



Minnesota Administrators  
for Special Education

# IMPACT

PO Box 9400 | North St Paul, MN | (651) 645-6272 | members@mnasa.org

Fall 2022

## Wow, What a Year!

### *MASE Strategic Action Plan Report*

**A**t the March MASE Board of Directors meeting, I found myself in awe of the great team of leaders around the table and the outstanding work happening across our organization. As the 2022-23 school year kicks off, we wanted to provide you with an brief update regarding our progress toward the MASE Strategic Action Plan 2021-24. Before we dive in, it is important we thank so many of you for embracing your role in living out the MASE Strategic Plan. Without your active involvement in the organization, we would not have been able to make the progress we did toward our annual goals last school year!

### **Progress**

The MASE Board of Directors had an opportunity to meet in June to reflect on our annual goals. Below is a summary of the progress we made toward each of our vision statements. Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

#### **Membership**

*Strengthen our membership base through targeted campaigns and member engagement strategies*

- We ended the year with 512 active members (goal was 460) plus 32 retiree members.
- A digital resource was created and shared out with colleges and universities, as well as neighboring states, to promote our student

and out-of-state membership options.

- A invitation to join MASE Committees was sent out by the membership committee to highlight the benefits of being a committee member.



**Jamie Nord**  
Executive Director  
St. Croix River Education  
District  
2021-23 MASE President

#### **Professional**

### **Development**

*Provide high-quality professional learning driven by the needs of our members*

- A **new!** Aspiring New Leaders opportunity has been designed for educators for the 22-23 school year.

*Wow, What a Year! continued on page 11.*

### **Inside this issue**

2022-23 Business Partners .....	2
Executive Notes.....	3
Fall Conference Preview .....	6
Fall Conference Fundraising.....	7
2022-23 MASE Slice Dates .....	9
Mia Urick's Retirement .....	9
Aspiring Leaders Dates .....	10
New Leaders Cohort .....	12
Legislative Update.....	13
Retiree Perspective .....	15
Legal Notes .....	16
MASE Calendar .....	18

## Special thanks to our 2022-23 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.

### **Platinum Business Partner Membership**

Creatively Focused

DotCom Therapy

Grand Canyon University

Kennedy & Graven, Chartered

Move This World

SpEd Forms

Strategic Staffing Solutions

Transition Assessments and Curriculum - WorkLifeReady.com

### **Gold Business Partner Membership**

Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, P.A.

Rupp, Anderson, Squires, Waldspurger & Mace P.A.

### **Silver Business Partner Membership**

CAREI

Goalbook

Infinitec UCP-Seguin

Invision Services, Inc.

Pemberton Law, PLLP

Speech Partners, LLC

University of St. Thomas Department of Special Education

## What's Happening at MASE When You Aren't Looking?

*"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."*

- Henry Ford

Happy October to you all! We are entering my very favorite time of year – Fall! It is a time of such beautiful seasonal change! I know that it is also an incredibly busy time for everyone in education! I am aware that many of you are starting the year understaffed and under stress, but I also KNOW you are prepared to meet the needs of students in the best possible way. I am sending you all well wishes for a wonderful start to the 2022-23 school year!

As you know, I came into the role of MASE Executive Director on July 1st. I thought I would take this newsletter opportunity to update members about “work” that has gone on since that first day. The above quote really sums up how I have approached entering this position.

I know that, as a MASE member, I volunteered for many committees over the years and served in different capacities, however, I didn't always give a lot of thought about what was going on behind the scenes on behalf of members. What I am sharing in this article is a snippet of what I have been doing during these first six weeks of my job. My hope is that it gives you a better understanding of the role MASE plays across educational entities. My personal goal is to engage in what I truly value - TEAMWORK! “None of us is as smart as all of us.”

So...here is a brief summary of my first 8 weeks on the job:

- The first week of July found me on an airplane to Washington D.C., to attend the CEC 2022 Leadership Institute and the CASE Special Education Legislative Summit. I had the

pleasure of traveling with Jamie Nord, your MASE President, and Cherie Johnson, your CASE Liaison serving on the MASE Board. We spent the week with teams from all over the country learning about organizational structure



Erin Toninato  
Executive Director  
MASE

from CEC and preparing, with the guidance of CASE, to meet with Legislators to discuss Special Education Teacher Shortage, Mental Health, Appropriations (cross-subsidy), and fully funding of I.D.E.A. The meetings were well planned, and we hope, impactful for the decision-makers at the federal level. The CASE platform is in alignment with our MN MASE platform. The discussions at both the federal and state level are so important – connecting our message to actual stories was a wonderful way to relay our message. Getting involved with the process is not as scary as it sounds (and yup...I was nervous) – it is very much a team effort! My hope is that we all use our “voices” for special education at these levels as there is strength in numbers!

- I have had the opportunity to have Zoom meetings with leaders from Ed. Minnesota, Minnesota Rural Education Association (MREA), MN Secondary Principals Association (MSPA), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Board of School Administrators (BOSA), and the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA).

## MASE IMPACT

Fall 2022

IMPACT is a publication of the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education,  
© copyright, MASE. No endorsement of products or services is intended.

Send materials to be considered for publication to:

**Dave Christians**

Associate for Leadership Support and Communications  
PO Box 9400 • North St Paul • MN 55109  
(651) 789-4061 • dave.christians@mnasa.org

### 2022-23 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

**Jamie Nord**

Executive Director, St. Croix River Education District

President-Elect

**Melissa Hanson**

Executive Director, Meeker & Wright Special Education Cooperative

Past President

**Sarah Mittelstadt**

Executive Director, Southern Plains Education Cooperative

Secretary (22-24)

**Michelle Cuka**

Director of Student Support Services, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools

Treasurer (19-23)

**Scott Masten**

Director of Special Education, Lake Agassiz Education Cooperative

Area A (21-24)

**Eva Pohl**

Director of Special Education, PAWN Special Education

Area B (22-23)

**Jaqueline Skelly**

Executive Director of Special Education, Itasca Area Schools Collaborative

Area C (20-24)

**Michelle Bethke-Kaliher**

Director of Student Support Services, Alexandria Public Schools

Area D (20-23)

**Amy Ernst**

Director of Special Education, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools

Area E (21-24)

**Erin Hoffman**

Director of Special Education, SWWC Service Cooperative

Area F-1 (22-23)

**Heather Harms**

Director of Special Education, Waseca Public Schools

Area F-2 (22-24)

**Dan Armagost**

Executive Director, Southern MN Education Consortium

Area G (21-23)

**Sara Lein**

Director of Special Services, W. St. Paul-Mendota Hgts.-Eagan Area Schools

Area H (22-24)

**Stacey Dahlby**

Dir. of Special Ed. for Secondary Schools, Anoka Hennepin School District

MASA Component Group Representatives:

**Melissa Schaller (21-23)**

Executive Director of Student Services, Intermediate School District 917

**Tanya Tacker (22-25)**

Executive Director of Special Education, Rum River Special Education Coop.

Retiree Representative (21-23)

**Jill Skarvold**

National CASE Liaison (18-23)

**Cheryl Johnson**

Executive Director, Goodhue County Education District

MNCEC Liaison (21-23)

**Christian Wernau**

Region X - Low Incidence Facilitator, Zumbro Education District

Executive Director

**Erin Toninato**

# Kennedy & Graven

CHARTERED

*A passion for public law*

## SCHOOL LAW GROUP

Comprehensive, practical, and dedicated legal services for public schools

- Labor & Employment Law
- Special Education
- Finance & Bond
- Construction
- Litigation
- Real Estate

**612-337-9300**  
[www.kennedy-graven.com](http://www.kennedy-graven.com)  
Offices: Minneapolis, St. Paul, & St. Cloud





### 2022 CASE Annual Fall Conference

November 10-12, 2022

Salt Lake City, UT

[www.casecec.org](http://www.casecec.org)

## Save the Date!



MASE

Best Practices

May 10-12, 2023

Madden's Resort, Brainerd

Each meeting was an opportunity to discuss ways in which collaboration has taken place and ways that we can continue to work together and build strong relationships. What I am learning is that we all want the same thing – to provide a great education for ALL students in the state of MN! We can do that through collaboration and staying connected to each other.

- Commissioner Heather Mueller invited Executive Directors and other stakeholders within education organizations/agencies together to discuss teacher shortages. The first time we gathered in person and then broke into small groups for further discussion. We have gathered a second time virtually. I am honored to be sitting around the table as a voice for special education representing MASE. I believe that the goal is truly to find solutions and not just discuss the concerns.
- Additionally, your MASE Committees are in planning mode. The volunteers who are chairing/co-chairing the MASE committees are busy putting together meeting dates and agenda items for the upcoming year. Thank you to all members who volunteer their time to be active in important committee work – it would not get done without you all!
- I have reached out to Business Partners to thank them for their support and continue to encourage others to join us.
- Of course, if you have attended SLICE and/or the Forum, you know that I have been the quick “greeter” for MASE during those events as I have had the opportunity to participate in both.
- Some MASE Board members and I attend monthly virtual meetings with CASE to stay updated on what is happening nationally in special education. In addition, Jamie Nord, your MASE President and I have set up a

scheduled monthly meeting to stay connected and ensure we are continuing to work toward the mission of the organization.

- Finally, your MASE Executive Board meets monthly to provide current information and stay updated on what is happening within the structure of the organization. You have a very dedicated group of people who are putting in a lot of work “when you aren’t looking”!

These are just a few of the highlights of the work that I have had the pleasure of being involved in during this initial period. It has been busy and exciting!

Primarily, through this article, I want you all to know and be assured that every single day, there is work being done on behalf of MASE members and special education! Your membership matters and with the help of many people, I will do the best I can to be present and advocate on your behalf! What I have experienced, and what I know to be true...MASE is a wonderful organization!

Finally, just a reminder that I would love to pop into a regional meeting either virtually, or in person. Thanks to those who have already locked in a date! I look forward to learning more about each region but more importantly, having the opportunity to get to know you all better!

I also encourage you to frequently check out the MASE website ([mnase.org](http://mnase.org)) for updates, news, events, resources, information about our business partners, etc. A special shout out to the MASA/ MASE staff who help keep it all organized and provide so much support! Thank you for all you do and the help you have provided during this transition!

Have a wonderful start to the year and I hope I see you at the MASE Fall Conference on October 26th - 28th at Madden’s! ●

# FALL CONFERENCE

*preview*



## 2022 MASE Fall Leadership Conference

Wednesday-Friday

October 26-28, 2022

Madden's on Gull Lake

Registration information available at [www.mnase.org](http://www.mnase.org)

### Conference Highlights

On Wednesday evening, join us for a delicious Madden's dinner. After dinner, we will enjoy dessert and our **welcome event**.

Our annual fundraising will begin Wednesday evening with the **Wine Tasting** benefiting the Minnesota Special Education Leaders Foundation (MNSELF). Our theme is ***Let's All Go to the Movies!***

Join us for **Thursday's morning keynote speaker**, Joe Beckman, whose mission has been to reclaim human connection in school communities throughout the world.

Twenty-four **small group sessions** will allow you to customize your conference experience.

The **Exhibit Fair** offers a chance for participants to visit with businesses offering the latest products and services that can benefit your programs.

The Thursday afternoon **reception** will be held in the Exhibit Area, and that will be a great time to purchase a few more raffle tickets!

We will once again host a **wine grab bag sale** on Thursday at the reception! 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.

This year **our raffle will once again benefit MNSELF**. 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.

And last but not least – try your luck at the **"pick a number" game**. For a small donation, you can choose your lucky number (or numbers!). We will draw the winning number after dinner on Thursday and whoever holds that number wins a great prize!

Thursday's dinner will feature the presentation of the **MASE Legacy Award to Renae Ouillette**. Renae will be honored for her "commitment to the field of special education through training, mentoring, personal support, modeling, and demonstrating an impact at the local, regional, and state levels."

Our **Friday keynote speaker**, Tasha Schuh, is an inspirational speaker who equips youth and educators to be resilient for their mental and emotional health. The four components of her speech, PATH (Purpose, Attitude, Team, and Hope), helped Tasha be resilient after a life-changing theater accident at age 16, which left her paralyzed from the chest down.

By the way, you will want to stay for this — not only because Tasha Schuh is not to be missed, but there will be a **door prize drawing** — a \$200 Amazon gift card will go to a lucky participant's district. Must be present to win! 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*

This fall, we invite everyone to participate in some fun events that will raise funds to support MNSELF.

MNSELF is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3): a charitable nonprofit organization created to raise funds to sponsor leadership training for current and aspiring directors of special education. Leadership in special education requires extensive and ongoing knowledge to address the ever-changing challenges presented by students with unique learning, health, and social needs.

A special thank you to the MASE Fundraising Subcommittee — **Chad Williams, Dena Hagen** and **Ryan Rehnstrand**.

### **The MASE Fall Raffle**

Raffle tickets have been mailed to all MASE members, active and retired. Once again we are asking members to either sell or buy their tickets. Tickets are again \$10 each; a book of 6 is \$50. Prizes include cash, a Treager smoker, yeti coolers, and Coach purses. The drawing will be on Thursday evening at the Fall Leadership Conference. Members will be directed to return their funds and ticket stubs to the MASE mailing address (PO Box 9400, North Saint Paul, MN 55109) post marked by October 19, to their Area Representative, or by bringing them to the conference.

If you get funds and ticket stubs from your Area's members, please don't forget to bring them to the conference.

### **2022 MASE Wine Tasting Fundraiser**

Wednesday, October 26 • 8 – 10 pm • Town Hall at Madden's

Our annual fundraising will begin Wednesday evening with the Wine Tasting benefiting the Minnesota Special Education Leaders Foundation (MNSELF). Our theme is Let's All Go to the Movies! Our MASE Areas will once again sponsor tables to show off their movie themed tables. Everyone votes for their favorite table, and the beautiful (oo-ahhhh) MASE traveling trophy is at stake!

### **Guess Your Best!**

Thursday, October 27 - guessing is open all day, 8 am - 5 pm - Town Hall Lobby

This year we will again have a fun game of chance. For a \$10 donation, members can choose their lucky number on a chart of 100 numbers. On Thursday evening, we will draw the winning number and the person holding that number will win a great prize. You can increase your chances and buy more than one number, just sayin'.

#### **Area assignments for table libations:**

Area A ... Red Wine	Area F-1 ... Other Wine
Area B ... Liqueur & Coffee Drinks	Area F-2 ... White Wine
Area C ... Cocktails	Area G ... Beer
Area D ... Non-alcoholic Fancy Drinks	Area H ... Beer
Area E ... Minnesota Grown	

# FALL CONFERENCE

## fundraising

### Grab Bag Wine Sales

Thursday, October 27 - at the reception before dinner, 5 – 6 pm

Every bottle of wine is the same price ... but bottles will be hidden in wine bags tied with red, white, or pink ribbons. The ribbons are your only hints! You might get “Three Buck Chuck,” or you might get Chateau Lafitte Rothschild Bordeaux (well, probably not, but something really great anyway!).

Donate wine for the grab bags!

Please bring your donation to the registration desk in Town Hall. We are hoping to receive 100 bottles of wine.

### MASEwear Boutique

Wednesday - Thursday, October 26-27 - Lower Level, Town Hall Lobby

Back by popular demand! The cute t-shirts and wonderful wind shirts will be back for sale this year. Do your holiday shopping early -- or buy something for yourself!

*Thanks for supporting MNSELF!*



### 2022-23 MASE Committees

The 2022-23 MASE Committees have been published online.

You can find the full list online at:

[www.mnase.org/committees](http://www.mnase.org/committees)

If you missed the sign-up deadline and still would like to serve on a committee please contact Lori Zimmerman ([lori.zimmerman@mnasa.org](mailto:lori.zimmerman@mnasa.org)).



# PROFESSIONAL *development*

## Join us for the Slice of Collaboration!

The 2022-23 sessions for SLICE of Collaboration has already kicked off! [You can find the dates and registration online here!](#)



We also have a rough draft of vthe topics for the first portion of the year, but note that those topics can change if there is an issue finding presenters or a new issue arises.

We are looking for presenters on IEP Rubrics and Evaluation Templates. If you are interested, contact [Laura Pingry-Kile](#).

If you have any other topics, something you would present on, etc, please contact Erin Toninato [etoninatomase@gmail.com](mailto:etoninatomase@gmail.com).

Looking forward to seeing you soon at Slice!

Your Slice Committee: Angie Kahle, Cheri Johnson, Deanna Gronseth, Erin Hoffman, Kori Ryan, Michelle Bethke-Kaliher, Laura Pingry-Kile, Saido Abdirashid, and Melissa Schaller, and Sarah Mittelstadt



## Mia Urick Retirement

MASE would like to take this opportunity to thank Mia Urick for her dedication to our organization over many years. As the Director of Professional Learning, Mia has had a profound impact on us all through her support of our work and her commitment to our learning and professional growth! MASE wishes you the best as you enter into retirement, Mia. May it be a time FULL of all things you love! Please take a moment to share your remarks with Mia here: [https://padlet.com/masa\\_mase/mia\\_urick\\_retirement](https://padlet.com/masa_mase/mia_urick_retirement).



## MASE Aspiring Leaders

We need you to please help spread the word! If you or someone you know is looking to become a leader in special education, this is an incredible, free opportunity to network with other leaders and learn from folks who are in the trenches! As a Director, you may know of educators who are considering that next step! This is a great step for them to get information about the variety of different leadership positions in special education, as well as network with other professionals.

There are 3 virtual panel sessions available to you throughout the school year! You can attend 1, 2, or all 3 sessions! There will be different panel members each time!

You can share the [informational flyer](#) with embedded registration links and a promotional video!



### **Session Dates**

**October 20, 2022**

12 noon - 1:30 pm | [Register for this virtual session!](#)

**January 18, 2023**

6:30 - 8 pm | [Register for this virtual session!](#)

**June 15, 2023**

12 noon - 1:30 pm | [Register for this virtual session!](#)

***Click below to watch the promotional video!***



- Several PD sessions focused on equity were offered during conferences and Slice.
- Initial exploration of using the MASE website as a PD resource hub has begun.

 **Legislative**

*Develop the capacity of our membership to advance our legislative priorities through support of intentional advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels*

- Resources were developed and posted on the MASE Week at the Capitol website to help members feel supported and confident in legislative advocacy efforts; we had a strong turnout at the virtual MASE Week at the Capitol event.
- Legislative calls were held during the sessions to keep members informed and engaged in key legislation conversations.
- CASE information was shared with members and CASE leadership joined the MASE Fall Conference; MASE representation at the annual CASE conference was up.

 **Nominating**

*Promote continued excellence in our field through recognition and opportunities for leadership roles within our organization*

- Baseline data were gathered regarding the number of nominations for annual awards by area with the goal of increasing representation across the state.
- A recommendation for terms limits for MASE positions was developed, presented, and approved by the Board.

 **Strategic Planning**

*Engage in continuous improvement cycles to ensure we are making progress toward our*

*mission as an organization*

- A new structure for MASE Area and Committee reports was implemented at Board meetings to keep the focus on our strategic plan.
- A Slice presentation around equity was facilitated followed by an Equity Task Force sign-up; the Equity Task Force will kick off its work during the 22-23 school year.

 **Business Partnership**

*Enhance our recruitment and retention of business partners who financially support our mission*

- A Slice presentation provided members with information about our Business Partnership program and how they can help support its growth and sustainability.
- Thank you cards were sent to all existing business partners to promote retention.
- An additional exhibitor booth opportunity was provided to business partners at our Best Practices conference in the spring.

 **Area-Specific**

*Establish and implement MASE Area-specific goals aligned to one or more of the Vision Statements*

- Area representatives shared out progress made toward their area-specific goals with the Board.

In addition to the vision statements above, the ad-hoc Communications committee (activated by the Board in December of 2021) has started work in the following areas to enhance our communication with members: establishing a social media presence, engaging in a website redesign, and streamlining our existing

## 2022-23 MASE New Leaders Cohort

There is still time to join the 2022-23 cohort! If you are aware of any new special education directors or leaders, please encourage them to register for the training!

MASE New Leaders' Training is a series of professional development sessions that provide opportunities for:

- newly employed Minnesota special education directors to explore the knowledge and skills needed for a successful first year
- mid-level leaders to enhance leadership skills either in preparation for advancement in leadership or for general skill development
- "newer" leaders who wish to refresh their training.

### Cohort Fee

MASE Members \$500 | Non-MASE Members \$700

### Registration Info

Full details and registration information online at: <https://events.resultsathand.com/newleaders/1730>.

### 2022-23 Program Dates

#### October 26, 2022

Prior to the MASE Fall Leadership Conference  
Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd  
Entire Group: 9 am – 3:00 pm  
Directors of Record: 3:15 – 4:30 pm

#### Directors' Session - Virtual

#### November 16, 2022

Directors of Record Only  
Online, 2:30-4 pm

#### January 18, 2023

Minneapolis Marriott NW | Brooklyn Park  
Entire Group: 9 am – 2:30 pm  
Directors of Record: 2:30 pm – 4 pm

#### Directors' Session - Virtual

#### February 15, 2023

Directors of Record Only  
Online, 2:30-4 pm

#### March 8, 2023

Prior to the MASA/MASE Spring Conference  
Minneapolis Marriott NW | Brooklyn Park  
Entire Group: 9 am – 2:30 pm  
Directors of Record: 2:30 pm – 4 pm

#### Directors' Session - Virtual

#### April 19, 2023

Directors of Record Only  
Online, 2:30-4 pm

#### May 10, 2023

Prior to the MASE Best Practices Conference  
Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd  
Entire Group: 9 am – 2:30 pm  
Directors of Record: 2:30 pm – 4 pm

The school year is upon us and the election season is right on its heels! If you watch any television at all, you are well aware that we are already seeing political ads, and they are just the appetizer to what will be a set of hotly-contested elections from the Governor's race on down.

All of the state's constitutional offices—Governor/Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, and State Auditor—are on the ballot this year, as is the entire Legislature. Legislative candidates will be running in newly-drawn districts based on the 2020 census. All this makes for what should be an exciting (if you find politics even marginally exciting) election season.

There's no question that every one of you is extremely busy as this school year kicks off. While in-person learning primarily commenced last spring, there's much to do in assessing where students are academically, socially, and emotionally as the pandemic recedes in the state's rearview mirror. Add to that the staffing shortages being faced this fall, and there's little doubt that this is one of the most challenging beginnings to a school year in a long time.

Although it is extremely busy, I hope you will have the opportunity to meet with legislative candidates as the election approaches. School districts often have candidate forums, and I urge each of you to insert yourself into these discussions if possible. If there is one issue that legislators have a difficult time getting their heads around, it's special education funding and policy. Many have very simplistic views of how the system works and have little idea of how the state special education formula is falling short of meeting the obligations of districts throughout the state.

Addressing the special education cross-subsidy was the top priority of the education community during the 2022 legislative session, and with the failure of the Governor and Legislature to come to a budget agreement that would have at least partially met the ongoing revenue shortfall, it will likely be at or near the top of school district funding priorities when the Legislature convenes in January 2023.



Brad Lundell  
MASE Lobbyist

We discussed other issues related to special education last session that will likely emerge again. For example, issues like additional preparation time for special education teachers, an extension in eligibility for transition services, and additional funding for scientifically-based reading instruction and multi-tiered systems of support may well find their way into legislative discussions in the year ahead.

Taking the time to discuss these issues and help boil them down to where candidates can firmly grasp them can yield positive results in the future. Candidates usually enjoy meeting with school staff to gain a clearer understanding of issues they may face if they are elected. Making these connections can also establish you as a trusted expert they can lean on for reliable and straightforward information once they are in the Legislature.

So be on the lookout for opportunities to connect with legislative candidates. As always, I am more than willing to help you in this effort.

*Legislative continued on page 14.*

*Wow, What a Year! from page 11.*

communication methods.

### **Next Steps**

We look forward to living out the MASE Strategic Plan with you again this year and would like to thank you in advance for your engagement in the committee and MASE area goal setting conversations this fall. This intentional step is a key part of our continuous improvement cycle as an organization. Your voice matters as we establish our goals for the 2022-23 school year! These goals will be finalized at our Board meeting in October and shared out with our broader membership during our virtual Annual Meeting on November 29, 2022 from 12-1pm. Please mark your calendars and join us to hear more about where we are headed as an organization this year! ●

*Legislative from page 13.*

I often recall former MASE President Daryl Miller's goal of making legislators ask whenever a special education issue is being discussed "What does MASE think about this?" Making connections now can help achieve this goal and make certain that issues related to special education have input from the education professionals that provide these vital services.

Contact me with any questions or comments at 612-220-7459 or [lundelllegislative31@gmail.com](mailto:lundelllegislative31@gmail.com). Thanks! ●

## 2022 MASE Annual Meeting

MASE's Annual Business Meeting will be held virtually on Tuesday, November 29 at noon.

You are invited to gather with your colleagues for an update on your association, including the work of committees, the financial health of the association, MASE initiatives, and a report on the CASE conference.

A lot of info packed into one short hour — you won't want to miss it!

[Please register in advance for the meeting here.](#)



# RETIREE

## *perspective*

It's a new school year, and whether you've been retired for many years or two months, every fall brings back that excitement, and let's not forget those (hopefully just a little) feelings of stress. Some of you just made that leadership transition to retirement, and others are anticipating it.

Since directors are notoriously well-organized and planful, we all know it's much better to be well-prepared before passing the torch. But what does that mean, and how best to handle that for the good of the organization? I struggled with "how do I do it (step down)" while working hard to keep disruptions from interfering with our work. Here are a few things I experienced.

**Different people; different emotions.** As we all know, people on your team will deal with your transition differently. Since you all are good (excellent!) leaders, you know that you have to coach others through changes in order to keep the movement on the important work that you're doing. Not only does the leader who is retiring need to deal with their own emotions, but also with the varied emotions of the team. But we've got that, right? Special education administrators are used to dealing with a wide range of emotions from every direction, every day! As I was getting ready to retire, it was vital for me to put others' emotions in the forefront.

**Strengthen or let go.** It's also important to figure out how to help the transition go smoothly. I'm not talking about leaving files or notes, I'm talking about how to help ideas keep moving and be prepared to let go of other plans. We all know that transitions can be an opportunity for strengthening projects and seeing new ideas be created. The administrator needs to take the time to think through how to help the team do this. It's

not helpful to believe that all the projects and goals will move forward. Instead, think about what can be let go.

**Be remembered.** Another aspect to think about is to remember that old adage, "people will forget what you did, but will never forget how you made them feel." Clearly, how we help our team feel in the heat of struggles (oh, and there are so many these days) is how we will be remembered. Most importantly, helping them feel successful and valued strengthens the work being done. Think carefully about that as you transition.

**Who have you nudged?** Businesses typically put a lot of thought into succession planning; do we? Often leadership hires are done outside of the organization, but that still doesn't mean that nudging others on your team isn't important for the strength of the organization. Strengthening the leadership skills of others is critical for strong work. We don't know when something might happen, but the more we help others grow in their leadership, the stronger the organization.

These are just a couple examples of valuable things to think about before and during the time leaders are preparing to transition out of their position. I know, I know – things are just too busy to be thinking about the nuances listed above. But, too often, we don't define what the transition will look like in advance. Hopefully, all leaders can find time to reflect on how their transition will feel and look to others. Because once you do, it's then time for working on those other dreams you have! ●



Jill Skarvold  
Retiree Representative  
MASE Board of Directors

## FAPE & Dyslexia: The Eighth Circuit Speaks

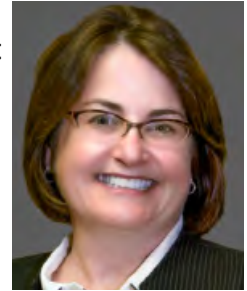
On July 29, 2022, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the decision of a Minnesota hearing officer and the Minnesota federal district court in a case involving FAPE and a diagnosis of dyslexia. The Court held that the Minnetonka Public Schools had provided a student with dyslexia with a free appropriate public education (FAPE).<sup>1</sup> MASE, along with MASA and MSBA,<sup>2</sup> submitted an amicus brief to the Court offering the state-wide perspective of the impact of this case on Minnesota schools.<sup>3</sup> The decision [can be found here](#).

**The Facts.** The student qualified for special education under the Autism Spectrum Disorder designation while in kindergarten.<sup>4</sup> The initial evaluation and the first IEP identified both significant attention and reading deficits although it did not label those needs as “ADHD” and “dyslexia.” In response to those needs, the District provided the student with research-based reading methods beginning with small group instruction. By third grade, the student was receiving 60 minutes per day, four days per week of small group reading. Progress reports observed that the student “had come a long way” despite struggling with very significant attention issues. Shortly after the progress report, the IEP team met and placed the student in a group of two students with a Wilson Reading System (WRS) certified paraprofessional for reading support.<sup>5</sup> The student made progress in attention and in reading, but he was not reading at grade level. A due process hearing was held in December of 2020 just before the student began fourth grade.

**The Hearing Decision and District Court Appeal.** The hearing officer found that the failure

to label the student’s needs as ADHD and dyslexia meant that the District failed to assess all areas of disability. The district court agreed finding that the District failed to “identify the most debilitating disabilities – dyslexia and ADHD.”<sup>6</sup> Finding that the District had failed to provide a FAPE as a result, the district court upheld the hearing officer’s order of compensatory education that included providing the student with WRS instruction every weekday, including during the summer, until the student completed the WRS program.<sup>7</sup> The District appealed the district court’s decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

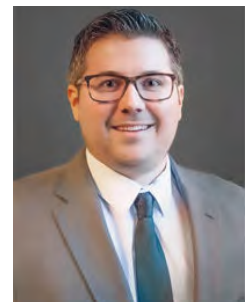
**The Eighth Circuit Speaks.** The Eighth Circuit reversed the district court. It held that the IDEA does not require a specific diagnosis or classification of disability as long as the school identifies the student’s individual needs.<sup>8</sup> The Court concluded that the District met its IDEA<sup>9</sup> evaluation obligations by identifying and evaluating the student’s special education needs, including significant reading and attention needs, even though the District did not use the terms “dyslexia” and “ADHD.”



Laura Tubbs Booth  
Attorney & Partner  
Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, P.A.



Christian R. Shafer  
Attorney & Shareholder  
Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, P.A.



Adam J. Frudden  
Attorney  
Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, P.A.

*Legal Notes continued on page 17..*



The Court held that while a student’s IEP must be “reasonably calculated” to allow the student to make appropriate progress “in light of [their] circumstances,” the IDEA does not require a school to “maximize a student’s potential or provide the best possible education at public expense.”<sup>10</sup> The Court concluded that the IEPs were reasonably calculated to allow the student to make appropriate progress in light of the student’s individual circumstances. Specifically, the Court held that the District set and continuously updated “achievable, measurable goals,” tried new reading curricula, and continuously increased special education services including small group and one-on-one instruction.<sup>11</sup> In this case, despite the fact that the student was not reading at grade level, the Court found that the student had made progress. It held that the law does not “require specific results” but instead “looks for improvement, not mastery.”<sup>12</sup>

Finally, once the Court determined that the District had provided the student with a FAPE, the District was not required to provide the parents’ requested method of instruction. The District considered and then initially denied the parents’ request for instruction using WRS.

The school advised that the student was not a good candidate for WRS instruction at the time because he “lacked the attentional stamina” the longer lessons required.<sup>13</sup> The Court noted that the District did provide WRS instruction for the student in the next school year. Finding that the student had made progress in attending to instruction and in reading as well as in all other goal areas, the Court held that the District fulfilled its obligations under the IDEA.

Laura Tubbs Booth, Christian R. Shafer, and Adam J. Frudden of Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney represented the District. ●

1. Minnetonka Pub. Sch., Indep. Sch. Dist. No. 276 v. M.L.K. ex rel. S.K., 42 F.4th 847 (8th Cir. 2022).
2. MASE – Minnesota Administrators for Special Education, MASA – Minnesota Association of School Administrators and MSBA – Minnesota School Boards Association filed an amicus brief authored by Attorneys Roseann T. Schreifels and Eric J. Magnuson. The School District and its attorneys at RRM are especially grateful for the support of these three organizations.
3. An amicus curiae (Latin for “Friend of the Court”) brief is submitted by interested parties to assist the court in its decision. In this case, the amicus provided critical information about the impact of this decision on Minnesota schools at large.
4. M.L.K., 42 F.4th at 849.
5. Id. at 853.
6. Id.
7. Hearing Officer’s Order 20-004H (4/29/20).
8. M.L.K., 42 F.4th at 852.
9. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401 et seq.
10. M.L.K., 42 F.4th at 853.
11. Id.
12. Id.
13. Id. at 854.
14. Parents have petitioned the Court for rehearing en banc (before the 11 judge panel). Rehearing en banc is rarely granted. See Fed. R.



## Save the Date! 2023 MASA/MASE Spring Conference

March 9-10, 2023

Minneapolis Marriott Northwest

Brooklyn Park, MN

# MASE CALENDAR

## **2022**

**October 20**

**MASE Aspiring Leaders**

Virtual | 12 noon - 12:30 pm

**MASE Board Meeting**

Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd

**October 26**

**MASE Board Meeting**

Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd

**October 26-28**

**MASE Fall Leadership Conference**

Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd

**November 8**

**CASE Executive Committee Meeting**

Marriott, Salt Lake City, UT

**November 9-10**

**CASE Board Meeting**

Marriott, Salt Lake City, UT

**November 10-12**

**CASE Fall Conference**

Marriott, Salt Lake City, UT

**November 29, 2022**

**MASE Annual Meeting**

Virtual | 12 pm noon

## **2023**

**January 18**

**MASE Aspiring Leaders**

Virtual | 12 noon - 12:30 pm

**February 8-10**

**CASE Winter Workshop**

Virtual

**March 1-3**

**CEC Convention**

Louisville, KY

**March 8**

**MASE New Leaders Cohort**

**MASE Board of Directors Meeting**

Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

**March 9-10**

**MASA/MASE Spring Conference**

Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

**May 10-12**

**MASE Best Practices**

Madden's on Gull Lake

**June 15**

**MASE Aspiring Leaders**

Virtual | 12 noon - 12:30 pm

## **2022-23 MDE Meeting Dates**

**Directors' Forum**

November 18, 2022

December 9, 2022

January – None

February 17, 2023

March 17, 2023

April 14, 2023

May 12, 2023

June 9, 2023

**SEAP**

November 4, 2022

January 20, 2023

April 21, 2023

June 16, 2023