

# Minnesota Administrators for Special Education

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News Release

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## **Erin Toninato named Special Education Administrator of the Year**

(St. Paul, MN) – The Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) has named Erin Toninato, Education Leadership & Low Incidence Facilitator of the South Central Service Cooperative, as the 2018 Special Education Administrator of the Year. Toninato has received this award for her dedication to students with disabilities and their families, and her active involvement in professional and community affairs. She will be honored with the Special Education Administrator of the Year Award at a statewide recognition ceremony during the MASA/MASE Spring Conference, March 8-9, 2018, at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park.

“Throughout her career, I have observed Erin to be professional, respectful, and dedicated towards helping learners succeed,” said Simone Bolin, Executive Director of the Mid-State Education District. “Erin has supported her staff through some very different student situations and never hesitates to use the resources available to manage difficult special education programming issues. Erin’s knowledge of special education law is second to none and she has a gift for delivering quality guidance.”

Toninato has served as the Education Leadership & Low Incidence Facilitator of the South Central Service Cooperative since 2015. Prior to her position at the South Central Service Cooperative, Toninato was the Executive Director of the River Bend Education District. She has served as a Special Education Paraprofessional, Special Education Teacher, Coordinator, Principal, and Special Education Director.

Toninato’s work continually reflects her commitment to students with disabilities and her leadership enables her to create organizations that support high standards and positive outcomes for all students. During her time at the River Bend Education District, Toninato further developed the Setting 3 Programs to be responsive to member districts and to students. Toninato worked with many county and agency organizations, such as the Three Counties for Kids Collaborative. In addition, she worked to create a PLC structure within the district to provide opportunities for professional learning and growth. Currently leading programs with the South Central Service Cooperative, Toninato is facilitating the implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) in multiple schools and districts.

“It is evident that Erin is a fierce advocate for students, staff, and families. Her commitment to students and her leadership in working with others to accomplish strong outcomes is seen every day in her work,” said Jill Skarvold, Regional Specialist for Special Education at the Lakes Country Service Cooperative and Holle Spessard, Director of Special Services at Tri-City United Schools in their letter of support. “Erin has high expectations for herself and always is reflective about her own practices in order to make improvements. She has been a mentor to many. She truly is a leader who is working on behalf of students with disabilities.”

As an advocate for students with disabilities, Toninato has been an active MASE member in her regional director group. She has served as an Area Representative to MASE Board, and Toninato is currently the secretary for MASE.

Toninato earned an Education Specialist licensure (Superintendent and Director of Special Educational Leadership and Administration) from Minnesota State University, Mankato.

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.