

Minnesota Administrators for Special Education

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News Release

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Michelle Jones Receives MASE Distinguished Service Award

(St. Paul, MN) – The Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) has named Michelle Jones, Education Finance Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), as the recipient of the 2017 Distinguished Service Award. Jones will be honored for her positive history and association with Minnesota public education, contribution to improving Minnesota’s public education, and reputation as a person who willingly “goes the extra mile” at a statewide recognition ceremony during the MASA/MASE Spring Conference, March 9-10, 2017, at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park.

Jones has been working in the public education field for nearly 20 years. Prior to her position as Education Finance Specialist with MDE, Jones also served as a Clerk Typist and a Grants Specialist. Jones finally moved into her current position as Education Finance Specialist.

As a Clerk Typist, Jones co-facilitated the training of regional specialists and users within MDE to use the Minnesota Quick Link database and electronic mail system, which was utilized by districts to submit amendments to their child count data. During this time, Jones had to manually enter child count for the entire state prior to data being submitted through MARSS. She also assisted in the development of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Manual and created and maintained the initial database of all special education directors and Electronic Data Reporting System (EDRS) staff in school districts.

In 1999, Jones was promoted to Grants Specialist where she administered and provided training for the annual December 1 Child Count to determine federal entitlements for special education programs. She prepared, managed, and approved the Annual Financial Application Process, which included six state aid programs and seven federal special education programs. Jones also provided technical assistance to local school district personnel to use the EDRS.

In her current role of Education Finance Specialist, Jones administers, analyzes, and monitors grant awards for Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Regional Low Incidence, Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), and the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Program (CIMP). She does the calculation of federal entitlements and makes adjustments to the entitlements for Student Services for the Blind and Coordinated Early Intervening Services. Jones provided training during the implementation of State Educational Record Review and on the application process in the State Educational Record View and Submission (SERVS), budget and payment requests. Jones was present for the inception of MDE taking the reigns of tuition billing calculations and she has provided countless trainings and technical assistance to directors and business managers.

“Michelle works patiently with directors and business managers new to the world of special education finance,” wrote Nan Records, Regional Low Incidence Facilitator at the National Joint Powers Alliance in her nomination letter for Jones. “In all that she does, Michelle goes the extra mile. If she isn’t the person you should be asking she doesn’t turn you away. She continually works to resolve any challenges presented to her.”

MASE is a professional association organized to promote programs and services to improve the education of children with disabilities, to foster high quality programs of professional development, and to study problems relating to serving children with disabilities and improving the leadership of administrators for special education. MASE members are administrators for special education in public or private schools, cooperative regional, state and other education administrative units, college and university professors of special education teacher or administrator preparation programs, and administrators, coordinators or consultants for the Minnesota Department of Education.

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