serve on political campaigns or committees?

**A:** Yes. School employees enjoy the same rights to free speech and involvement in political activities as private citizens. However, they must participate in the capacity of a private citizen and not as an official representative of the school district.

**Q:** May political groups or committees meet in school district buildings?

**A:** They may if permitted by school board policy and on the same basis as other political groups and committees. In other words, if the school district allows one political group to use its facilities then it must make the facilities open to all political groups.

**Q:** May teachers distribute political literature via district and school mailboxes?

**A:** The ability of teachers to use school mailboxes for political purposes depends largely on individual district policy and practice. Generally, teachers' mailboxes are school district property and are designated as nonpublic forums. This means the district has the authority to restrict access to its mailboxes so long as the restrictions are viewpoint neutral and reasonably based upon the purpose served by the mailboxes.

In most schools, the purpose of teacher mailboxes is to facilitate district

Continued on page 6

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An Election Year Q & A  
Continued from page 4

business. Materials endorsing a particular candidate or issue do not relate to school business. Also, allowing private expression in a nonpublic forum may imply government endorsement of that expression. Avoiding the appearance of political favoritism is a valid justification for limiting speech in a nonpublic forum.

The status of a nonpublic forum may be changed, however, if it is opened for public discourse, even of a limited nature. Thus, if a school district opens its teachers' mailboxes to political campaign literature for one candidate or one particular party, it may ultimately be required to allow distribution of political literature for all candidates and

all parties. This would result in the mailboxes becoming a mode for political debate and discourse, contrary to their original intent.

**Q:** What may a school district say in district, school, or classroom newsletters?

**A:** Such newsletters may provide information about where and when the election will be held. They may also provide factual financial data about the district if a referendum is on the ballot. However, the newsletter may not advocate for a specific candidate or position. Again, the underlying principle is that school districts may not expend district funds to support a particular political viewpoint.

**Q:** May school district employees contact parents

and students from their home telephones or home computers and urge them to vote for a particular candidate or position?

**A:** The ability of school employees to engage in such activity depends upon whether home telephone numbers and home e-mail address are deemed public directory information under the district's data privacy policy. If the information would be available to any citizen, then district employees may use it to communicate with parents and students in this manner. If, however, the information is not available to the public as directory information, school employees may not use the telephone numbers and email addresses to communicate with parents or students on political matters unless the numbers

are obtained from some other public source such as a telephone book.

**Q:** Do the rules change when a school district employee is off-site and out in public?

**A:** Generally, yes. While school district employees may not advocate a specific political position on school premises during the school day while on duty, they may certainly, in their personal capacities, engage in political activities on the same basis as any citizen.

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.

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Shari Prest  
Ark Associates

This day—this year—is not the same as the last. Change has continued to happen at exponential speeds. Over the summer months, the kids entering your schools have likely spent 585 hours on media, about one-third of those hours on the internet and about one-fourth of those in front of the TV. More text messages will be sent on the day you read this than there are people on the planet. The kids you see walk through the school doors today may pursue college majors or be employed at jobs and use technologies that have not yet been created. The kids are different because of their experiences and their futures.

The human, intellectual and language balance in the world is changing, too. In the minutes it takes you to read this, 60 new babies will be born in the U.S., 244 in China and 351 in India. Both countries have more honors students than the U.S. has children. In 2006, both China and India produced over twice as many college graduates as did the U.S. All college graduates in India speak English. In eight years, it is predicted China will be the number one English speaking country in the world. The world is different because of populations and priorities.

Education is compelled not only to respond but to provide visible leadership as these transitions occur. There are several things you can do to prepare your learners, teachers and communities for the future.

Become informed and share information about the changes taking place in the workplace and the world.

Ask yourselves what changes need to be made to accomplish your school/district mission for an unknown future.

Adapt your staff hiring and training practices to support a culture of change.

Use internal and external resources to redefine and communicate the essential skills that will be required for successful graduates in addition to the current

“basic skills,” i.e. massive information management, global communications skills, and self-directed learning competence.

Let your communities know how your schools will be changing to meet the needs of the future.

Consistently use and update communication “tools” including e-mail, websites, blogs, podcasts, cable television, etc.

Some of the above information has been taken from *Shift Happens* by Karl Fisch, assisted by Scott McLeod, [shiftohappens.wikispaces.com](http://shiftohappens.wikispaces.com)

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## When the Time is Right, Be Ready

There haven't been many opportunities to celebrate successful bond elections recently. In fact it has been mighty quiet in Minnesota for several years. Though there appears to be change in the political air, anti-tax sentiments continue to carry the day and the results are dramatic. For example, in the last half of the 2007-2008 school year, 15 districts put forth 20 capital bond questions totaling approximately \$387 million dollars. Only eight questions passed totaling \$98 million dollars—\$72 million of which would impact two districts.

The decline in capital investment began in the fall of 2001 and the downward trajectory has continued unabated. In a state in which good stewardship has historically been honored and in which 75% of pre-2001 bond elections passed, taking good care of facilities has become a challenging and in some cases an impossible task. Building a new school, renovating inadequate space, upgrades to incorporate new programs and technology, even deferred maintenance have become propositions that are typically on the losing side of the equation.

So what is a school leader to do? School referendums have become one of the few places citizens can affect tax impact. The excess levy has transitioned to the necessary levy. The urgency of general fund issues appears to trump "brick and mortar" issues and to the typical voter any bond appears huge when compared to a general levy question. Multiple questions on a ballot make it easy for voters to feel good about supporting schools and limit tax impact through "pick and choose" voting. Further, it becomes difficult to engender sympathy for the financial challenges of the District when the public is facing similar challenges (i.e. financial instability, foreclosure, increased cost of energy, health care premiums, etc.). How many times have you read or heard, "I have to live within my means, why doesn't the school district?"

Too often the response to tough times is to retreat, dig in and wait it out. However, successful organizational leaders know that tough times, like good ones are temporary. As an educational leader you are challenged to advance the organization whatever the circumstances. Schools and other buildings are a significant and highly visible representation of the District and your stewardship. A strategic and sustained effort is needed and should be part of "business as usual." A successful bond election is years in the making, not months.

Consider these actions as ongoing preparation, so that when the time is right, you are ready.



Gary Prest, Ed.D.  
Executive Consultant  
Cunningham Group  
Architecture

### 1. Review and update your facility master plan

The facility master plan should be a dynamic document demonstrating thorough, up-to-date understanding of the every square inch of the district's buildings and what needs to be done to maximize their efficient and effective use. It should provide the board very good guidance for decision making and be a resource to staff and community.

### 2. Develop an expert facility planning team that meets routinely to review and update your master facility plan

While most districts utilize staff in this regard, every community has "experts" outside the district employee team who understand and provide valuable insights (and support) regarding district facilities. These might include well regarded facility managers, assessors, building inspectors, architects, builders, and developers. These relationships can be critical when bringing a capital referendum before the public and this team can together develop a knowledge base about what is the best and latest advancement in facility design and operation.

### 3. Tie programs, curriculum, demographic changes and facilities together

School facilities exist to support student learning and community development. All facility discussion and planning should clearly be tied to the programs, curriculum, and educational goals of the community. Mining the insights and perspectives of citizens, community organizations, the board, staff and students through focus groups can provide the compelling stories about how current school facilities enhance or detract from learning and what should comprise the best school for future learning.

### 4. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Let your public know you are engaged in an ongoing effort to take good care of their facilities. As data is collected and analyzed through focus groups, surveys, and professional assessments publicize findings (good news and bad news) of each.

### 5. Engage Architects early in the process who have demonstrated success working with districts and communities.

Architects have unique skills, experience and expertise to share with you. Educational facilities require more than good design skills. Understanding of student needs, learning styles, curriculum, program, and community context are crucial aspects for consideration. Forming a good team to collaborate with community, planning committees, board and district leadership is critical to success. Planning teams and district leadership need to do their homework to find the best professional team to serve the district. In addition to talking with other similar districts that have experienced success, the Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI) and American Institute of Architects (AIA) are excellent resources for ideas about and processes for selecting the right architect.

These activities will provide firm footing and strong support for moving forward with a capital bond election when the time is right.

  
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## Advancing by Retreating Tremendous Bang for the Buck

**M**any school districts around the country, along with other nonprofit and public organizations, have found that involving their boards, superintendents, and senior administrators in a retreat can produce powerful results. The term “retreat” is typically used to describe a special work session lasting at least a full day, and often 1 ½ to two days (anything less than a day is a meeting, not a retreat), that is held away from the office and that focuses on accomplishing work that cannot feasibly be done in regular board meetings. Because the normal “rules of the game” are suspended at retreats, you are able to do such extraordinary jobs as updating district values and vision statements, identifying critical issues facing your district, brainstorming possible change targets to address the identified issues, thinking through improvements in school board structure and process to strengthen governing performance, and coming up with ways to enhance the board-superintendent working partnership, to name a few powerful outcomes that retreats can produce.



Doug Eadie  
President & CEO  
Doug Eadie &  
Company

### BUT A RISKY BUSINESS

However, if retreats are potentially powerful vehicles for producing critical results for your school district, they are also high-risk endeavors, primarily because of the involvement of your board in a far less structured session than your typical board meeting. Everyone can come up with at least one “retreat from hell” story that proves the point: from everyone’s being bored to tears to far more damaging outcomes, such as visceral debate that ends up fracturing, rather than cementing, consensus and produces oodles of bad feeling to boot. Experience has taught me that if you don’t take steps to minimize the risk, you’d be better off skipping the retreat. Fortunately, there are five practical steps that you can take to ensure that your retreat produces powerful results – with minimum risk for everyone involved: (1) Make sure your school board is actively involved in designing the retreat; (2) Set precise objectives; (3) Build in active participation; (4) Program in systematic follow-through; and (5) Meet away from the office.

### INVOLVING YOUR BOARD IN DESIGN

There are two very important reasons for involving board

members in designing the retreat: having the benefit of their experience and wisdom and building board ownership of the upcoming retreat. A very simple approach that I’ve seen work well countless times is to create an “ad hoc retreat design committee” involving board leadership and the superintendent to put together a detailed design for the retreat: its objectives, structure, and the blow-by-blow agenda. If you employ a professional facilitator, this is the group she or he would work directly with in preparing for the retreat. The board of a mid-size suburban district in the midwest, for example, involved their board president, vice president, secretary/treasurer, and chair of the Policy and Planning Committee, along with the superintendent in their retreat design committee. This ad hoc committee not only worked out a detailed retreat design, but also signed the six-page retreat description that was sent to all participants three weeks before the retreat.

### SET PRECISE OBJECTIVES

Of course, there’s no way you can come up with a workable structure and process for your retreat if you don’t specify what you want the event to achieve. This is one of the key responsibilities of your ad hoc retreat design committee. For example, among the retreat objectives set by the design committee mentioned established above were: “to clarify our district’s strategic framework – its values, vision, and strategic directions; to understand the implications for our district of national, state and local conditions and trends; to identify strategic issues facing our district.” And the retreat objectives of another district I worked with a few years ago included: “to fashion a detailed board leadership mission; to flesh out the roles, responsibilities, workplans, and operating procedures of our new standing committees; to identify practical ways to strengthen the board as a human resource; to clarify the board-superintendent partnership and identify ways to enhance it.”

### ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Commitment to following through on the results of a retreat heavily depends on the ownership that participants – especially school board members – feel for the results, and feeling like an owner comes from participating actively in producing the results. One of the best ways to achieve participation is to use breakout groups led by board members to generate information and ideas in your retreat. For example, one school district used nine different

Continued on page 16

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Advancing by Retreating  
Continued from page 14

breakout groups led by board members at one of its retreats, including groups titled “vision;” “values/culture;” “strategic issues;” and “characteristics of a sound board-superintendent partnership.” Of course, breakout groups can bomb badly if they aren’t meticulously designed to produce specific results through well-defined methodology and if the board members who lead them aren’t well prepared to play the facilitator role.

### PROGRAM IN FORMAL FOLLOW-THROUGH

Spending only a day or two together dealing with really complex, high-stakes matters isn’t enough time to come up with final answers about anything, and if you try, the whole thing is likely to come unraveled by the next Monday, when you return to the proverbial salt mine. Many school districts have reached agreement as part of the retreat design process on how follow-through will be handled. One district, for example, required that the professional facilitator it retained for the retreat prepare a detailed set of action recommendations, and created a steering committee for the express purpose of reviewing the recommendations and taking them to the full board for decision making. Without building in such follow-through, your school district’s return on its investment in a retreat is likely to be paltry.

### GET AWAY FROM THE OFFICE

It’s really important that you hold your retreat in a comfortable setting as far away from district headquarters as feasible, since a different location will help participants rise above the “business-as-usual” mentality, freeing their minds for “out-of-the-box” work. You don’t need a luxurious resort, although an attractive resort location would be an asset. I’ve seen modestly priced, nearby hotel meeting rooms work well, and you might even be able to arrange for donated space, such as the board room of a local corporation. The point is to avoid holding a “suspend the rules” meeting in your boardroom, where the rules come all too easily to mind.

### DO IT – BUT DO IT RIGHT

Retreats are probably the best way to involve your board creatively in generating critical products that can’t be handled in regular board meetings, so if you haven’t made use of retreats as a board involvement tool, you’re well advised to. Just make sure you keep the above tips in mind as you put your retreat together.

Doug Eadie is president & CEO of Doug Eadie & Company, a firm specializing in building strong board-superintendent partnerships. You can reach Doug at [Doug@DougEadie.com](mailto:Doug@DougEadie.com) or 800.209.7652.

## Check out Doug’s newest books from Governance Edge

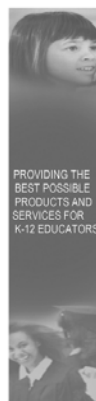
### “Building a Rock-Solid Partnership With Your Board” (2008)

Drawing on his work with hundreds of nonprofit and public organizations of every size and purpose, governance expert Doug Eadie describes how board-savvy CEOs effectively manage the human dimension of the board-CEO relationship. Using real-world case examples, leaders who want their nonprofit organizations to thrive in challenging times will learn how to keep their relationship with their boards close, productive and enduring. The perfect companion volume to Doug’s *Meeting the Governing Challenge*, this new book provides tested, practical guidance that you can put to work today in helping to manage the emotional/psychological dimension of the CEO-board relationship.

### “Meeting the Governing Challenge” (2007)

Based on Doug’s work with nearly 500 nonprofit and public organizations, this is an indispensable guidebook for building higher-impact board leadership and a solid board-CEO partnership. In this book, Doug describes the five key elements of his High Impact Governing Model, providing the detailed, nuts and bolts guidance to transform your board into a higher-impact governing body. A powerful resource, this is a must read for nonprofit and public leaders.

These Governance Edge publications can be ordered through the Doug Eadie & Company website ([DougEadie.com](http://DougEadie.com)). As a member of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators you will receive a 20% discount on all Governance Edge products by entering the discount code of {DougEadie}. For ordering inquiries, please contact Angela Ashe at [angela@DougEadie.com](mailto:angela@DougEadie.com) or by phone at (727) 786-6908.

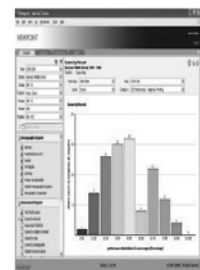


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# Teacher Leaders

## Building Leadership Capacity to Motivate Others

**A**ccountability in education has never been as heightened as it is today. Public school leaders are driven by continuous improvement as they set a vision of excellence; they align standards and recognize that accountability through assessment provides the data for teachers to successfully collaborate as professionals and build capacity for teaching and learning. The result is the building of leadership capacity with teachers where passionate teachers assume the leadership to get better and help others do the same.



Steve Jordahl, EdD  
Superintendent  
St. Cloud Area Schools

Superintendents must recognize that change is accomplished through intense focus on classroom practices where learning is enhanced by teachers collaborating to meet the needs of all learners. Plus, principals will be at their best as instructional leaders when they recognize the passion of teachers and reinforce the need for them to help each other to engage in professional conversations about how to meet the needs of all learners. They will recognize the teachers who are willing and able to lead others in organized ways to talk about teaching and learning. These teacher leaders can encourage and organize their colleagues to observe, mentor and coach each other to explore improved practices. The teacher-leaders recognize that learning is enhanced when they step out of their individual classroom

environment and start working to impact their whole school or grade level.

Building the leadership capacity with teachers motivates them and allows them to take ownership in their own professional development that aligns with the district's mission, vision and core values. It sustains success because the culture of the school becomes a commitment to learners versus "we have always done it that way" mentality. They engage others with their expertise to share, mentor and coach. They start talking in healthy ways about identifying weaknesses and adopting strategies to correct them. They begin to set clear goals and expectations with internal accountability for future discussions about what the data is revealing.

We know that our teachers are competent and driven to continually improve, but building leadership capacity within the ranks of the teachers will give them an avenue and a desire to engage in the professional dialog necessary to help one another. District and building administrators just need to provide the expectations and the structure for getting this done. Then, teachers need to build the capacity for trust; without trust, teachers find themselves working in isolation. Imagine what the simple lack of trust can do; without trust teachers will isolate themselves from mentoring, coaching, and engaging themselves in organized professional dialog about improved practices to impact learners. A lack of trust among adults leads to a lack of impact on our learners. Teacher-leaders must be at the core of a culture that puts learning ahead of everything else.

## NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

# It's Time for School Boards to go on Record Demanding Change

**M**ASA will be working with a number of educational associations in Minnesota to ask school boards in every school district to adopt a resolution indicating their displeasure with the present version of the No Child Left Behind Law. MASA will be working through its federal advisory committee to prepare an appropriate resolution. We plan to ask every superintendent in the state to bring it to their school boards for potential action.

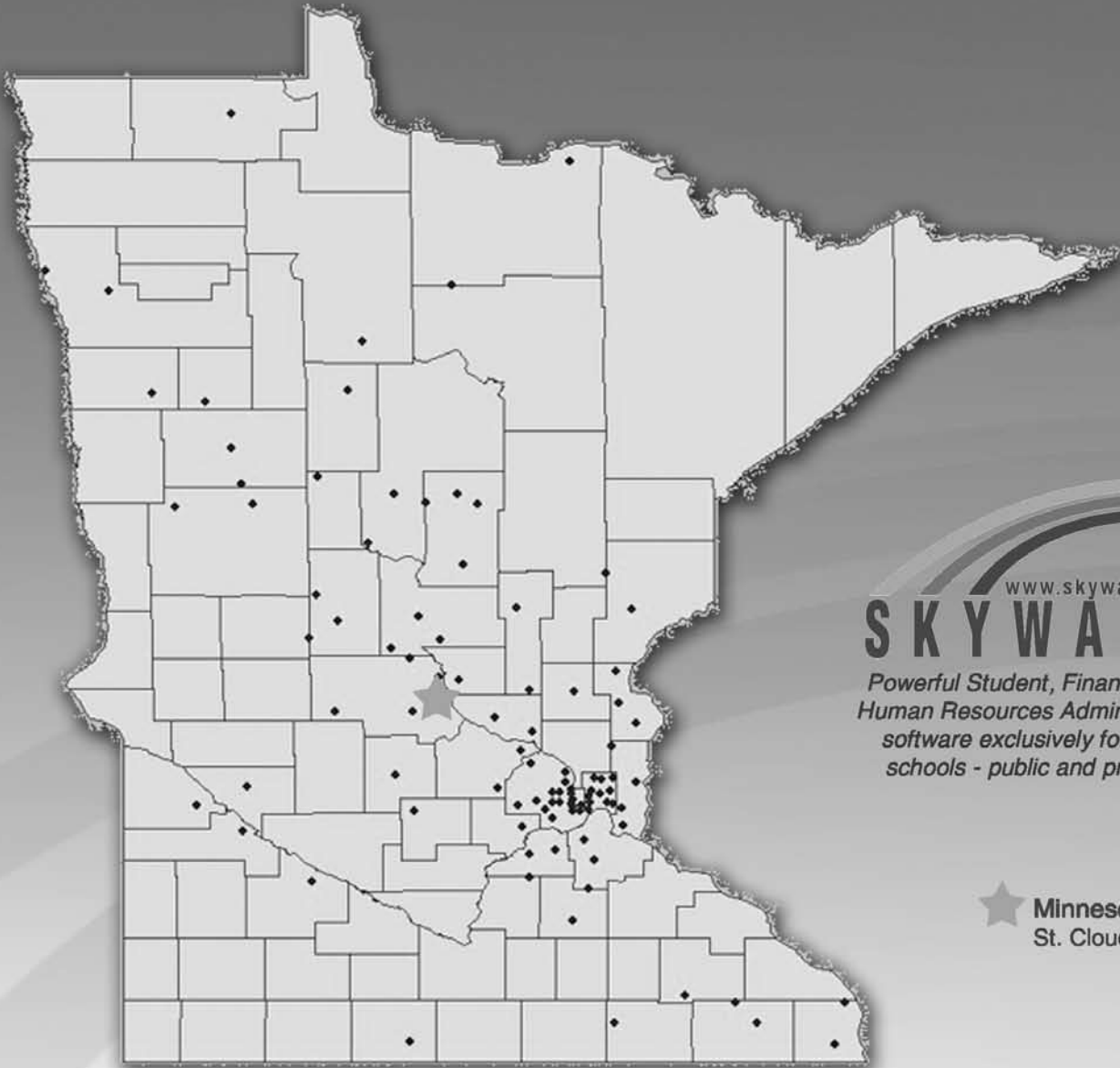
This resolution will not only ask our federal

congressional representatives to demand substantial change in 2009 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the resolution will also ask that our state legislators act to begin moving Minnesota out of the oppressive grips of NCLB.

Watch for more information in the coming weeks as the resolution is prepared and we ask school boards across the state to engage in this effort.

—Charlie Kyte, Executive Director, MASA

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Chad Maxa, IT Director  
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## K-12 and Higher Education

# Let's Work Together

**T**raditionally Minnesota's higher education systems and Minnesota's K-12 education systems have not spent very much time coordinating and collaborating with each other. There are two areas in which greater coordination is really needed.

### #1 Teacher Supply and Preparation

Recently ten Minnesota Superintendents met with the seven deans of the Colleges of Education of the MNSCU System to discuss the issue of teacher supply and preparation. We talked in depth about supply and quality issues, both of students coming into teacher preparation programs from high schools and coming out of teacher preparation programs to become teachers.

We are significantly producing more teachers than our K-12 schools can absorb in elementary education, physical education and social studies. On the other hand, there are desperate short falls in the area of special education. While supplies were tight in math, science and English, schools are still finding teachers for these areas.

A Superintendent shared that there was too large a supply of upper middle class female elementary teachers coming out of the colleges. What we really need are more male teachers and teachers of color.

College deans acknowledge the issue of having too many young people prepare in areas where there was not a high likelihood to obtain a job. The deans have repeatedly pushed students to consider special education, the sciences, English and other areas of shortage. However, many students want to teach in the areas where there is already a surplus.

The college deans were also asked about the preparation of students coming into the schools of education. One dean felt very positive about the caliber and preparation of the students coming into their colleges of education. They are having good success with both incoming freshman and community college transfers.

### #2 Blending courses between college and high schools, especially in the technical areas.

Earlier this summer presidents of several MNSCU technical colleges met with a group of superintendents in Alexandria.



Charlie Kyte  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Association  
of School  
Administrators

There was a forthright discussion about the barriers and challenges of having students take advanced training in our high schools. This group shared pros and cons of PSEO, Adv Placement, IB Programs as well as concurrent college courses in high schools.

We also saw an excellent demonstration of the Mechatronics program being offered by Alexandria Technical College. High school students in small groups are actually taking this course in an online computer/cell phone/tv camera environment in their home high schools with second year students at Alexandria technical college serving as helpline assistants.

The students in each of the high schools are learning how to use sophisticated computer controlled machines, which are now widely used in manufacturing. K-12 vocational teachers oversee the students who are self-directed, and the master instructor at Alexandria provides professional development for the K-12. This is a high tech and efficient way to get very advanced training to high school students and to keep these students in their local high schools.

In conclusion, higher education institutions and K-12 education institutions are beginning to find more ways to work together. What is really needed now are regional relationships all across the state. This dialogue needs to be broader and we must work together to help meld our systems so we truly meet the needs of as many students as possible.

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## Minnesota P-Card Program Produces Record Rebates to Schools

**T**he Minnesota P-Card Program is a system by which school districts can pay invoices electronically rather than by the old-fashioned invoice/paper check model. This system is faster, more secure, and much more efficient. It helps reduce the work load a bit in all of our over burdened business offices in the school districts across the state.

This past year (9/1/07 – 8/31/07) 72 school districts participated in this program and 50 of them utilized the program at high enough levels to earn rebates. This past year over 35 million in invoices were paid by Minnesota schools with this system. Our goal for next year is to pay at least 50 million in invoices and to provide rebates in excess of \$250,000 back to the school districts. If you are not yet a school district using the P-Card program consider doing so. Simply contact MASA (members@mnasa.org) and we will have someone work with your business office to set the program up.

The rebate schedule is as follows;

\$50,000 to \$100,000	\$125 - 250
\$100,000 to \$300,000	\$4000- 1,200
\$300,000 to \$8,000	\$1350 – 3,600
\$800,000 to \$1.5 M	\$4000 – 7,500
\$1.5 M to \$3.5 M	\$9,000 – 21,000
\$3.5 M to \$5.5 M	\$22,750 – 37,750
\$5.5 M to \$7.5 M	\$38,500 – 52,500

This year school districts qualified for rebates. Rebate checks are being sent to school districts with recognition to the school board about the way in which their business offices, accountants and superintendents utilized this new and better system and actually produced some money for their districts.

We don't want to reveal the exact amount that each district has received, however, here is a summary.

- 27 Districts received rebates between \$125 – 1,200
- 15 Districts received rebates between \$1,350 – 7,500
- 4 Districts received rebates between \$9,000 – 21,000
- 2 Districts received rebates between \$22,500 – 52,000

In total this program has paid \$202,000 back to Minnesota school districts in the past year.

The Minnesota P-Card program was conceived by MASA. It is endorsed by MSBA and MASBO. The program is a partnership with the PFM Company who also provides the financial advice and accounting systems for the Minnesota Liquid Asset Fund.

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# LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION

## MASA Recognizes Leadership and Service Congratulations Award Recipients!

**M**ASA service pins and certificates were presented at the 2008 Fall Conference. We proudly recognize these MASA members for their years of leadership as administrators or superintendents.

### **35 Year Superintendent (Gold Pin with Diamond)**

**Dennis Peterson**

Superintendent, Minnetonka Schools

### **25 Year Superintendent (Gold Pin with Ruby)**

**Brad Madsen**

Superintendent, Dawson-Boyd & Lac Qui Parle Valley Schools

**Earl Mathison**

Superintendent, Upsala Schools

**Jon McBroom**

Superintendent, Shakopee Schools

**John Tritabaugh**

Interim Superintendent, Kimball Area Schools

### **20 Year Superintendent (Gold Pin)**

**Irving Peterson**

Superintendent, Thief River Falls Schools

**Michael Smith**

Superintendent, Rockford Area Schools

### **15 Year Superintendent Certificate**

**Jack Almos**

Superintendent, Hinckley-Finlayson Schools

**Stephen Malone**

Superintendent, GFW Schools

### **10 Year Superintendent Certificate**

**Karsten Anderson**

Superintendent, Watertown-Mayer Schools

**Doug Froke**

Superintendent, Detroit Lakes Schools

**John Thein**

Superintendent, Roseville Area Schools

### **35 Year Administrator (Silver Pin with Diamond)**

**Harold Remme**

Superintendent, New Ulm Schools

### **30 Year Administrator (Silver Pin with Sapphire)**

**John Langenbrunner**

Superintendent, Sibley East Schools

**Steve Niklaus**

Superintendent, Annandale Schools

### **25 Year Administrator (Silver Pin with Ruby)**

**David Baukol**

Superintendent, Montevideo Schools

**Rick Clark**

Superintendent, Buffalo Lake-Hector Schools

**Diane Rauschenfels**

Superintendent, Proctor Schools

### **20 Year Administrator (Silver Pin)**

**John Currie**

Superintendent, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Schools

**Steven Dooley**

Superintendent, Becker Schools

**Chuck Futterer**

Superintendent, Cook County Schools

**David Johnson**

Superintendent, LeSueur-Henderson Schools

**Michael McLoughlin**

Superintendent, Chisago Lakes Area Schools

**Brad Meeks**

Superintendent, Farmington Area Schools

**Bruce Novak**

Superintendent, Cambridge-Isanti Schools

**Jeffrey Olson**

Superintendent, St. Peter Schools

### **15 Year Administrator Certificate**

**Beth Anderson**

Retired Director of Special Education, International Falls Schools

**Paul Carlson**

Superintendent, New London-Spicer Schools

**Joe Silko**

Superintendent, Grand Rapids Schools

### **10 Year Administrator Certificate**

**Cynthia Amoroso**

Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Mankato Area Schools

**Jeff Taylor**

Superintendent, Ortonville Schools

**Curt Tryggestad**

Superintendent, Little Falls Community Schools

# MASA FOUNDATION

## MASA Foundation Strives to Serve Members

**T**he MASA foundation is governed by a board of directors made up of retired and active MASA members. The Foundation now has an endowment fund in excess of \$170,000 and the board has set a goal of having the endowment fund increase to \$500,000 within the next five years. The Foundation distributes grants to members as they continue to enhance their professional development and their professional opportunities.

The MASA Foundation has traditionally raised funds through our Fall Conference Golf Tournament and Spring Conference Silent Auction. A number of members have also made contributions of \$1000 or more to the Foundation. Most impressive was that over the last four years 100 active members of our association made pledges to contribute \$50 or \$100 each year over a period of four years.

We are now launching a new fund drive and have asked every member of MASA to consider giving a little back to help build an endowment for the future so we can continue



to educate and provide opportunities for our members. If you haven't already turned one in, call the office and make a commitment to the MASA Foundation. Your support would be appreciated.

Over the past two years, the Foundation has helped fund a number of our members participating in trips to China to examine their education system. We have sent members from small districts to national conferences that they would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend. We have had several members engage mentors to help teach them how to do strategic planning and move complex processes forward in their school districts. This spring, the MASA Foundation will once again distribute grants to a number of members for their professional growth. Watch for announcements about the topic areas and direction from the Foundation so you too, could participate in the grant process.

—Charlie Kyte, Executive Director, MASA



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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## October

**29**

Fresh Start Workshop IV  
MASA Offices, St. Paul

## November

**12**

Great Start Workshop III  
MASA Offices, St. Paul

**14**

Newsletter Submissions Due

**19-21 Mark Your Calendar!**

Curriculum Leaders of Minnesota  
Fall Conference  
Craguns Resort, Brainerd

**27-28**

Thanksgiving Holiday  
MASA Offices Closed

## December

**10**

MASA Executive Committee Meeting  
9 - 10:45 a.m.  
MASA Board of Directors Meeting  
11 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
MASA Offices, St. Paul

**24-25**

Winter Holiday  
MASA Offices Closed

## January

**1-2**

Winter Holiday  
MASA Offices Closed

**8**

MASA Foundation Board Meeting  
MASA Offices, St. Paul

**14**

Great Start Workshop IV  
Minneapolis

**15**

2nd Year Cohort  
Minneapolis Convention Center,  
Minneapolis

**15-16**

MSBA Winter Convention  
Minneapolis Convention Center,  
Minneapolis

## February

**13**

Newsletter Submissions Due

**19-22**

AASA National Convention  
San Francisco, CA

**23**

School Safety Conference  
Site TBD

## March

**18**

Great Start Workshop V  
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel,  
Bloomington

**18**

MASA Executive Committee Meeting  
9:30 - 11:30 a.m.  
MASA Board of Directors Meeting  
1 - 4:30 p.m.  
Northland Inn, Minneapolis

**19-20**

MASA & MASE Spring Conference  
Northland Inn, Minneapolis

**26**

Emerging Leaders Conference  
TIES, Roseville

## April

**10**

Spring Holiday  
MASA Offices Closed

**10**

Spring Holiday  
MASA Offices Closed

**22-24**

AASA Legislative Advocacy  
Conference  
Crystal City Hyatt Regency Hotel,  
Washington, DC

## May

**15**

Newsletter Submissions Due

**25**

Spring Holiday  
MASA Offices Closed

## June

**11-12**

MASA Board Retreat  
Como Zoo & Conservatory



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