

**MEDIA Advisory**

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Mia Urick  
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651-645-6272 • [urickm@mnasa.org](mailto:urickm@mnasa.org)**Dr. Gary Lewis Receives MASE Legacy Award**

(St. Paul, MN) – Gary Lewis, Retired Director of Student Services for Northfield Public Schools (Minnesota) and CEO of SpEd Forms, Inc., has been awarded the Legacy Award by the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE). Dr. Lewis 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 2018 MASE Fall Leadership Conference, October 24-26 at Cragun's Conference Center in Brainerd.

Dr. Lewis served as a Special Education Administrator for a total of 24 years. He served as the Director of Special Education for the River Bend Education District from 1989-2003 and then as the Director of Student Services at Northfield Public Schools from 2003-2013. Since 2013, Dr. Lewis has been the CEO of SpEd Forms, Inc.

Dr. Lewis has been a mentor to many people through his career. He understands that high-quality teachers are the most critical component of public education. Dr. Lewis is not afraid to make challenging decisions in staffing models, always looking to place teachers in a position where they and students can be most successful.

"Dr. Lewis is a true legend among Minnesota educators. He is a visionary leader who possesses the necessary administrative skill to see that vision implemented and measured," said Dr. Matthew Hillmann, Superintendent of Northfield Public Schools. "He is a champion for students with disabilities, ensuring each child has the opportunity to maximize their free and appropriate public education."

Dr. Lewis is always willing to take a fresh look at things, find new approaches, and try new strategies to address the organizational challenges and state and federal based hurdles special education programs face. During his time as Director of Student Services at Northfield Public Schools, Dr. Lewis was an innovator who studied issues thoroughly and implemented plans with fidelity. His teachers were well-trained and supported, his students well-served, and parents were heard and felt valued.

Dr. Lewis plays a crucial role in statewide advocacy for Special Education. He is routinely asked by the Minnesota Department of Education for input on rule-making and other policy advice. Dr. Lewis and his team at River Bend Education District transformed the tracking of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) by developing the SpEd Forms software platform. Today, the vast majority of Minnesota special education teachers use this software to track IEPs efficiently and securely.

Dr. Lewis was an active member of MASE, MN Association of School Administrators (MASA), Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) / Council of Administrators for Special Education (CASE), and the MN Special Education Leaders Foundation (MNSELF). In 1999, he received the MASE Distinguished Service Award for exemplary service in the interest of Minnesota Public Education.

Dr. Lewis received a doctorate degree in Education from the University of Northern Colorado and a master's degree in Guidance and Counseling from the University of Wisconsin-Stout. He earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology and English and a School Psychology Certification from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

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 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



MASE

Minnesota Administrators  
for Special Education

*MASE builds strong leaders who work on behalf of students with disabilities.*

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