

# Minnesota Administrators for Special Education

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News Release

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## Gaynard Brown Receives MASE Legacy Award

(St. Paul, MN) – Gaynard Brown, Retired Director of the Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative (PBEC), has been awarded the Legacy Award by the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE). Brown will be honored for his commitment to encouraging, developing, and mentoring leaders who reflect the MASE mission at a statewide recognition ceremony to be held at the 2019 MASE Fall Leadership Conference, October 23-25 at Cragun's Conference Center in Brainerd.

Brown is an outstanding advocate for children with disabilities and their families. He did things the right way and was not afraid to voice his opinion when he felt a child was not getting what they need to be successful. In his leadership practices, Brown was a caring individual and this was reflected in the way he treated children, parents, teachers, administrators, and the people who work for him. The compassion, respect, and caring that Brown showed as a Special Education Director has made him a very beloved and esteemed leader in his district and across the state.

Brown has been a mentor to many people throughout his career. He had a way of identifying individuals and encouraging them to further their career paths in higher education and administrative opportunities. Brown has provided some of the earliest trainings for directors on how to look at instructional data and outcomes for students in the special education field.

As the Special Education Director of the PBEC, Brown created an environment that put students first. He strove to improve services for children in all of PBEC's districts to help them be more successful. He helped implement new reading programs in the cooperative's districts and also was a driving force in setting up a foundation for Response to Intervention in his district's schools. Brown was forward thinking in wanting to find, recruit, and develop special education administrators. He was very aware of teachers and staff that showed leadership qualities and did not hesitate in encouraging them to pursue further educational and leadership opportunities. Staff were trained to realize the importance of building strong, positive working relationships with parents. Teams worked collaboratively with the goal for each student to reach their highest potential. Brown's leadership and impact is still felt in the special education community today, years after his retirement.

"Gaynard genuinely cares about the people he works with, and about the people that are fortunate to call him friend. Because of how he treated all of us, he created a culture of caring that permeated our entire organization," said Dr. Heidi Hahn, Assistant Superintendent of Brainerd Public Schools. "Staff not only took care of each other at work, they took care of each other each and every day. Gaynard mentored me and showed me what it means to be a genuine, kind and empowering leader – for that, I am eternally grateful."

*The MASE Nominating Committee selects the Legacy Award recipient based on a review of biographical information provided in the nomination materials. The recipient must be a current active MASE member (or active at the time of their retirement) who has contributed to the professional growth and development of others through a service history as a long-standing, contributing MASE member. The recipient must demonstrate a commitment to the field of special education through training, mentoring, personal support, modeling, and demonstrating an impact that is considerable and measurable over time; and contribution at the local, regional, and state levels.*

*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 educational 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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