

Ben Kanninen is 2005 MN Superintendent of the Year

MASA has named Dr. Ben Kanninen, Superintendent for the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Schools, the 2005 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year.

As the Minnesota honoree, Dr. Kanninen is a candidate among other state winners for National Superintendent of the Year, to be announced at the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) convention, February 17–20, 2005 in San Antonio, Texas.

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

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

Dr. Kanninen was selected for this honor by a panel of representatives from a variety of Minnesota

education organizations. “Ben Kanninen exemplifies the strong leaders that we need to provide guidance for our increasingly complex educational systems.” says MASA Executive Director Dr. Charles Kyte, “We are very glad that he has been selected to represent Minnesota as Superintendent of the Year for 2005.”

Dr. Kanninen has been superintendent for the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Schools since 1998. With an enrollment of 11,000 K through 12th grade students, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage serves portions of five suburban communities in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. The district has been innovative in designing a free universal all day every day Kindergarten program to increase and sustain the performance of all students. Despite recent significant budget reductions, the district is facing this year with hope and optimism rather than controversy because of the skillful and positive leadership that Dr. Kanninen uses to engage community members, staff and students.

Vicki Roy, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School Board Director, nominated Dr. Kanninen for the Superintendent of the Year Award. “Dr. Kanninen brings a genuine compassion for every student in his role as Superintendent,” says Ms. Roy, “he has the ability to facilitate productive collaboration among multiple stakeholders and the ability to see a broad perspective, apply pertinent information and convey it to

stakeholders in a manner that is meaningful to them. In doing this, he facilitates the creation of a school system that addresses the needs of all our students and provides them an excellent educational program.”



Ben Kanninen

Dr. Kanninen is especially noted for his ability to create and support an environment for learning. In the nomination process for this award, Dr. Kanninen was asked about what elements should be included in preparation programs for aspiring superintendents.

“Aspiring superintendents need to develop skills in the areas of listening, learning and of adapting to changing needs and circumstances,” Dr. Kanninen responded, “critical elements in any preparation program for aspiring superintendents therefore should include a strong liberal arts education with emphasis in literature and the humanities. In addition, such programs should provide **Superintendent...cont. on page 3**

inside ...

Implementing Finance Reform	2
MASA's Legislative Platform	2
Engage Your Legislators	4
Spring Conference Highlights	7
Alternative Gift-Making	8
Welcome New Members	10
The Federal Role of MASA	16

Implementing Finance Reform Task Force Recommendation



Ric Dressen

by Ric Dressen,
MASA President
and
Superintendent,
Alexandria Schools

I was one of 19 members on the Governor's Task Force on School Finance Reform. Other MASA members were Alan Jensen (Elk River), Frankie Poplau (New

Prague) and Ken LaCroix (Retired-Hastings). My summary thoughts follow, but the entire Task Force report is available at:
<http://www.education.state.mn.us/content/076429.pdf>

What is the importance of the task force's work?

The K-12 education funding formula is a foundation for Minnesota's public school system. History and research show that approximately every 25 years we need to build a new foundation

(funding formula) to support the ever-evolving system of education.

The Governor's Task Force Study identified two significant findings:

1. The current formula has been stretched, pulled and twisted as far as it can go. It is not going to be able to respond to an educational system that must be more accountable, responsive to change and allow for innovation.
2. A new funding formula can be constructed to:
 - Be logically linked to and stimulate student learning
 - Evaluate school accountability
 - Foster community engagement and encourage educator creativity
 - Sustain the state's progress toward funding equity, and
 - Be more understandable to the public

As educators, we need to recognize the urgency to add, revise and enhance the task force's work. Our state's current revenue limitations are not a good reason to delay moving forward with a

new formula framework. We must move forward.

If we don't get active in this effort, we will follow the direction of many other states that are having their educational formula developed through litigation. I have nothing against the judicial system, but I prefer to have educators and elected officials build our 21st Century education's funding system. The longer we wait, the less control we will have on our funding future.

What's the key?

The task force developed six specific recommendations for a new funding approach. The key to the system is developing a funding formula aligned with state standards and connected to a comprehensive instructional program offered by schools. This will replace our current 1970-funding model that provides revenue to schools only when it is available or through locally approved referendums.

Finance...page 21

MASA's Legislative Platform...the Process of Getting There



Charlie Kyte

by Charlie Kyte,
Executive Director,
MASA

When you return from your holiday break, a copy of MASA's Legislative Platform for 2005 should be sitting on your desk. While the mailing will happen in late December, the process of developing the

platform began months earlier.

Over 50 MASA members helped to develop the Legislative Platform. These members were representative of all geographical regions of the state and MASA component groups.

Several of MASA's leaders, including President Ric Dressen, President-Elect Ted Blaesing and numerous members of the Board of Directors, began meeting with the leaders of other education associations last summer. In meetings with the leaders of Education Minnesota, the Principals associations

and MSBA, we were able to better understand the concerns and positions of these associations and their members.

In addition, I met with many of the state's political leaders, including Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson, Speaker of the House Steve Swiggum, representatives of the governor's office and the leaders of the education committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Finally, Representatives of MASA have met with Commissioner Seagren and Minnesota Department of Education administrators. In each of these meetings we were working to project our interest in education policy and to understand which issues were going to have momentum and which were not.

After our information was gathered, members of the MASA Legislative Committee and the Board of Directors began to prioritize issues. When you see the Legislative Platform you will recognize strong positions on funding

Minnesota's public schools as well as positions on several significant policy areas. We strive to be progressive yet practical. The MASA positions advocate strongly for funding while we look for ways in which schools can be accountable to their constituencies.

Watch for the MASA Platform. Be prepared to share it with others in your school district including board members, parents and staff. Plan to share it also with your newly elected Representatives and the Senators from your area.

In addition to distributing the MASA summary platform to all MASA members, it will also be sent to every legislator in the state. Legislators on the education committees will receive a more detailed version of the platform.

MASA will strive once again to be a positive force for public education in the halls of our capitol and in our legislature as we work through the 2005 legislative session. •

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Superintendent of the Year ... Continued from page 1

training in school finance both in terms of theory and practice, exposure to school law, and study in the area of the politics of education with reference to how political systems work...Today's emphasis on accountability and on student achievement also suggests that leadership candidates learn first hand about how to restructure academic programs to ensure that all students learn."

Dr. Kanninen also highlighted significant change in the area of 'universal access' to a system demanding 'universal proficiency.' "Enrollment decline and changing student demographics have created significant educational and financial challenges." says Dr. Kanninen, "In response, we have engaged in a process of redesigning teaching and learning practices in our district. We have done this by creating a comprehensive curriculum renewal process." The Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Schools have seen success in this process by evaluating all students and finding that students benefited academically. At-risk students made the strongest gains, thus closing the achievement gap for their district.

Within a climate of change, Dr. Kanninen embraces opportunities to improve systems that reach all students. "Dr. Kanninen consistently demonstrates bold and creative initiatives," says Mary Ajax, President/CEO of the Community Action Council, "that ensure equity and excellence for all students."

Meeting those needs can be challenging, given the financial climate for public schools. State financial support for public education has declined in most states during the past year. Yet in that

context, Dr. Kanninen has led the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage district to meet challenges creatively and strategically. He has managed to protect core curriculum and to facilitate new programs to engage and enrich students. "At the secondary level," says Dr. Kanninen, "we have established a variety of remedial support systems designed to ensure that students both at the middle and high school level become proficient in math and reading."

Gerald Ackerman, former administrator in the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Schools, praises Dr. Kanninen's leadership. "I have had the privilege of working with some of the finest superintendents in the state." says Mr. Ackerman, "I can honestly say that I have never worked for a more effective leader than Dr. Kanninen. He is a hands-on leader who willingly shares leadership opportunities with others."

"I have never worked for a more effective leader...He is a hands-on leader who willingly shares leadership opportunities with others."
~ Gerald Ackerman

Dr. Kanninen holds a doctoral degree from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; a specialist's degree from the University of Minnesota, Duluth; a master of arts degree in teaching from the

University of St. Thomas and a bachelor of arts degree in English from Princeton University. Before becoming Superintendent for the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Schools, he was Superintendent of Schools and Senior High Principal in Superior, Wisconsin, and an Assistant Principal/Athletic Director in Duluth, Minnesota.

Springsted Incorporated, public finance advisors, is the sponsor of the Minnesota Superintendent of the Year program. ARAMARK ServiceMaster Facility Services and the American Association of School Administrators are cosponsors of the National Superintendent of the Year award program.

MASA wishes to express a sincere "thank you" to the generous sponsors of this prestigious award. •

LEADER'S *toolbox*

The Time is Now to Engage Your Legislators!

by Eileen Harvala, APR
Public Relations Coordinator
Hopkins Schools

Two ingredients essential to the formation of a successful grassroots legislative advocacy group are top-level support from the superintendent and school board, and strong, parent-led leadership.

Hopkins School District 270 has had a legislative action coalition (LAC) since 1985. The LAC exists by school board policy and consent, which keeps the group focused on the district's mission, priorities, and issues. The LAC serves as an advisory group and an information-gathering resource for the school board and superintendent. In addition, the school board has a minimum of one liaison to the legislative action coalition.

Hopkins Superintendent Michael L. Kremer, Ph.D., sets the tone for legislative advocacy by developing and maintaining relationships with the district's 12 elected legislators. He spends time with them one-on-one, and invites them to meetings with school district

parents, city and community leaders, and school district and community events. They regularly receive information about what's taking place in the school district.

Superintendent Kremer consistently delivers clear messages about important legislation and the district's legislative platform to legislators, city and county officials, community groups, and business organizations such as the local and state chambers of commerce.

Administrative support has sustained the legislative action coalition, and led to its current strength of more than 600 members. This support from the highest levels sends a strong message to parents/guardians and community residents that they can and do make a difference.

Effective legislative advocacy also requires strong, grassroots leadership. District 270's LAC

Steering Committee, which is a small group of about 20 volunteers, meets every Friday throughout the school year. Anyone in the community is invited to join this group, including business people and non-parents. This group is charged with researching, writing, and seeking approval from the school board for the district's legislative platform. Committee members write position papers to support key messages in the platform. They also monitor legislative activity and plan special events and advocacy campaigns.

Out of the Steering Committee comes the leadership for another tier of parent volunteers—the school liaisons. The Steering Committee's school liaison coordinator:

- Have regular meetings with the school liaisons co-coordinators

Time ...cont. page 15

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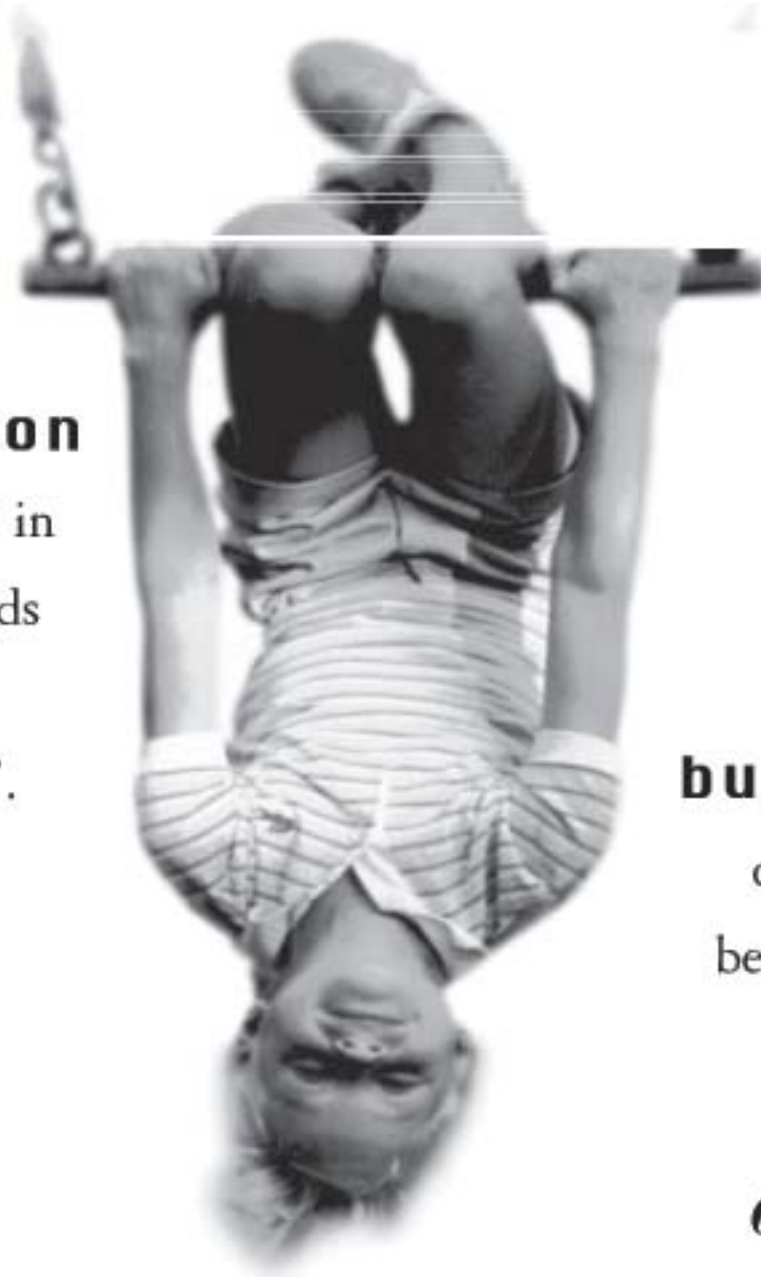
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Exploring the Challenges of Greater Minnesota



Ric Dressen

by Ric Dressen
MASA President
and
Superintendent
Alexandria Schools

MASA's tradition of helping to shape solutions to statewide educational challenges continues as the Association studies the changing

demographics of Greater Minnesota. The Board of Directors, the Legislative Committee and the Department of Education have discussed this topic. Other discussion and dialogue opportunities will be occurring in the upcoming months.

The focus of the MASA efforts will be to: (1) identify the challenges

facing school districts in Greater Minnesota, and (2) pursue possible opportunities and options that could assist school districts in addressing these challenges.

Among the Challenges

The Association has identified several challenges facing school districts in Greater Minnesota, especially in the next five years. These include:

- Population and student enrollment decline
- Shortages of staff in numerous licensure areas
- Limits in technology access
- Stress and changes occurring in Greater Minnesota economy
- Desire for communities to remain independent school districts.

Seeking Solutions

The Association leadership recognizes "a silver bullet"

solution does not exist. Hopefully, the discussion, dialogue and study will bring forward:

- Success stories already being practiced in school districts
- Creative options that could be explored and piloted
- Additional forums for further problem solving

MASA will work with other state educational organizations and depend on our membership to help in this effort. The challenges are difficult and everyone's energy is needed to ensure all Minnesota students have access to quality educational programs in the 21st century. If you would like to be part of this ongoing conversation, please contact Charlie Kyte at ckyte@mnasa.org.



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John Tritabaugh Receives Morris Bye Award

John Tritabaugh, Superintendent for the Albany Area Schools, received the Morris Bye Memorial Award at the 2004 Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) Fall Conference, "Shaping Public Education in the Best Interest of Kids," October 3-5, in Brainerd, Minnesota.

The Bye Award is presented annually to a superintendent with a minimum of twenty years of successful administrative experience serving Minnesota public schools. The recipient must demonstrate strong educational leadership, a lifelong commitment to the development of all students, and foster innovations in education to enable students to develop personal skills and values such as perseverance, responsibility, and leadership.

Mr. Tritabaugh has been the Superintendent of the Albany Area Schools for 12 years. During that time he has worked to promote educational programs to insure the

maximum development of students by initiating a block schedule at Albany Area Senior High, implementing a five-year strategic plan for the district and developing a collaborative atmosphere among district administrators. "I have found a great deal of satisfaction in bringing stability and trust to Albany Area Schools," says Mr. Tritabaugh, "which has made it a better place for families and staff."

Prior to Mr. Tritabaugh's superintendency at Albany, he was an Elementary Principal for Atwater Schools and later became the Superintendent of the Atwater-Grove City Schools. Mr. Tritabaugh worked to successfully complete the Pairing Agreement for Atwater and Grove City School Districts and also worked as a consultant to the Minnesota Department of Education to put together a feasibility study on the possible consolidation of the Pine River and Backus School Districts.

Mr. Tritabaugh has helped to develop creative and innovative ideas at Albany Area Schools that enhance student and staff learning by working on such committees as School-to-

Work, Health and Safety, Staff Wellness and Meet and Confer for Classified Staff.

Mr. Tritabaugh is especially proud that he has hired five former students as quality teachers, hired five former classroom teachers as principals and mentored them as they developed successful careers, mentored three principals who are currently serving as superintendents, having encouraged them to become administrators. Mr. Tritabaugh feels that being able to share educational information, encourage students to be educators, convince teachers to become administrators, and mentoring new administrators has provided him with great joy and enthusiasm in his educational career.

Mr. Tritabaugh is also involved in his wider community. He is a member of the local Lion's Club and the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Tritabaugh is also active in his church, where he has been on numerous committees and served as a church council member and secretary of the congregation.

Mr. Tritabaugh holds a bachelor's degree from Concordia University, Saint Paul, Minnesota; a master's degree from St. Cloud State University, and a Sixth Year degree from St. Cloud State University.

The Morris Bye Memorial Award was created in 1988 by the family of Morris Bye to recognize the efforts and important work of superintendents throughout Minnesota. Bye was a former MASA member who served as Superintendent in the Anoka School District from 1943 to 1964. •

Attention, Members!

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like to wish you
HAPPY HOLIDAYS



Alternative Gift-Making to Benefit Schools and Implications Under Title IX



by Jennifer J. Cullen
Attorney
Rider Bennett, LLP
and
Charles E. Long
Attorney
Rider Bennett, LLP

Jennifer J. Cullen



Charles E. Long

Individuals are often interested in financially supporting their school through lifetime gifts or leaving a bequest to the school in their wills. Although a donor's intention is very lofty, it can sometimes be complicated by state or federal funding

rules. Additionally, funds held or accepted by public school districts, regardless of the source, are considered "public funds" and become subject to strict investment and use restrictions.

So, one may ask, how can individuals give financial help to their schools in a beneficial and more flexible manner? One answer is to set up a separate charitable entity solely for the purpose of funding school activities and other school related programs, often ones that would otherwise not fit into the school's budget. Common goals of a school foundation include: classroom enrichment grants; scholarships; academic, cultural, artistic or athletic programs; assisting students in attending camps or competitions; and funding teacher recognition programs. School foundations - as well as other charitable entities, unless given special status - are required to be politically neutral. Therefore, the foundation's focus is to provide non-political educational experiences.

Minnesota law prohibits public school districts from creating their own non-profit organizations. Thus, individual contributors or other community members must facilitate the non-profit organization's creation.

If an individual or a small group of individuals are the primary financial support for the charitable entity, the organization would likely qualify as a private foundation. Such entities are not required to pay income tax. Cash gifts to private foundations qualify for a charitable deduction up to 30% of the donor's adjusted gross income (less if the gift is made up of something other than cash). A charity that qualifies as a private foundation is subject to a fairly strict set of rules regarding certain types of financial transactions, must pay a 2% excise tax on its net investment income, and is required to file a tax return with the IRS each year and a financial statement with the Minnesota Attorney General's Office annually.

If the entity's organizational documents clearly indicate that its sole purpose is to benefit one or more specific public charities and if other criteria are met, the organization may qualify as a "Support Organization." Having Support Organization status means that (in addition to exemption from paying income tax) cash contributions to the entity qualify for a charitable deduction up to 50% of the donor's adjusted gross income (less if the gift is made up of something other than cash). There are no excise taxes on net investment income and the entity is not subject to the restrictive financial transactions that private foundations are. The entity is still required to file an annual federal tax return and a financial statement with the Attorney General's Office.

One of the best options for setting up a charitable entity to support a local school is a separate public charitable organization. In order to qualify as a public charity, a substantial amount of the entity's donations must come from the general public and not from one or a small group of contributors. Cash donations to public charities qualify for the same charitable deduction as Support Organizations. Also, like Support Organizations, public charities are income tax exempt, not subject to tax on net investment income, and not subject to strict financial transactions like private foundations. Public charities are required to file a tax return each year with the IRS and to provide financial statements to the Minnesota Attorney General's Office.

Once these separate charitable entities are established, it is imperative that potential donors are made aware of them. To the extent contributions are made directly to the separate legal entity, interference with the school's other funding may be minimized. If the money is donated directly to the school, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to later transfer those assets into the separate entity. Therefore, conveying that the separate charitable organization exists and encouraging contributions to it (instead of gifting directly to the school) is vital to the foundation's success.

Charitable foundations and booster clubs are relatively free to choose why and how they raise funds. However, once those funds are transferred to a public school district, the district's use of the funds becomes subject to various state and federal controls. This issue arises most often in the **Alternative...cont. page 21**

Staffing: Putting the Jigsaw Pieces Together

by Nancy Rajanen, Ph.D.
Executive Director of Human
Resources
Robbinsdale Area Schools

My mom loves jigsaw puzzles. For years, she's spread them out on coffee tables, and encouraged everyone to join in the fun. (Personally, I like to look at the picture on the box, and let it go at that!)

Putting together the annual staffing plan for schools is much like assembling a jigsaw puzzle. The various pieces are interrelated, all of the parts are needed to make up the whole, and leaving out any one piece can leave you frustrated!

Like those jigsaws that can sit on your coffee table forever, staffing is one of those puzzles that need to be in front of you for most of the year. In order to best assemble the pieces, a staffing timeline can help you see the big picture, and plan your moves accordingly.

November – This is a good time to review your seniority lists, and provide copies to all sites for their review & challenge. This timeline may vary according to your collective bargaining agreement.

December – Your School Board should approve staffing timelines. This doesn't need to be formal, but it is wise for them to be aware of the process, so they can respond to employees and public. This is also a good time to send out letters to staff on leave of absence, to confirm their return for the next year. Deadlines of February or March should be given to staff on leave, so you can plan for openings.

January – School Boards should set staffing ratios prior to any FTE allocations to buildings. The ratios should be based on carefully calculated total cost estimate of positions. Consider the average step & lane of your staff, and remember that it can change

dramatically over the course of a few years, based on your staff and your salary schedule.

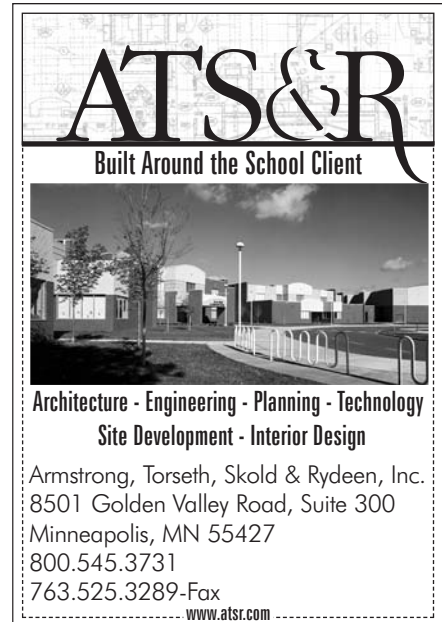
February – Secondary registration should be completed, and used to calculate secondary FTE allocations. All buildings should determine staffing by subject or grade. This is when your HR department needs to review the information and determine the staffing in each subject area, consider necessary reassignments (stranding), identify teachers for ULA, and notify probationary teachers of contract termination.

March – Your School Board should take preliminary action proposing to place staff on unrequested leave and termination of probationary teachers. A final vote on the teachers should be taken now to allow for any possible hearings by the April deadline. Letters should be hand-delivered to staff, with a signature noting the delivery/receipt.

April – Transfers and posting should occur (this will vary according to your collective bargaining agreement). Letters of assignment should be sent to staff in April-May. For those hard to fill positions, you may want to have a presence at the Career Fairs in Minneapolis, Sioux Falls, or the various colleges/universities.

May – Time to complete your classified staffing. Notifications to staff will save you from unnecessary unemployment claims, and save employees from unnecessary worry about their employment status.

Unlike the coffee table version, the staffing jigsaw puzzle is never quite finished. It is a fluid process, changing with resignations, leaves of absence, and enrollment changes. However, the majority of it can be completed by early spring, leaving you time to rest ...and work a jigsaw puzzle! •



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MN Administrator's Leadership Forum – The Final Year



by **Kristine Bryan Nielsen, Executive Director**

As many of you know, the Administrators Leadership Forum is winding down from our 3+

years of working with school administrators in the areas of school leadership and technology. Here are a few updates while the Forum is still in operation.

- **MVAL.** Now is the time to get your mVal account the way you want it! If you or someone you know would like a license for mVal (while they are still free, courtesy of the Gates grant) please let me know as soon as possible. If you want a copy of mVal Desktop, indicate that. If you

would like a copy of the web version, I need the name(s), school name(s) and email addresses(s) so that I can request the formation of those accounts. If you are having difficulties with your current account, please contact me at kris@mn-admin-forum.org - or for technical issues, contact support@media-x.com.

- **TAGLIT post assessments.** If you would like to conduct a TAGLIT post assessment (still free of charge), now is the time. I need the school name, dates of the former survey, and the length of time you want the survey to last.
- **Handhelds.** The Forum has no process to upgrade handhelds but you are welcome to contact my vendor for competitive pricing if you wish to upgrade or replace your unit. Contact Chuck Bose at CCV software (800-541-6078) and

tell him you are a member of our project.

- **Online discussion boards.** Three discussions boards have been created (powered by vivEd) one for Curriculum Leaders, one for those interested in online learning for students and one for MESPA members. To sign up for either of the first two, contact me for instructions. MESPA members are automatically registered for their board and can get instructions from the MESPA office. There is also a statewide discussion board available through the Forum's Atomic Learning Site (it would be wonderful to see this discussion board get some use!). To register for this site, visit http://custom.atomiclearning.com/mnadmin_sign_up.

Keep in touch – I love to hear about your challenges, ideas and issues. •



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MASA Recognizes Leadership and Service **Congratulations Award Recipients!**

MASA service pins and certificates were presented at the 2004 Fall Conference. We proudly recognize these MASA members for their years of leadership as administrators or superintendents.

30 Year Superintendent (Gold Pin with Sapphire):

Ray Seiler, Retiree/Bellingham Schools
Larry Tompkins, Superintendent, Southland Schools



25 Year Superintendent (Gold Pin with Ruby):

Norm Miller, Interim Superintendent, Madelia Schools
Rollie Morud, Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education
Harold Remme, Superintendent, New Ulm Schools

20 Year Superintendent (Gold Pin):

Eric Bartleson, Retiree/Winona Schools
Jerry Jensen, Superintendent, Lake City Schools
Rich Lorenz, Superintendent, NRHEG Schools

10 year Superintendent Certificate:

Todd Cameron, Superintendent, New York Mills Schools
John Hornung, Superintendent, Central Schools
Bruce Jensen, Superintendent, Kittson Central Schools
John Landgaard, Superintendent, Worthington Schools
Charles Rick, Superintendent, Sibley East Schools

35 Year Administrator (Silver Pin with Diamond):

Keith Redfield, Interim Superintendent, Minnewaska Area Schools

30 Year Administrator (Silver Pin with Sapphire):

Mike Benedetto, Superintendent, Monticello Schools
Keith Erickson, Director of Special Services, Albert Lea Area Schools
David Kragness, Superintendent, Warroad Schools
Michael Lovett, Assistant Superintendent, Minnetonka Schools
Jerry Nesland, Executive Director, Northwest Service Cooperative

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Joann Knuth, Area Superintendent, St. Paul Schools
Stephen Malone, Superintendent, GFW Schools
Bruce Novak, Superintendent, Isle Schools

10 Year Administrator Certificate:

Rick Bleichner, Superintendent, Battle Lake Schools
Frankie Poplau, Superintendent, New Prague Area Schools

The Time is Now... Continued from page 4

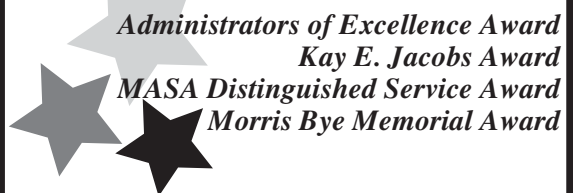
- Serve as an information conduit about activity at the legislature and within the school district
- Help the school liaisons organize special activities at their school sites such as letter-writing campaigns, visits with legislators in the schools, visits with legislators in their homes, and parent advocate email or phone trees

School liaisons are vital to building relationships with legislators. They put faces to issues of concern for public schools. It means a lot when legislators hear directly from parents about issues that are important to them.

School liaisons are only one level of District 270's multi-tiered legislative advocacy structure. Other tiers allow parents to select if they want to receive legislative information via email. Another group receives pertinent information about legislative activity on an occasional basis. The Business Task Force includes business owners and executives who also help with legislative advocacy on behalf of the school district.

For more information on the Hopkins School District 270 Legislative Action Coalition, visit: <http://www.hopkins.k12.mn.us/pages/district/commun/legislative.html>.

MASA Awards Recognize Outstanding Leadership



Administrators of Excellence Award

Kay E. Jacobs Award

MASA Distinguished Service Award

Morris Bye Memorial Award

Each year, the MASA/MASE Spring Conference provides an opportunity to recognize outstanding members who are dedicated leaders and advocates for children and Minnesota education. We encourage you to consider nominating yourself or a colleague for recognition. Nominate someone who you feel reflects the qualities of a leader who is committed to education and who is an exemplary representative of MASA.

Information packets with award nomination forms will be emailed to all members. Award background information is also available on the MASA web site (www.mnasa.org).

Nominations are due by February 1, 2005.

The Federal Role of MASA

by Penny Kodrich
Co-Chair
MASA Federal Advocacy Committee
and
Director of Special Services
Edina Schools
and
Kathy Leedom
Co-Chair
MASA Federal Advocacy Committee
and
Superintendent
Willmar Schools

MASA has had a long history of working with the state's legislators and policy makers. Minnesota's K-12 public education has benefited greatly from the efforts of MASA members, as a result of their influence on legislative decisions regarding funding and policy. The implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), now in its third year, represents a sea of change in federal education policy. Instead of simply providing additional resources to help states educate children with extraordinary needs, federal mandates now dictate virtually every significant aspect of elementary and secondary education. While most believe that the goal of high standards and the desire that every student succeed at a high level of performance is laudable, many have questioned the guidelines for implementation and the limited federal funding in support of this goal. Likewise, the work around the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has brought about discussions surrounding the alignment of IDEA with NCLB and the consequent implications upon the public schools.

These and other changes at the Federal level have led MASA to form a Federal Advocacy Committee. This concept, first generated by Dr. Kenneth Dragseth (2002-03 MASA president and Superintendent of Edina Public Schools) and supported by Toni Johns (2003-04 MASA president and Superintendent of Brooklyn Center), was spearheaded through the efforts of Charlie Kyte, Executive Director of MASA. The committee began formally meeting in the

03-04 school year under the leadership of co-chairs, Kathy Leedom, Superintendent for the Willmar Public Schools and Penny Kodrich, Director of Special Services for the Edina Public Schools.

The goal of the Federal Advocacy Committee is fairly straightforward: to influence policy makers and legislators in Washington D.C. regarding public education. Although the goal is straightforward, realizing the goal required organization. To create a foundation of influence, the committee has taken several steps. In 2003-04, the committee organized one meeting in each Congressional District between the respective Congress Person and MASA representatives from that district. Similar meetings have been held with US Senators, Mark Dayton and Norm Coleman and their aides. For 04-05, two meetings are being targeted in each Congressional District. The purpose is to build relationships between MASA members and Minnesota's Representatives and Senators that will lead to dialogue on the issues that concern MASA most. In 03-04, talking points centered on the implementation guidelines of NCLB, solutions to Minnesota's lowered level of Title I funding, and IDEA reauthorization and full funding of Special Education. By meeting regularly with Minnesota's Federal Legislators, we hope the necessary infrastructure for credibility and dialogue is being established.

The larger committee's work has revolved around the development of positions for MASA on each of the key Federal issues. On November 15th, forty members of the MASA Federal Advocacy Committee met. They developed a

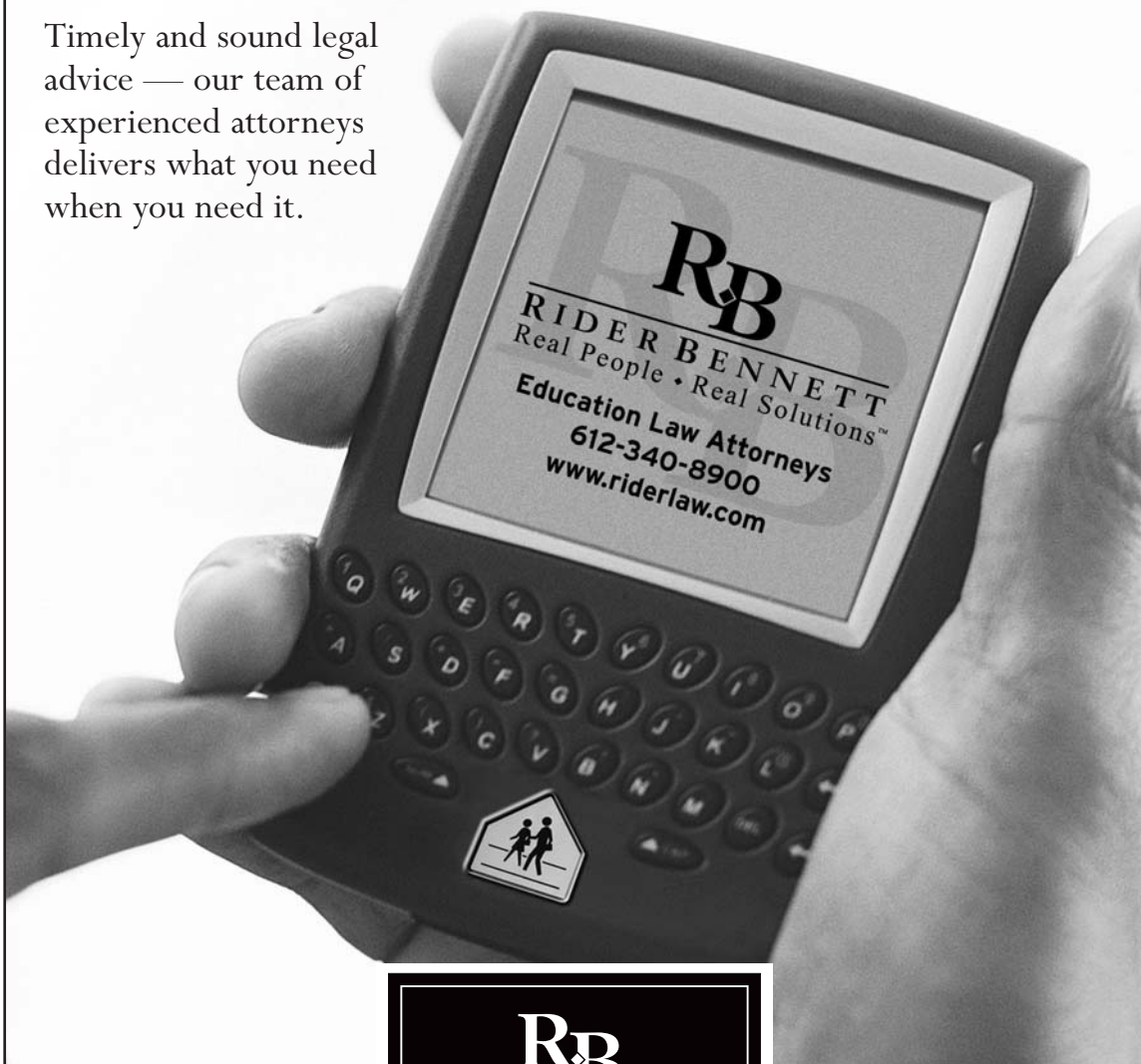
white paper position on NCLB changes that will go to the whole Minnesota congressional delegation as well as a set of recommendations for change to the Minnesota NCLB Implementation Plan. These recommendations will be the talking points for the meetings planned in each Congressional District and will be shared with Commissioner Seagren. MASA is developing talking points to use in these meetings.

In addition, Bruce Hunter and Mary Kusler, lobbyists for AASA, have periodically met with the committee to keep members apprised of developments in Washington DC that will potentially impact Federal Legislation. In January and March, several Federal Advocacy Committee members, MASA President, Ric Dressen, and Charlie Kyte, will go to Washington D.C. to meet with key education aides and policy makers, in order to promote MASA's position on changes for the NCLB Act.

The next full meeting of the Federal Advocacy Committee will be January 14, 2005 in Minneapolis. This meeting coincides with the MSBA winter convention held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. If you would like to learn more about the Federal Advocacy Committee or are interested in participating in the Congressional meetings in your district, please call either Kathy Leedom at 320-231-8510, Penny Kodrich at 952-848-4899, or Charlie Kyte. Your input and involvement are welcomed and appreciated. •

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The Future Scan Process of the MASA Board of Directors



Ted Blaesing

by Ted Blaesing
MASA President-Elect
and
Superintendent
White Bear Lake Schools

Just what does one do while serving on the MASA Board of Directors? Yes, we drink our share of coffee and draw on our years of training in eating goodies from a staff lounge, but this is not typical of the “work” completed by our

MASA Board. This past summer we completed a scanning process as a precursor to establishing action goals. We recognized that MASA goals, much like school district goals, do not come packaged in neat, bite-size increments to be accomplished within 365 days. Some goals might in fact take several years. Consider this scenario the MASA Board considered when developing our Legislative goals for 2005-2007.

“It is now September 2006 and you have been completely out of touch with Minnesota for two years. You are pleasantly surprised to see public schools with enough money and programs for all children to flourish. Citizens and parents feel the schools are attentive to the needs of

children and are accountable for results. You learn that the 2005 legislature worked miracles.” From this scenario we then dove into figuring out what changed, what was overcome, and how did MASA play a role. These future scanning exercises were invigorating, yet challenging, with tangible results.

MASA has proactively sought to build strong working relationships with all entities that impact education. A few examples include the MDE, MAESP, MASSP, the Alliance for Student Achievement, MSBA, EM, business leaders, and legislators at both the State and Federal level. Many hands make light work, and to that end MASA Board members now serve on committees with responsibility to meet and develop a working relationship with the groups that impact education. MASA indeed has a working Board. More coffee please! •

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The NCLB RoadMap Points You in the Right Direction

**By Forest Hertlein, Ph.D.,
Federal Programs Specialist**

Have you lost your way in the NCLB parent communication maze? Can you readily determine which notices to send, when to send them, and under what circumstances? Help is available in the form of an online NCLB RoadMap available with a subscription to TransACT® NCLB Parent Notifications. The NCLB RoadMap tool is an online “wizard” (automated survey) which presents users with a series of “yes/no” questions that help school administrators easily determine the notices and forms required for school-to-home communication.

Based on the answers provided by a specific school or district, the RoadMap provides recommendations that reflect your school’s or district’s specific situation at any given time. For example, whether or not your school or district receives Title I funds can affect parent notice requirements related to such things as homeless education, highly qualified staff, private school consultation, disclosure of student directory

information to military recruiters, or families whose students have limited-English proficiency. These are just a few of the compliance areas that administrators must be prepared to communicate with parents in a timely manner and in a language that parents can understand.

The NCLB RoadMap is divided into eleven separate compliance topics. After answering questions for any compliance topic, the RoadMap provides you with a summary of your responses, recommended forms and notices, timelines, suggestions for implementation, and a corresponding requirement from the NCLB Act or Regulations. The requirements for compliance can be affected by many factors, and determinants for compliance may shift as your populations or funding sources change. As districts and schools move in and out of making AYP, the NCLB RoadMap becomes a convenient tool for revisiting and assuring proper parent communication. You can learn more about this and other NCLB resources by visiting the MASA website (www.mnasa.org) and clicking on the button for TransACT NCLB Parent Notifications. •



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Implementing Finance... Continued from page 2

What is the new funding amount?

The task force's charge and study focused on educational policy. Our work was not in educational finance. Thus, the recommendation never attempted to develop an exact funding formula amount. Our study took us deep enough to recognize that our recommended approach could be successfully implemented with further study and analyses.

This study did not address several other educational funding areas. The study excluded transportation, special education, personnel management (i.e. PELRA) and expenditure controls. All will need to be included as we journey further into a new funding system.

Where is the report's 'Wow'?

School finance reform is not exciting. However, it can be dynamic and powerful! Minnesota's E-12 educational funding accounts for 42% of the state's general fund dollars. The system must be complex to meet the unique needs of the over 850,000 students being educated annually in the state of Minnesota. It can be a system that is fair, understandable, and accountable - while still being responsive to the unique needs of our many students.

The 'Wow' of our task force work is that our current system will never get us to the next level of funding to meet our state's evolving educational needs. Minnesota must make its move, and we cannot delay. A key legislative session is just around the corner and significant educational finance reform must be part of Minnesota's 2005 Legislation.

I believe the entire task force had hoped to accomplish more. However, I believe we were very successful. I hope our recommendation will serve as a "spring board" to engage the entire state into developing a funding model intended to meet Minnesota's future challenges, the needs of its people and the aspirations of individuals and families. These ideas are an attempt to make Minnesota's public schools more assessable, more effective, more accountable and more creative.

The task force work is completed. Now I challenge all of us to become engaged in further shaping Minnesota's educational finance system for the 21st Century. Let's get to work! •

Alternative Gift-Making ... Continued from page 8

context of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in all programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. School districts, as recipients of federal funds, must comply with Title IX. Specifically, Title IX requires that female students be provided with aids, benefits and services equivalent to those provided to male students and that female students not be limited on the basis of sex in their enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage or opportunity offered in any program or activity provided by the district.

That some of the money used to support a particular program or activity comes from other sources (i.e., non-profit foundations, booster clubs, alumni donations) does not remove it from the auspices of Title IX. The school district's obligation to ensure equivalent benefits, treatment, services or opportunities for males and females exists regardless of the funding source. Private donations are considered within the totality of benefits, services, and opportunities a district provides.

The most common examples arise in athletics. Competition levels, facilities, equipment, scheduling and coaching must all offer equal opportunities for boys and girls. Other benefits must be equal as well. For example, the Office of Civil Rights has noted that use of booster club funds to provide pre-game meals for the boys' football team may violate Title IX if no girls team members are provided a similar benefit.

This in no way should deter school districts from accepting donations from charitable entities or clubs. The Office of Civil Rights has emphasized that nothing in Title IX precludes private fundraising to benefit schools. It clearly is permissible. Also, OCR has explained that Title IX does not require teams to share or split proceeds from their own fundraising activities. What the statute does is to obligate school districts to ensure equivalency in the benefits, services, treatment and opportunities afforded to boys and girls, regardless of the funding source. Thus, school districts are wise to keep records of expenditures of outside financial support to ensure that benefits to male students from such sources are off-set by an equivalent benefit to female students.

•



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Discover Card Tribute Award Scholarships

The Discover Card Tribute Award Scholarship program:

- Is sponsored by Discover® Card, in cooperation with the American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- Recognizes the achievements of high school juniors in areas beyond academics, and
- Awards scholarships for any type of post-high school education or training.

Who may apply?

Applicants for the 2005 program year must:

- Be a high school junior during the 2004-2005 school year (beginning September 2004)
- Have a cumulative grade point average (for the 9th and 10th grade years only) of at least 2.75 (on a 4.0 scale), and
- Be enrolled in and graduate from ANY accredited public or private high school in the 50 United States or the District of Columbia, and
- Continue his or her education/training beyond high school in any accredited training, licensing or certification program or institution of higher education.

What criteria are used in the judging?

Judging is based on outstanding achievements in areas beyond academics. In addition to meeting the eligibility qualifications, applicants must demonstrate outstanding accomplishments in Special Talents, Leadership, Obstacles Overcome and Community Service.

What can this scholarship be used for?

Scholarships may be used for any type of education and/or training beyond high school, including:

- certification or license
- trade or technical school, or
- two- or four-year colleges and universities.

How many scholarships are available and how much are the scholarships worth?

There are two levels of Tribute Award scholarships:

State (and District of Columbia) Scholarships:

Up to 9 Awards: \$2,500 each

National Scholarships:

Up to 9 Awards: \$25,000 each

When is the 2005 application deadline?

The application deadline for the 2005 program is Friday, January 7, 2005. The electronic request form for the 2005 Tribute Award program for students becoming high school juniors in the fall of 2004 was available on this website beginning March 1, 2004. Application materials for the 2005 program were sent to high schools in September 2004 and are available online at the AASA web site (www.aasa.org) beginning October 1, 2004.

Beginning May 23, 2005, a list of the state and national winners for the 2005 program will be available on the AASA web site.

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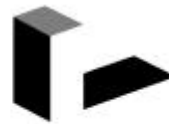
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The Next Stage[®]



Calendar 2004-05

December 23 - 24 and
December 31
Winter Holidays
MASA Offices Closed

January 4
Legislative Session Begins

January 12
Referendum Workshop
Metro Area

January 19
MASA Region 8 Meeting
Bemidji

January 26
MASA Region 9 Meeting
Metro Area

January 28
MASA Region 3 Meeting
Willmar

February 2
MASA Executive Committee Meeting
9 - 10:45 am
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
11 am - 4 pm

February 9
MASA Foundation Board Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

February 11
Newsletter Submissions Due

February 17 - 20
AASA National Convention
San Antonio, TX

March 17
MASA Day @ the Capitol
Kelly Inn, St. Paul

March 25
Spring Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

April 20 (at Spring Conference)
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel
MASA Executive Committee Meeting
9:00 - 10:45 am
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
11:00 am - 4:00 pm
Board of Directors & Past Presidents Dinner
5:30-8:30 pm

April 21 - 22
MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

May 11
MASA Foundation Board Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

May 13
Newsletter Submissions Due

May 30
Memorial Day Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

June 14 (tentative)
MASA Executive Committee Meeting
11 am - 12:30 pm
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
1:30 - 5:30 pm
Minnesota Science Museum,
St. Paul

June 15 (tentative)
Board Meeting Continues
9 am - 12 noon



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