



IMPACT

1884 Como Avenue • St. Paul, MN 55108 • (651) 645-6272 • members@mnasa.org

Fall 2019

To do our best work we must invest in our Leaders

"The only skill needed in the 21st Century is the skill of learning new skills, everything else will become obsolete" - Peter Drucker

As educational leaders we are navigating through some of the greatest challenges our organizations have ever faced. Great challenges also present great opportunities to positively impact our educational systems. "In education, even the way we change has changed. To survive and thrive, we must perform at a higher level-continuously", says Quint Studer. Our work with Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) is an investment in the development of our leadership skills and provides us with opportunities to build a broad network of peers that can help us reach this high level of performance. As educational leaders, we all strive for a culture of educational excellence. Unfortunately, we are sometimes using great tools and strategies but not getting great results. Using a framework, such as the one developed by the Studer Education Group, can help us to identify our strengths and leverage them. It can also help us to identify and address the gaps in our efforts. The next step is to identify practices and

procedures which are an effective match to the problems and apply specific strategies, tools, and tactics to address these gaps. In other words, use the right tool in the toolbox to fix the problem. These methods will sharpen our focus and help us to develop strategies to measure success and move towards the goal of performance excellence!



Cheryl Hall
Director of Special Services
Northfield Public Schools
2019-20 MASE President

Over the past year I have had the opportunity to learn more about what it means to work towards performance excellence with the Northfield school district leadership team. We began partnering with the Studer Education Group to help us focus on key issues in our continuous improvement journey. This work introduced us to the following Nine Principals:

1. Commit to Excellence
2. Measure the important things
3. Build a Culture around Service
4. Develop Leaders to Develop People
5. Focus on Employee Engagement
6. Build Individual Accountability
7. Align Behaviors with Goals and Values
8. Communicate at all Levels
9. Recognize and reward success

We began this process by listening to our stakeholders. Listening included stakeholder surveys to gather perceptions of our organization's culture and leadership.

President's Message continued on page 4.

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BUSINESS

partners

Special thanks to our 2019-20 MASE Business Partners!

The MASE Business Partnership program strengthens the ties between MASE members and their collaborative partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Our goal is to advance the field of special education and improve student outcomes with an emphasis on proven, evidence-based practices.

Tier 3

Edgenuity, Inc.

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Strategic Staffing Solutions

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SpEd Forms

Tier 1

CAREI

Transition Assessments and Curriculum

UCP/Infinitec

Welcome back to the new school year!

I hope that you were able to take some time to rest and recharge your batteries over the past few months. Not unlike disconnecting from the ubiquitous cell phone, this doesn't happen without direct effort on your part to connect up or better yet to unhook from everything that proves to be a drain on your personal resources.

Since my last newsletter article, the MASE Board has met and installed new leaders or current leaders in new positions. Cheryl Hall is our new president. Sarah Mittelstadt is our new president-elect. Laura Pingry-Kile is our new past-president and Legislative Committee tri-chair. Scott Masten has joined the leadership team as the treasurer. All of these individuals will have ongoing responsibilities on the MASE Executive Committee which gathers monthly to address the needs of our members, consider any new challenges and to provide direction to me. I continue to be fortunate to be able to work with such a strong group of MASE leaders.

Once again in July, our CASE Liaison Cheryl Johnson, President-Elect Sarah Mittelstadt, and I attended the CASE-CEC Special Education Legislative Summit in Alexandria, VA. Joining us was MNCEC President-Elect Kelly Dietrich, who was able to provide a unique perspective from charter schools, and Professor Keyena Cornelius from MSU-Mankato, who was able to address the challenges of finding and training the next generation of special educators. In addition to receiving the most current information regarding special education issues at the federal level and the CASE/CEC positions, we had the opportunity to visit the congressional offices of each of our federal legislators. We updated the staffers (with the exception of Congresswoman Angie Craig with whom we were fortunate to meet in-person) on the ongoing challenges to delivering special education services and supports to our students with disabilities. We advocated strongly for bipartisan support of S-866 and HR- 1878 that would put into place a structure for a ten-year ramping up to the 40% federal coverage of special education expenses promised with the IDEA authorization in 1975. Reauthorization of IDEA itself appears to be something that nobody is pushing, preferring to await a possible change at the executive level. In meeting with other attendees from across the country, we continued to be reminded how fortunate

we are to be from a state that chooses to support public schools and has not directed public funds to private (and in some instances for profit) schools.

In July, I was invited to meet with the special education directors who support students enrolled in the Indigo Education charter schools. We had a frank conversation that included the strained relationship between charter schools and the independent school districts. I believe that if MASE is to truly be considered to represent all the public school special education administrators in Minnesota we must carefully consider how we do so. A start would be to make sure that members who are employed by charter schools are invited and made welcome at our area meetings. I suppose a case could also be made for charter school special education administrators to join MASE and become active members. In reviewing our membership list, I was surprised to find only a very small number of members who identify as being affiliated with a charter school. It is time for each of our areas to reach out to charter school special education administrators inviting them to attend one of our area meetings, regardless of their membership status within MASE.

Our legislative committee has begun its preparations for our first committee meeting. It became readily apparent last year that legislators prefer to receive



John Klaber
MASE Executive Director

Executive Notes continued on page 5.

2019 CASE/NASDSE Conference

October 27-29, 2019

Louisville, Kentucky

Registration information at www.casecec.org



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2019-20 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Director of Special Services, Southern Plains Education Coop.

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Director of Special Education, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools

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Executive Director, Goodhue County Education District

MNCEC Liaison (13-21)
Marcy Doud
Assistant Superintendent of Specialized Services, Saint Paul Public Schools

Executive Director
John Klaber

President's Message from page 1.

This helped us to identify what we are doing well and what needs more attention. The next step had each leader meet with each supervised employee for a short listening or "rounding session" which posed the following questions: What's working well, who's crucial in helping you work well, do you have the tools and resources you need to work well, and how can I help you work well? The answers to these questions then became actionable items that address the nine principles and were shared with our staff.

I believe that the most impactful result of this process was the "shout out" message, which gave recognition and specific feedback to those identified in the "who's crucial in helping you work well" question. Staff appreciated not only being recognized by a leader, but that the basis of that recognition came from their colleagues. This is a powerful reinforcement of the positive behaviors that we want to see every day in our school district.

I wanted to share my experience with this improvement process as it demonstrates the importance of not only investing in professional development but also in the key skills that leaders need in order to navigate the complexities of our work. If we are going to meet the diverse needs of our learners and close the gaps in learning, we must first learn to use a framework that provides a focus which cultivates a learning and work culture that is positive, welcomes innovation, and supports our teachers and staff.

I believe that the MASE mission and our strategic plan is well aligned with these nine principles. This creates opportunities for us all to work together to improve the lives of every student. I encourage and invite you to join your MASE colleagues as we pursue educational excellence. I look forward to the exciting work we will be doing together this year. ●

Preparing Tomorrow's Leaders

Learn more about our **new online** Education Specialist (EdS) Degree with Special Education Director Licensure. Scholarships offered!

education.stthomas.edu

School of Education UNIVERSITY OF **St. Thomas**



Know someone who still needs to renew their membership?

This year, when you join or renew your MASE or MASA membership(s), the membership materials will be online. The new platform offers a number of advantages:

- It's paperless, always a good thing.
- It's convenient. Arrange your membership(s) anywhere, anytime. No need to keep track of your materials. Just sign in and you are all set to go.
- It's efficient. Once you complete your membership materials, your membership benefits are immediately in force and your contact data is included in the member directory.
- It's accurate. You access and fill in your own data. You can even make changes as they occur.
- It's secure. You access your member account using your email and password, and, except for the member directory, that information remains private. Our data back-up will be constant so there will be no chance of losing your membership record.
- Your dues will be paid online, too. You may use a credit card, PayPal, or choose to be billed.

Renew your membership online today at <https://events.resultsathand.com/membership/931>

Executive Notes from page 3.

testimony from individuals who are directly impacted by any proposed piece of legislation. As a direct result, we have expanded the leadership of that committee to three individuals. Laura Pingry-Kile is taking on a chairmanship as the MASE Past-President. Jamie Nord continues as one of the chairs, and Jeff Jorgensen has offered to join as the third chair. I look forward to these three individuals and others testifying on behalf of our legislative platform during the upcoming legislative session.

Finally, please encourage the vendors from whom you purchase supplies and services to join us as a MASE Business Partner. Again this year, we will be asking you to consider responding to calls from vendors with a statement that you prefer to work with those that have taken the positive step to become a MASE Business Partner. This has been a once a month request, but we'd certainly appreciate it if this occurred daily. Again, I'm glad you're back and I look forward to visiting with

IMPACT is your newsletter and we encourage your input!
If you have ideas or an article to share, please contact us at (651) 789-4061 or send an email to dchristians@mnasa.org.

2019-20 MASE Committees

The 2019-20 MASE Committees have been announced.

You can find the full list online at:

www.mnase.org/committees

If you missed the sign-up deadline and still would like to serve on a committee please contact Dave Christians (dchristians@mnasa.org) at the MASE Offices.



CEC Convention

February 5-8, 2020

Oregon Convention Center

Portland, OR

Register today!

www.ceconvention.org



2019 MASE Fall Leadership Conference

Wednesday-Friday

October 23-25, 2019

Cragun's Conference Center, Brainerd

Registration information available

at www.mnase.org

If you ask a few people to describe a great leader, it is likely that you will hear many of the same characteristics: integrity, creativity, inspiring, passionate, a listener, a visionary, etc. But ask the same people to provide a succinct definition of an excellent leader and it is likely that they will struggle to come up with one. Leadership is, as many human attributes are, hard to pin down. We know it when we see it and we sure know it when we don't see it! And we know that quality leadership makes a difference—for our staff, our wider communities, and most importantly for our students. Research shows us that there is a direct link between quality leadership and student success. What better reason is there to improve our leadership capabilities than that? Join your colleagues this fall and reflect on your own leadership practice and explore all the different ways that Leadership Matters!

Conference Highlights

Welcome to Cragun's! After dinner on Wednesday night, we will hear from inspirational comedian **Judson Laipply**, who will address how Leadership Matters because change is constant in our lives. Learn to accept that some of those changes are not going to be in our control while others will be directly affected by the choices we make. Judson blends comedy and content with a style that is down to earth, playful, and thought provoking and of course gets capped off with his famous finale, "The Evolution of Dance," one of the most popular viral videos of all time that has a combined view count of over 500 million across all platforms.

On Thursday morning, **Angela Meiers** will present, Brave Leadership Matters. Angela is a world-renowned author, entrepreneur, international keynote speaker, and educator, whose transformative message of the importance of mattering has the power to unleash the genius in us all. There is no doubt bravery is needed to lead and succeed. For centuries bravery has been a crucible of leadership and a fundamental principle for battle of any type and kind. But, what does BRAVE look like? How does BRAVE act and behave? And most importantly how big can YOUR BRAVE be? This presentation seeks to answer these questions by putting these elusive concepts of leadership and learning in place to deliver better results faster for you and to those you seek to lead and serve.

Eighteen different **small group sessions** will allow you to customize your conference experience. Sessions are posted in the "breakout session" section of the registration materials.

On Thursday afternoon, join your colleagues for the **MASE Annual Meeting**, a chance to get updated on Association activities and hear from **Eric Kloos** from the Minnesota Department of Education. One lucky participant's district will win a \$200 Amazon Gift Card! Must be present to win!

The **Exhibit Fair** offers a chance for participants to visit with businesses offering the latest products and services that can benefit your programs. Many of MASE's Business Partner Members will be exhibiting – stop by and thank them for their partnership! The Thursday afternoon **reception** will be held in the Exhibit Area.

Dinner on Thursday will feature the presentation of the **MASE Legacy Award to Gaynard Brown**. Gaynard will be honored for his "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." This is a wonderful chance to recognize and honor an exemplary leader for an outstanding career!

On Friday morning, we will offer more small group sessions and our closing general session, Positive School Leadership, presented by **Karen Seashore**, Regents Professor and Beck Chair of Ideas in Education; Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development; College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. Karen will explain positive and asset-based understandings of organizations to develop a powerful model of school leadership, grounded in both existing research and the complexities of life in schools and drawing on the strengths of relationships among staff and the broader school community. Karen builds a compelling case for creating a more inclusive, less "mechanistic" approach to leadership and challenges our assumptions about the purposes and goals of leadership in schools.

FALL CONFERENCE

fundraising

Our annual fundraising will begin Wednesday evening with the **Wine Tasting benefiting the Stenswick-Benson Scholarship Fund**. Our theme this year is: **Finale! Those TV Favorites We Loved and Lost**

*Do you remember your favorite show?
You know the one you never missed?
You saw the finale and had to let go.
Of characters, stories, and plots that twist.*

*And so this fall think Game of Thrones
Or if you're REALLY old, think Davy Jones!
Seinfeld, MASH, and Downton Abbey
Following Lost would make you crabby.*

*Everybody liked Alyssa Milano.
Who knows what happened to Tony Soprano?
Friends, Cheers, and Breaking Bad –
You might have watched Star Trek with your Dad.*

*So pick your fave and gather the crew.
The best TV tribute will win; it's true.
And if this theme is making you weary
Dress up like Sheldon in the Big Bang Theory!*

New this year! **The MASE Fall Raffle**

This year we will be adding a raffle to our fall fundraising benefiting this year's charity, the Stenswick-Benson Scholarship Fund. All MASE members have received a book of raffle tickets and a request to either buy them or sell them. The prizes are fantastic (cash prizes, yeti coolers, coach purses, and a grand prize of \$1,000 cash!). The drawing will be after dinner on Thursday evening and you do not have to be present to win. If you haven't bought or sold your tickets yet, now is the time! And of course we will be selling tickets at the conference.



Don't forget to shop the Silent Auction, also benefiting the Stenswick-Benson Scholarship Fund. Bidding is open all day Thursday until 5 pm. A wonderful fall conference tradition, the Silent Auction is great shopping for an even greater cause! Start your holiday shopping now ... an auction item might make a great staff recognition ... isn't it about time you treated yourself?

Please help the auction! Bring your auction items to the registration desk Wednesday or Thursday. Auction items will be on display throughout the day Thursday. Be imaginative and donate items you think your colleagues will value. In past years, popular items have included consulting time, books, gift certificates, tickets, home-cooked meals, gift baskets and more.

We will once again host a wine grab bag sale on Thursday at the reception. All bottles are the same price; choose red, white, or rose indicated by the ribbon on the grab bag. You could get a very fancy bottle of wine, or something a little less posh but nonetheless delicious! We are once again asking for wine donations. Bring your gift to the registration desk on Wednesday or Thursday and you will get some extra raffle luck, because what goes 'round comes 'round.

And last but not least – try your luck at the guessing game. For a small donation, you can guess the number of items in the guessing jar – the prize goes to the best guess! Check out the game and guess your best poolside on Thursday.

Back to School? Excessive Student Absenteeism May Trigger Schools' Obligations Under IDEA and Section 504

By the time many educators are reading this, some students will have already begun amassing absences. Recent data from the United States Department of Education highlights what educators already know; a significant number of students—around sixteen percent—are missing a significant number of school days each year. In responding to excessive student absences, it is important that educators are proactive—"out of sight" cannot mean "out of mind." Among many other reasons to be proactive, students' absences can create legal obligations for a school district under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and Minnesota law.

For non-disabled students, absences may trigger a school's "child find" obligations under the IDEA. Specifically, the IDEA requires that each school district conduct activities to locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities who are located within the geographic bounds of the district. 34 C.F.R. § 300.111; see also Minn. R. 3525.0750. The "child find" process "is triggered where [a school district] has reason to suspect that the child may have a disability and that special education services may be necessary to address that disability." *Sch. Bd. of the City of Norfolk v. Brown*, 769 F. Supp. 2d 928, 942 (E.D. Va. 2010).

A student's attendance problems do not automatically trigger a school district's "child find" obligations. *Round Rock Independent School Dist.*, 25 IDELR 336 (SEA July 8, 1996). Nevertheless, the "child find" obligation may be triggered where there are significant absences, a reason to believe the absences are linked to a disability, and a need for services. For instance, the Ohio Education Department found that a school district violated its "child find" obligations when private evaluation reports clearly linked the student's attendance problems with disabilities. *Hilliard City School District*, 60 IDELR 58 (SEA OH 2012). Likewise, in a recent Minnesota case, the judge held that a school district violated its "child find" obligations because it was aware that the student "stopped attending school because of her anxiety" and did not act on that information. *Ind. Sch. Dist. 283 v. E.M.D.H.*, 357 F.Supp.3d 876 (D. Minn. 2019). Similarly, a school district's Section 504 "child find" obligations were found to be triggered when student accrued

significant absences around the same time the student was treated for bi-polar disorder. *Broward County (FL) Sch. Dist.*, 61 IDELR 265 (OCR 2013).¹

As these cases demonstrate, greater significance has been placed on the "child find" process—including when absences are relevant—in recent years. Now, more than ever, school districts should examine their "child find" processes and understand their obligations, including their obligations in situations where students are chronically absent.

With respect to students who already qualify for special education services, absences can factor into the development and modification of their Individualized Education Program ("IEP"). The IDEA requires IEP teams to review a student's IEP "periodically, but not less frequently than annually," and to revise a student's IEP "as appropriate" to address, among other things: "(I) any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals and in the general education curriculum, where appropriate; (II) the results of any reevaluation conducted under this section; (III) information about the child provided to, or by, the parents ...; (IV) the child's anticipated needs; or (V) other matters." 20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(4); see also 34 C.F.R. § 300.324(b). Further, the IDEA mandates that if a student's "behavior impedes the child's learning," the IEP team must consider "positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies" during the review of that student's IEP. *Id.* Under Minnesota law, the "objective of any behavioral



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Gaynard Brown Receives MASE Legacy Award

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. ●

Save the Date!



MASE
Best Practices
May 13-15, 2020
Madden's Resort, Brainerd

2019-20 *board of directors*

Meet your 2019-20 MASE Board of Directors!

President

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Even Year Election (18-20)
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Area B (Region 7)

Odd Year Election (19-21)
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Area C (Region 4)

Even Year Election (16-20)
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Area D (Region 5 & 6)

Odd Year Election (17-21)
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Area E (Region 3)

Even Year Election (19-20)
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Area F-1 (Region 2)

Odd Year Election (19-21)
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Area F-2 (Region 1)

Even Year Election (16-20)
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Area G (Region 9E)

Odd Year Election (19-21)
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Retiree Representative

Odd Year Election (17-21)
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Other Representatives:

MNCEC Liaison (ex officio)

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CASE Liaison (ex officio)

Even Year Election (18-20)
Cheryl Johnson
Executive Director
Goodhue County Education
District
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Committee chairs are not voting
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These appointments are made on
an annual basis.

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LEGISLATIVE *update*

Fall is upon us and with it a new school year. Here's hoping that the 2019-2020 school year is off to a smooth start in districts throughout the state. For special educators, the joys and challenges of working with students with disabilities will proceed as usual as there was little help from the Legislature last year in reducing the overwhelming amount of paperwork that accompany the process of serving these students.

As I reported in the session wrap-up, there was a fair amount of optimism expressed during the 2019 legislative session regarding the possibility of making some steps toward reducing special education paperwork. Unfortunately, there was very little progress in this area with some minor changes to the conciliation conference process being the only provision that survived the conference committee process.

This does not mean that the effort put forward last session all went for naught. One of the reasons these changes weren't pursued more aggressively is that the negotiations over the education budget took precedence and a number of high-profile policy questions were held over for discussion during the 2020 legislative session when more attention can be directed toward them. MASE has been supportive of the suggested changes—most of which resulted from hard work done by the New Ulm school district—and will continue to put its weight behind substantive and real changes that will reduce the paperwork burden faced by special education staff throughout the state.

Another item that fell by the wayside during the 2019 session was the language in the House bill that would have allowed districts to serve students with IEPs in an unrelated disability area to receive instruction under the ADSIS program. When first drafted, it was believed that there would be no additional financial obligation placed on the state, but fiscal analysis provided by the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Management and Budget indicated that might not be the case. Given these implications, the measure was dropped from consideration in 2019. However, discussions to make this change are on-going and hopefully an agreement that does not have fiscal implications can be reached and enacted in 2020.

The issue of third-party billing for work performed by school social workers in conjunction with the IEP is also being discussed. Currently, school social workers

can be reimbursed through third-party billing for services as part of a student's evaluation relating to eligibility for special education services, but cannot receive reimbursement for services provided once the student is identified. MASE is working with the Minnesota School Social Workers Association to craft legislation that will remedy this situation.



Brad Lundell
MASE Lobbyist

The MASE legislative committee, co-chaired by Jamie Nord, Laura Pingry-Kile, and Jeff Jorgensen, is in the process of developing the 2020 MASE legislative platform and planning for MASE's 2020 Day on the Hill and the committee certainly welcomes input from the entire MASE membership. Feel free to contact them with comments and suggestions you may have. The same goes for me. In my role as MASE's lobbyist, I can also serve as a conduit for your input. I can be reached at 612-220-7459 or lundelllegislative31@gmail.com.

Thanks to all of you for your hard work and dedication to making sure all Minnesota's students receive access to a quality education. I am honored to work with you in these efforts. ●

Save the Date! *2020 MASE Day at the Capitol* *Tuesday, March 5, 2020*

Time: Meeting will begin at 8 am

Location: Best Western Capitol Ridge

Room: Ballroom


The day will begin with refreshments and a legislative meeting starting at 8 am at the Best Western Capitol Ridge and the group will then head to the Capitol to meet with various legislators. The group will then reconvene back at the hotel at around 2:30 pm.

All MASE members are welcome to attend!

More details to come!

RESEARCH TO *practice*

Looking to add to your Reading List? Five Research Must-Reads for Inclusive Education Leaders

 On behalf of the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI), welcome back to the start of another school year! Whether you are just beginning your career as a school administrator or are a seasoned veteran, the start of a new school year is always an exciting time filled with new opportunities and challenges. For those of you who are not familiar with CAREI, we are a research center that serves as the link between research and practice in Minnesota schools PreK-16 and other agencies interested in applied educational research. For over 30 years, CAREI has brought together university researchers and school practitioners to share findings, discuss current issues, and identify solutions. Our vision is to be the premier network hub that builds educators' data-based decision-making capacity through high-quality technical assistance, professional learning, and program evaluation in education. CAREI partners with rural, suburban, and urban districts of all sizes. We work on a variety of projects that address teaching and learning issues from Pre-K through college. We also have an option for districts to join the "CAREI Assembly." CAREI Assembly membership is one of the best ways that a school district can stay connected to the emerging knowledge about educational policy and practice. Please let me know if you would like more information on becoming a CAREI Assembly Member at kgibbons@umn.edu.

Each school year we publish a monthly short electronic newsletter called the CAREI Research Watch. In it, we summarize current research in education that we believe can inform the practice of district, school, and teacher leaders. Last year, 54 school districts were members of the CAREI Assembly and received these newsletters monthly. Our April 2019 special issue focused on Culturally Responsive Leadership in Education. Keep reading for summaries of Five "Must-Reads" from this issue.

Must-Read One: Implementing an Equity Literacy Framework in Schools **Gorski & Swalwell (2015)**

This article helps leaders look inward at their own biases. This article highlights the importance of

implementing a framework centered on equity in order to create environments which purposefully address issues such as racism, homophobia, sexism, and economic inequality in schools. The authors identify four specific abilities which educators and students alike develop through an Equity Literacy framework:

1. Recognize forms of bias, discrimination, and inequity, even when subtle.
2. Respond to bias, discrimination, and inequity in a thoughtful and equitable manner.
3. Redress bias, discrimination, and inequity by responding to both interpersonal bias and also systemic and social change.
4. Cultivate and sustain bias-free and discrimination-free communities including through an understanding that everyone in civil society has a basic responsibility recognize, respond to, and redress inequity.

This general framework is applied to the school settings through five guiding principles for an equity literacy curriculum.

1. Equity literacy is important in every subject area.
2. The most effective equity literacy approach is integrative and interdisciplinary.
3. Students of all ages are primed for equity literacy.
4. Students from all backgrounds need equity literacy.
5. Teaching for equity literacy is a political act - but not more so than not teaching for equity literacy.

Read more about each of these principles and the authors' experiences in school-based focus groups which highlight the need for an equity literacy



Kim Gibbons, Ph.D.
Director
Center for Applied Research
and Educational Improvement
(CAREI)

Research to Practice continued on page 14.

framework in the full article.

Must-Read Two: Culturally Responsive Leadership - An Introduction
Khalifa (2018)

Enjoy a good biography? Learn about Joe, a legendary culturally responsive school leader. This freely available introduction to Dr. Muhammad Khalifa's book *Culturally Responsive School Leadership* summarizes his ethnographic research in Davistown, a community near Detroit, Michigan. Conclusions of his research are explored in more detail in his book, and are highlighted here.

1. Culturally self-reflective leaders can engage in reflection on their personal and organizational roles in a way that provides space for students and families to view their leaders as fair and reduce suspicion between some minoritized students and the school.
2. School climate can be changed in ways that foster a sense of belonging for minoritized students.
3. In conjunction with this change in climate and feelings of belonging, student identities associated with minoritized communities can be explicitly accepted and honored.
4. School leaders can promote culturally responsive curriculum and instruction in ways that promote connections between curriculum and students' lives and facilitate engagement with curricular content.

This introduction also summarizes key contextual and historical factors of oppression and their impact on school and community underdevelopment. The role of school leaders in calling attention to the enactment of oppression in an ever-changing way and on a variety of characteristics including racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and national lines is explored. Dr. Khalifa challenges our views on how families can engage with the school and to resist the harmful school-centric leadership role adopted by most principals. He proposes a model of school leadership which centers on community leadership and the culturally responsive behaviors that school leaders can use to resist oppression in school environments, engage the communities they serve, and improve the lives and educational experiences of minoritized children. Access the introduction chapter here or purchase the book from Harvard Education Press and other book sellers.

Must-Read Three: Implementation of Best Practices for Transition Planning with Students Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth with Disabilities and their Families
Gothberg, Greene, & Kohler (2018)

In general, post-school outcomes are poor for students with disabilities. However, for students with disabilities who come from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, the outcomes are even more discouraging. This study reviewed research identifying 11 research-based practices for promoting the active involvement of youth and their families from CLD backgrounds during the transition planning process. These practices are broadly categorized as:

1. Use culturally responsive communication with families.
2. Demonstrate cultural reciprocity with families when planning transition services.
3. Utilize person-family centered approaches.
4. Provide cultural competence training to school personnel.
5. Provide transition training to parents on topics including special education law, parent rights and responsibilities, and available special education services.

In a survey administered to school staff from interdisciplinary transition teams from 90 school districts over five years, the results indicated that none of these five best practices were consistently implemented. In most school districts, staff focused on Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) compliance with little to no consideration of the specific needs of students and families who were CLD. Additionally, no training was provided to staff or families regarding the specific needs of this student population. The authors identified this as an area for state Departments of Education and local school districts to improve the training and support provided to teams focused on transition planning to address this research-to-practice gap.

Must-Read Four: Low-Cost Strategy for Addressing Discipline Disparities for Black Male Students
Cook, Duong, McIntosh, Fiat, Larson, Pullmann, & McGinnis, (2018)

The school to prison pipeline is criminal - but these researchers are on the case! Exclusionary discipline continues to be a common practice in schools and

Research to Practice from page 14.

disparities exist with students of color, especially Black males, receiving exclusionary discipline at the highest rates. This study examined the efficacy of a low-cost strategy for addressing malleable root causes of discipline disparities for Black male students. The GREET-STOP-PROMPT (GSP) approach used (a) proactive classroom management strategies, (b) a self-regulation technique for teachers to mitigate the impact of biases when responding to problem behavior, and (c) reactive strategies to increase empathic, consistent, and appropriate responses.

1. GREET: Teachers were provided specific evidence-based classroom management techniques to increase their knowledge, skills, and confidence. These included Greeting students positively at the door; Reinforcing positive behavior with frequent, specific, contingent feedback; Establishing and cueing behavioral expectations; Engaging students by increasing opportunities to respond; and Taking time to provide wise feedback by voicing high expectations and belief in students.
2. STOP: Teachers were trained to self-regulate their behavior through a process of Stopping any immediate reaction, Taking a breath to regulate, Observing the knee-jerk reaction, and Proceeding positively by identifying a course of action and doing what is most effective.
3. PROMPT: Teachers practiced progressive methods for responding to perceived or actual problem behavior by providing Proximity to correct behavior; Redirecting students to get back on track; Ongoing Monitoring and reinforcement of peers for social learning; Private prompting; and Teaching through a structured empathy statement, labeling inappropriate and appropriate behavior, outlining choices, warning of consequences, giving think time, and checking back in with the student.

This study tested this strategy with three schools that were under Federal and State oversight due to racial disproportionality with exclusionary discipline. In all three schools, Black male students were more than 2.5 times more likely than other students to be referred to the office for behavior problems. Teachers were trained on the intervention during two 3-hour sessions. Teachers also received ongoing coaching and attended problem-solving meetings.

Decreasing trend and level changes were observed in the three schools with the implementation of the

GSP intervention, indicating that the intervention was effective in decreasing the discrepancy in office discipline referrals (ODRs) per week between Black male students and all other students. In all three schools, Black male students continued to be more likely to receive ODRs than other groups. However, the overall number of ODRs at all schools decreased with the implementation of GSP and the likelihood of Black male students receiving ODRs was reduced by two-thirds. Additionally, teachers reported that GSP was feasible and acceptable, indicating that this could be a sustainable practice for schools to implement.

Must-Read Five: The Principal's Guide to Building Culturally Responsive Schools The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)

This guide for school leaders is organized by action, with each including a rationale, specific recommendations, and an extensive list of resources and tools. The following actions are identified:

1. Engage in Culturally Responsive Leadership: Building leaders must be willing to engage in critical self-reflection and understand their own multiple identities.
2. Diversify Student and Adult Capacity: Building leaders facilitate student and adult leadership and ownership of school change. Leaders are committed to identifying and interrupting policies and practices which perpetuate unequal outcomes.
3. Utilizing Assets To Ensure Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning: Teachers and staff may need coaching on implementing effective culturally responsive teaching. Leading that effort is the role of the principal. Culturally responsive instruction does not mean that students of different races should be taught in different ways. Rather, it is a focus on incorporating aspects of students' lives into the curriculum to make it more relatable across cultures.
4. Providing Diverse Opportunities for All Students: Building leaders can facilitate an inclusive environment which creates a safe space and appreciation for diversity.

Download the full guide from the NAESP website: <https://www.naesp.org/principal-s-guide-building-culturally-responsive-schools>. ●

Additional Resources

Research to Practice continued on page 16.

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Disparities in Rates of Chronic Absenteeism

The Hamilton Project created this interactive [data map](#) showing rates of chronic absenteeism by state and school district. You can also select "Student Characteristics" to see how students are disproportionately affected by chronic absenteeism based on characteristics of ethnicity and special education status.

Disparities in OSS Rates

This [interactive data map](#) from the Department of Education demonstrates out of school suspension (OSS) rates by state and district. The interactive map allows filtering for Black male and Black female students. Additional maps for Hispanic, Native American, and students with disabilities are available [here](#).

Income Mobility and Geographic Disparities

The US Census Bureau and researchers from Harvard University and Brown University have released data looking at adult outcomes of earnings distributions and incarceration rates based on the neighborhood in which children are born. Read the [executive summary](#) of their research and explore the [data map](#).

School Climate for LGBTQ Students

GLSEN (pronounced "glisten") is a research and advocacy organization focused on supporting LGBTQ students. In January, GLSEN released [state snapshots of school climate](#) based on the 2017 National School Climate Survey. See Minnesota's snapshot [here](#).

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Khalifa, M. (2018). *Culturally Responsive School Leadership*. Race and Education Series. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

National Association of Elementary Principals. *The Principal's Guide to Building Culturally Responsive Schools*. Alexandria, VA: Author. <https://www.naesp.org/principal-s-guide-building-culturally-responsive-schools>

Legal Notes from page 8.

intervention must be that pupils acquire appropriate behaviors and skills" and "be designed to enable a pupil to benefit from an appropriate, individualized educational program as well as develop skills to enable them to function as independently as possible in their communities." Minn. Admin. R. 3525.0850.

As with "child find" obligations, a student's absences may trigger a school district's obligation to review and revise his or her IEP. Recently, the Minnesota Department of Education ("MDE") found that a school did not satisfy that obligation. In that situation, a student had poor attendance caused by school avoidance behaviors, which impeded the student's learning. Nonetheless, the IEP team did not meet for a year and, once it did meet, the IEP team did not consider conducting a Functional Behavior Assessment ("FBA") or developing any positive behavioral interventions or supports to address the student's attendance. The MDE concluded that the school district's failure to hold an IEP meeting to review and revise the student's IEP to address the student's anticipated needs relating to school avoidance behaviors violated the IDEA. Further, the MDE also concluded that, after the IEP team did eventually meet, the team's failure to consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports to address the student's school avoidance behaviors violated the IDEA and Minnesota law.

As the recent MDE Complaint Decision makes clear, educators must proactively respond when students who have been identified with a disability begin accruing a significant number of absences. Not only will responding proactively to students' absences benefit the school district in this context by lowering the chances of costly administrative proceedings, it will also help students get back in school and resume learning.

A school's obligation to address students' absences in the context of the "child find" and the IEP review and revision processes will vary from student to student. Schools are advised to contact their legal counsel with any questions regarding these obligations or compliance with the IDEA. ●

1. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act has a similar "child find" requirement. When in doubt as to whether a student will qualify for IDEA services or accommodations under Section 504, it is advisable to refer a student for a special education evaluation. Compliance with IDEA is usually compliance with Section 504. The inverse is not true, however. Compliance with Section 504 is not compliance with IDEA.

MASE CALENDAR

2019

September 20

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)
MDE in Conference Center A, Room 13

October 23

MASE Board of Directors Meeting
MASE New Leaders Cohort - Session 2
Cragun's Conference Center, Brainerd

October 23-25

MASE Fall Leadership Conference
Cragun's Conference Center, Brainerd

October 26-27

CASE Board of Directors Meeting
Louisville, KY Galt House

October 27-29

Joint CASE/NASDSE
Louisville, KY Galt House

November 12

MASE New Leaders Cohort - Session 3
MASE Offices, St. Paul

November 22

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)
MDE in Conference Center A, Room 13

December 5

MASE Board of Directors Meeting
MASE Offices, St. Paul

December 6

Special Education Directors' Forum
MDE in Conference Center B, Room 15-16

December 10

MASE New Leaders Cohort - Session 4
MASE Offices, St. Paul

2020

January 10

MASE New Leaders Cohort - Session 5
MASE Offices, St. Paul

January 24

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)
MDE Conference Center A, Room 13

February 5-8

CEC Convention and Expo
Portland, Oregon

March 5

2020 MASE Day at the Capitol
Best Western Capitol Ridge

March 6

Special Education Directors' Forum
MDE Conference Center B, Room 15-16

March 11

MASE Board of Directors Meeting
MASE New Leaders Cohort - Session 6
Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

March 12-13

MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

April 17

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)
MDE Conference Center A, Room 13

May 8

Special Education Directors' Forum
MDE Conference Center B, Room 15-16

May 13

MASE New Leaders Cohort - Session 7
Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd

May 13-15

MASE Best Practices Conference
Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd

June - Dates TBD

MASE & MASA Board of Directors Retreats
Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd

July 1

Membership Renewal