



IMPACT

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Spring 2016

Working Together to Solve the Staff Shortage Crisis

Stating that there is a growing shortage of qualified special education teachers is at best an understatement. The lack of qualified special education teachers is rapidly becoming a crisis. As MASE Executive Director John Klaber frequently reminds me, without a quality special education teacher in front of our students little else matters. Curriculum, due process standards, the instructional delivery models and so on are all irrelevant if we do not have quality teachers serving our students with special needs.

How can the special education teacher shortage be fixed? As in many complex problems, there is not one simple answer. Many special education directors across the state are finding creative and innovative ways to provide quality services to students with special needs. Other directors are working with colleges and universities to grow their own special education teachers. In addition to these efforts, MASE needs to continue to reach and partner with other groups that have a strong interest in having high-quality teachers working with our neediest learners. These groups can include PACER and other advocacy organizations as well as Education Minnesota.

Moving forward, MASE members need to support each other by sharing strategies that are designed to bring more special education teachers into the field. At the Midwest Special Education Cooperative we have used

the following strategies, which were first shared with me by fellow MASE members. We have reached out to local colleges and universities increasing our connections and hosting more interns and student teachers. At this time these connections have allowed us to hire one speech clinician and we are hopeful that we will soon be hiring a second. We are also reaching out to high school students in an effort to recruit them into the teaching profession. I'm hopeful that this strategy will bring more quality special educators into the profession.



Todd Travis
MASE President and Director of Special Education
Midwest Special Education Cooperative

I know there are other examples of our MASE members using innovative methods to recruit and retain special education staff. I strongly encourage some of you to step forward and offer presentations at the upcoming Best Practices Conference. As you know, MASE is a member service organization and was designed at its inception to support fellow administrators for special education in the provision of quality services to students with special needs. It is critical that we work together to solve the growing special education staff shortages we all face. Please consider presenting any staff recruitment strategies that you have developed at the spring Best Practices Conference. ●

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SAVE THE DATE!
2016 MASE Fall Leadership Conference

October 26-28, 2016

Cragun's Conference Center, Brainerd

Finding Gumption

I've just finished reading a book that my daughter and her husband thought I might enjoy, as it was written by an interesting actor, Nick Offerman of Parks and Recreation, who somewhat like myself is also a woodworker. They even got me an autographed copy. The book is called *Gumption: Relighting the Torch of Freedom with America's Gutsiest Troublemakers*. I recommend it, although it is not for someone looking for a deep existential discussion of leadership. It really is the perfect "vacation book."

Merriam-Webster defines "gumption" as courage and confidence, or possessing common sense or initiative. My uptake is that one does not need to be famous to meet challenges with "gumption." There are many famous or near famous individuals who have modeled "gumption." In addition to sharing how a number of individuals demonstrated or continue to demonstrate "gumption," there are any number of quotations attributed to those individuals. The one that resonated with me the most is attributed to Teddy Roosevelt: "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

I've been fortunate to have worked hard at work that I believe to be worth doing. Yes, I know that a case could be made that special education has become more about the creation of legally defensible documents and the delivery of legally defensible instruction than actually improving educational outcomes for students.

However, let's consider that quotation in light of being mid-winter in Minnesota and the challenges faced by special education directors and why we enter into and remain in the profession. You will find that as a director, you will routinely work 50 hour weeks and those hours may pale in comparison with some of our colleagues across the state who routinely compile upwards of 60 or more hour work weeks. Your overall salary will be more than most staff employed by the school district. By contrast, your hourly rate will be somewhat more than what was earned by the paraprofessionals and somewhat less than most of the teachers. You can do the math ... if you are in the 60 hour a week group. The prize really isn't the financial compensation. There must be something more.

Possibly it will be the opportunity to meet parents who are inordinately grateful for the services that are being provided to their child. I can tell you that one of my favorite questions to ask of such parents was to inquire if they paid taxes. When they responded in the affirmative, I was pleased to tell them that the services that we were providing to them were because taxpayers, like themselves, were making it possible for us to meet the unique educational needs of

their child. Yes, you will also meet your share of parents who are sure that they personally write out a check each week to cover your salary and, as such, you should be specifically beholden to them. Here, I am reminded of a recent New Yorker magazine cartoon showing a parent and child walking into the office of a special education administrator where the parent announces that: "My child has special wants." Unfortunately your most outspoken parents will be in the latter group, but please know that I, and many others like to believe most parents are appreciative, although unspoken. Here is where I get to tell you that time heals most wounds, so let's call parent contact a toss-up.

You certainly have the opportunity to work with teachers (within the category of teachers, I include psychologists, SLPs, OTs, PTs, others) who take it as a personal affront and a black mark on their professional reputation should one of their students fail to make appropriate educational/social/emotional progress. Fortunately these folks far outnumber those who really have no idea as to how critical their efforts were to the educational success of their students. So working with enlightened and motivated staff (regular and special education) is certainly on the plus side of the ledger.

I have written about the pleasure I took at attending the graduation ceremonies for our high school students. You will hear it from me again this spring and you should attend those ceremonies and take pride in the fact that many of those students are walking across the stage as graduates because of the work you have done as a special education director. So, this would be another of those items on the plus side of the ledger.

Monitoring, fiscal and programmatic will suck the life out of your staff and likely you, as well. At the end of the day, you may find it difficult to see the monitoring process as meeting even minimal cost-benefit expectations either in terms of dollars or sense. (Note the clever use of sense versus cents.) If you didn't pick up on that, it is time to take a break and you know which side of the ledger this falls.

Finally there is the work of the special education director most closely aligned to the title itself. You will be able to impact (as a director) the direction the school district takes as it anticipates and prepares for the unique special



John Klaber
MASE Executive Director

Finding Gumption continued on page 12.

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MASE Leadership Issues
(Formerly "Rural Issues")

Thursday, April 21, 2016
Sauk Rapids Government Center

10 am - 2 pm

MASE "Rural Issues" has a new name - MASE Leadership Issues! We changed our name to remind all of our members that they are welcome to these popular meetings. Join your colleagues from across the state for good company and great discussion about current topics in special education leadership.

Hope to see you there! Questions? Call (651) 645-6272.

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.

2016 Legislative Session

The 2016 legislative session is right around the corner and the slight downturn in the state's financial picture that was unveiled with the February forecast has cast a bit of a pall over the optimism created by the November forecast that showed a forecasted budget surplus of \$1.2 billion. That has shrunk to approximately \$900 million, which while still an impressive amount, and legislators have become increasingly worried that a dip in national and state economic performance could put the state's future fiscal health in jeopardy if every expenditure isn't carefully calculated in 2016.

One of the spending priorities for the education community is an addressing of the \$600 million-plus cross-subsidy from school district general funds to pay for unreimbursed special education costs. Many districts are forced to attempt to increase their voter-approved operating referenda to absorb these costs and a greater state commitment to helping districts meet their true education costs would be solid policy. The Alliance for Student Achievement—a coalition of the state's major education organizations—has issued a call for the Legislature to reduce the cross-subsidy by 25% (\$150 million) this year. We shall have to wait and see how much traction this will get in a year that will feature very tight budgets.

MASE's issues don't center solely on funding. The special education teacher shortage has reached crisis proportions in Minnesota with some regions of the state having over 100 teachers on variances in order to work with students receiving special education services.

There are a variety of reasons contributing to this shortage:

- Teachers licensed to teach special education in other states find it difficult to obtain a Minnesota license.
- The Academic and Behavioral Strategist (ABS) license is a temporary license that expires after five years with further training in a specific disability area and that training must be taken at the master's degree level.
- A number of programs—both graduate and undergraduate—have disappeared, making it difficult for prospective students to become licensed or seek the coursework necessary to renew their existing license.

These reasons, along with the rising costs associated with earning a bachelor's or master's degree are pushing individuals away from college in general and, further, away from degrees that don't promise a salary that will help

retire the college debt many experience while earning a degree.

MASE is in a unique position to help solve the teacher shortage. As administrators of programs throughout the state, MASE members experience firsthand the effects of this teacher shortage. It is important that MASE members communicate what they see as the major contributors to the teacher shortage and suggest solutions to policy makers

from the Board of Teaching, the Minnesota Department of Education, Education Minnesota, the higher education community, and the Minnesota Legislature. While the special education teacher shortage is decried from the 30,000 foot level, real solutions must be developed to improve the situation for the school community.

As always, I welcome your comments and input. I can be reached at lundelllegislative@gmail.com or (612) 220-7459.



Brad Lundell
MASE Lobbyist

Save the Date! **MASE Day at the Capitol** **Tuesday, March 22, 2016**

The day will begin with a breakfast and 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.

If you are interested in staying overnight at the Best Western Capitol Ridge on March 21 or 22, please request the MASE group rate. The rate is \$119.99 a night. Please call (651) 227-8711.

All MASE members are welcome to attend. Questions? Please contact John Klaber (jpklaber@gmail.com).

Great school leaders create effective systems that adapt to rapid and pervasive change, provide a culture supporting risk-taking and experimentation, and nurture a climate of possibilities. Future ready leaders' systems optimize the use of technology while keeping the vision about the learning, not the devices. Collaborative leadership focusing on excellent instruction for all students draws on well-developed systems that integrate curriculum, instruction, professional development, technology, and assessment, creating a powerful learning environment. Join your MASA and MASE colleagues this spring and examine how we can employ future ready leadership within our schools and wider networks to provide great education systems for all of our students.



Networking, Networking, Networking! There will be numerous opportunities to socialize with colleagues you already know, as well as grow your professional network with fellow administrators from around the state. Gather in the Fireside Room for the Welcome Reception on Wednesday evening, dine with new faces during meals, and learn together during general sessions and breakouts.

Inspiring Keynote Speakers! Thursday will feature a keynote address from Len Forkas who will present "What Spins the Wheel," discussing leadership challenges and what he learned as he fought through the scorch of deserts and the joint-wrenching cold of 11,000-foot mountain elevations during his 12-day, 3,000-mile, coast-to-coast solo bicycle race. On Friday morning, Katherine Prince will present "Imagining the Future" and explore the opportunities and challenges raised by KnowledgeWorks' ten-year forecast, examine the 2006-16 forecast for clues to inform the next decade, and consider what role you will play in shaping learning for the coming era.

New Fundraising Format! The MASA Region donating the largest amount will receive \$400 to use for professional development (PD) and the "second place" region will receive \$200 in PD funds for the region. In order to level the playing field, we will weight the donations based on the number of MASA members in each region. Donate at www.mnasa.org/donate.

Thought Leader Sessions! We are featuring three longer breakout sessions on topic of particular interest to our members. These sessions will be 90 minutes long and we have invited thought leaders to address topics such as concurrent enrollment, the teacher shortage, and secondary literacy. Attend these sessions and get a "deeper dive" into three selected topics:

- "Improving Secondary Content Literacy in Light of the Common Core State Standards: What Administrators and Teacher Leaders Need to Know," presented by Kevin Feldman, Educational Consultant.
- "Concurrent Enrollment: Where We Are and Where We Are Headed," presented by Pakou Yang, System Director of P-20 and College Readiness Academic and Student Affairs Division, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.
- Panel Presentation: Addressing Minnesota's Emerging Teacher Shortage

Customize Your Experience! Individualize your professional learning with a variety of breakout sessions, UnConference - and visit Thursday's Exhibit Fair. With more than 80 exhibitors offering the innovative products and services, you'll discover the latest educational technology available for your students and communities.

Celebrate Your Colleagues! Throughout the conference we will be celebrating the service of our colleagues. In addition to celebrating our 2016 retiring members, we will present the Kay E. Jacobs Award, Distinguished Service Award, Outstanding Central Office Leader Awards and the Regional Administrator of Excellence Awards.

Practice 21st Century Skills! All MASA and MASE conferences are digital, featuring program information, session handouts, contact lists and much more on our app. Please bring your computer, tablet or smartphone with you to stay connected!

2016 MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Future Ready Leadership
March 10-11, 2016
Minneapolis Marriott Northwest
Brooklyn Park, MN
regonline.com/2016masamasespringconference

Meet Your Keynote Speakers...



Len Forkas



Katherine Prince

Schedule At-a-Glance

Wednesday, March 9 - Pre-Conference Events

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 9 am-4 pm | • MASA Great Start Cohort |
| | • MASE New Leaders Cohort |
| 11-4 pm | • MASA & MASE Board Meetings |
| 12:30-4 pm | • At Ruth's Table, Women Leader's Workshop |
| 2-5 pm | • Conference Registration Open |
| 4-5 pm | • Ruth's Table Reception |
| 6-8 pm | • MASA Past Presidents/MASA Board Dinner |
| 8-10 pm | • Conference Reception |

Thursday, March 10 (Registration open 7 am)

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 7-8:30 am | • Retiree Breakfast |
| 8:30-10:30 am | • Keynote Speaker: Len Forkas |
| | • MASA Foundation Fundraising Kickoff |
| | • Awards Presentation |
| 10:30 am-3:30 pm | • Exhibits Open |
| 11 am-12:30 pm | • Thought Leader Sessions |
| 12:30-1:30 pm | • Lunch |
| 2-3 & 3:30-4:30 pm | • UnConference |

Friday, March 11 (Registration open 8 am)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 8:30-9:30 am & 9:45-10:45 am | • Breakout Sessions (details at mnasa.org) |
| 8:30-10:30 am | • Keynote Speaker: Katherine Prince |
| | • Awards Presentation |

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RESEARCH TO *practice*

What Are the Needs in Minnesota?

Minnesotans value education. Education is the largest financial investment in the state budget, and those investments place Minnesota students among the top performers in the nation. Still, substantial gaps in opportunity and performance persist. The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) recently engaged in a yearlong evaluation of the needs among educators in Minnesota.

We completed this needs assessment for three reasons:

1. To describe infrastructure, capacity, and costs of program evaluation and educational assessment;
2. To identify unmet needs; and
3. To evaluate how the CAREI at the University of Minnesota (University) might contribute a solution.

Researchers and evaluators from CAREI interviewed and surveyed educational leaders and other stakeholders. For the purpose of the needs assessment, CAREI gathered input from approximately 800 individuals and 13 professional organizations.

Key Findings

The conclusions from our 2015 statewide needs assessment are very clear. There are substantial unmet needs at all levels of the Minnesota educational systems with respect to research, evaluation, assessment, and data use. The following are some key findings:

- A large majority of respondents believe **good quality data can improve educational decisions**. Nearly everyone with whom we spoke articulated that they would benefit from additional assistance in the use of data.
- A large percentage of survey respondents indicated **their school's or district's capacity to effectively use data to guide educational decisions was fair or poor**. Despite substantial motivations and efforts to use data, most educational systems in Minnesota lack the capacity to meet their own needs for data-based decision making.
- Educational professionals consistently described the need for **additional resources** to help them use data. There are very limited resources at all levels of the educational systems in Minnesota to access, analyze, present, and interpret data in a timely and effective manner.
- Respondents consistently described the **need for professional development and expert consultation**

to assist, automate, and deliver timely reports and provide guidance for the use of data for educational decisions.

- Educational leaders indicated that they **do not have the time or personnel** to design, develop, or implement assessment and evaluation programs that would effectively inform leadership and practice. The results of surveys indicate that those professionals are too few in number in Minnesota and, perhaps, too costly for many educational agencies to afford.
- Relatively few school districts in Minnesota employ **professionals with advanced training in research, program evaluation, or assessment/measurement**. Those are generally the largest districts concentrated in the metro region such that most rural and out-state systems with limited capacity and expertise.



Kim Gibbons, Ph.D.
Associate Director
Center for Applied Research
and Educational Improvement

How Can CAREI Assist in Meeting Unmet Needs?

Like many other states, Minnesota has established rigorous systems for accountability, which include state standards. It has also established useful programs for data collection. Those include the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), the Minnesota Student Survey, and the Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS). The returns on those and other investments have yet to be realized, in part, because there are substantial unmet needs for educational systems and professionals to use them. Additional supports may substantially improve their uses by policy makers, educational leaders, and educators.

Those who responded to the interviews and surveys consistently indicated a lack of resources and expertise to support their efforts. To truly leverage state and local investments, **professional educators require infrastructure to build capacity and efficiencies to use data that improve educational outcomes**. Historically,

What are the Needs in Minnesota?
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Reflective *Leadership*

Being a Courageous Leader

Many years ago, when I was still a special education teacher for the St. Cloud school district, I was invited to attend a workshop for aspiring leaders. At the time, I was a single parent of five school-age children, teaching full-time, and I was almost done with the first year of my master's degree program at St. Cloud State University. I didn't think of myself as a leader, but more as a survivor. I had been a stay-at-home mom for 14 years and now, as a divorced single parent, I needed to move across the salary lanes and make more money. That's why I was in college. Paying the bills was more important than being a leader back then.

I attended the workshop and one of the speakers was Dr. Bernice "Bernie" Berns, the Associate Superintendent for the St. Cloud school district. She said something that has stayed with me all these years. I'll never forget her saying that it takes courage to be a leader. Why that resonated with me, I don't exactly know. Maybe it was because she was a woman leader with a petite stature packed with a lot of energy and good humor. Maybe it was because she helped me to feel courageous as I sat there wondering where my life was headed. After that day, I decided to work towards my administrative license while working on my master's degree. Two years later, I became a special ed supervisor in St. Cloud and five years after that, I became the Executive Director in my current position.

I firmly believe that it takes courage to be a good leader. It takes courage to let bad teachers go, to make change happen and to face conflict head-on. It takes courage to stay true to yourself, to learn to pick your battles and to stay focused on the students. If you are already a leader, you know this to be true. If you are an aspiring leader, read this paragraph again.

I think it is a challenging time to be a special education leader. I recently watched a video titled "Special Education Elders." The video was taken at a MASE conference back in 2004. Dr. Janine Dahms-Walker facilitated a panel of three retired special education directors. These directors held their positions back when the challenge was getting kids with disabilities into the schools, before P.L. 94-142 became the law in 1975. Not an easy time. I can remember when I first started out teaching and having to ask the elementary general ed teachers if my students, who were all cognitively impaired, could attend phy ed or music with their class. It was the beginning of inclusion. I remember having to write my IEPs out on paper – no computers then. But

they were only a page or two long on carbon copy paper. I don't remember stressing out about my paperwork.

We are on the brink of a teacher shortage and some of us already feel that we are past the brink – the teacher pool is empty. Not only is it becoming more difficult to find licensed special ed teachers, it is also becoming more difficult to find specialists – like Blind/Visually Impaired teachers, Physical Therapists, School Psychologists, etc. The teachers you do have might be under a variance, limited, or community expert license. They just want to work with kids, but there is all the paperwork that is required. The paperwork can be difficult enough if you are a licensed special ed teacher, but if you don't understand due process, it can be a nightmare. Add to this a state system which, in my opinion, has added paperwork to the process and is punitive towards teachers during the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) review years.

How do you be a courageous leader in these times? You have to be willing to speak up. You have to be willing to reach out and collaborate with your fellow leaders to find a solution. You have to be willing to keep talking about the tough issues. Just as the leaders before us had to break down the barriers which kept kids with disabilities out of the general ed classroom, and before that, out of their neighborhood schools, we need to keep working at reducing the paperwork, supporting teachers and finding ways to bring new teachers into



Reggie Engebretson
Executive Director
Northland Special Education
Cooperative

Courageous Leader continued on page 12

Are You Moving?

Now is the time of year when many of our members are on the move! Help us keep track of you (and keep your MASE benefits and services coming to you). Please give Deb a call at (651) 645-6272 or (866) 444-5251 or email members@mnasa.org. Deb will update your records. If you have new colleagues in your area who are not MASE members, please let us know and we will send membership information to them.

Student Aggression in Schools is on the Rise

We are hearing more about student-to-student and student-to-adult aggression in our schools. What is really happening? And how can school administrators be thinking, planning, and problem-solving for this increase in aggression?

First of all, let's not forget that most students in our schools today do not show aggression towards others. Secondly, relatively few students who have a mental illness use aggression, so we need to be careful about directly linking the rise in mental health needs to the reason that we are seeing an increase in aggression in our schools.

Yet, the increase in aggression is real. Our experiences as school administrators demonstrate that there is a growing number of students who have significant challenges in their lives who use acting out as a way to cope with their problems. Here in the metro area, the incident at St. Paul's Central High School precipitated more media attention to this challenge than in the past, causing us to further examine the pattern of aggression in schools.

Although mental illness is not synonymous with aggressive behavior, the need for better mental health services for our children and youth is getting more attention and is one strategy that seems to help. The need for early intervention is critical to the long-term well-being of our youth as they become adults, and there is a growing body of evidence that early intervention really works. At a legislative meeting held by the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) several years ago, Dr. Joel Oberstar, CEO and Chief Medical Officer at Prairie Care, informed listeners that we now know from using brain scans that there is a physiological difference between the brain of an adult with clinical depression compared to a person without depression. With that kind of evidence, if we intervene early, it is possible that we can limit the chance that an individual will suffer with lifelong mental health challenges like depression.

The intermediate district superintendents partner with Sue Abderholden, executive director from the National Association of Mental Illness Minnesota (NAMI Minnesota), at the legislature. I recently heard Sue say that she believes our mental health system is not really broken, but we do have to build a system. In fact, a lot has already been done at the legislature to build a better mental health system for children and youth in the last several sessions. To name just a few:

- To support early intervention, in 2013 and 2014 we saw an increase in funding for School Linked Mental

Health grants that allows schools to partner with a local mental health provider so that children have easier access to services.

- To support children for more crisis intervention, the 2015 Legislature approved opening psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs) with up to 150 new beds in up to six sites that can open beginning in 2017. PRTFs are for children who require more intensive care due to mental health symptoms such as a significant aggressive behavior, development disorders, psychosis or physical health.



Connie Hayes

Superintendent
Northeast Metro 916
Intermediate School District

It is true that many of the supports coming from the legislature seem slow to develop. It is particularly hard to be patient when we see a young person who is having difficulty managing conditions like the early onset of psychosis, ongoing depression, or anxiety, especially when we know that childhood trauma has a significant impact on the psychological development of a child. General educators are seeing the symptoms of these kinds of conditions in schools, as well as the impact they have on students' success with their school program.

And to recognize them specifically, staff and principals in our level IV programs around the state see students, who not only bring those same mental health challenges to school, but who also have a disability such as an emotional behavioral disability, autism, or cognitive delays. Programming for their highly complex needs is particularly difficult and costly.

But what can be done? Do the protections afforded to students mean that principals and educators cannot intervene when there is a fight? No, the use of reasonable force remains in statute to give schools the authority to keep the environment safe, but reasonable force is not necessary in every incident nor is it always the preferred method. Most of us know that fewer students will respond to the command, "Sit down and be quiet," when a situation starts to boil. So the question remains, what else can we do in a situation to intervene earlier, when there is time, to diffuse the situation?

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Student Aggression from page 8.

If staff are trained, they can employ the use of verbal de-escalation to try and diffuse situations as they start to intensify. This is not a skill most of us come by naturally and so training is both useful and essential. In fact, I believe that most principals and educators would much prefer to have the skills to put the lid on the boil and help maintain order rather than have the situation turn chaotic. This is one of the takeaways I have seen in my work as superintendent at Northeast Metro 916 Intermediate School District, where we are constantly providing training to our staff so they have this skill in their tool belt. And it really works in many situations. In the past, when a frustrated student would move to pick up an object to throw, we would immediately put hands on the student. Today, our staff have greater ability to use their verbal de-escalation skills to diffuse a situation like this and prevent the situation from becoming a crisis for both the student and the staff members.

For those of you thinking it is sad that we have to train educators how to do this, I have to agree. But aggression is on the rise in our schools. That is a fact. I do believe that as educators we must constantly be open to building new skills to meet the demands of our job. Public education has done this for the nearly 40 years I have been an educator and I am confident we can do the same with this challenging problem now. At the same time, we all need to work with our policy makers to help continue building the mental health system for our children and youth. Please visit the NAMI Minnesota website at www.namihelps.org to learn more about what is being done and learn about ways you can support the mental health needs of our children. ●

Have You Renewed Your MASE Membership?

For more information or additional membership materials, contact the MASE office at (651) 645-6272 or members@mnasa.org or visit our website at www.mnase.org.

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and Much More!

What are the Needs in Minnesota? from page 6

CAREI coordinated with educational agencies located in the twin cities metropolitan area. The proposed solution will expand the mission and accessibility of CAREI. It will provide resources to policy makers and educational agencies throughout the state; especially those in **rural and high need communities** who were historically underserved. CAREI will enable the use of evidence and data at all levels of the education system and foster high-value partnerships. In its expanded role, CAREI will continue as an impartial and independent hub for applied research and educational improvement. It will bring others together to define their values, goals, objectives, policies, and programs. It will provide services and resources to facilitate high quality research, evaluation, and assessment practices among its partners.

The personnel, expertise, and infrastructure at CAREI already exist and can expand to provide centralized services for the state. In part, these services will enhance the usability and effects of data that are already collected by state and local educational agencies; however, it will do much more. If it were just a little bit easier and more feasible for leaders and educators to use data, they would use it more often and effectively. CAREI can facilitate that. In the following months, we will be sharing the results of the needs assessment with a variety of key stakeholders. We will also work on expanding services at CAREI to meet the unmet state needs. Stay tuned for future developments!

Kim Gibbons, Ph.D., currently is the Associate Director of the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota. Prior to that, she was the Executive Director of the St. Croix River Education District (SCRED) located in Rush City, MN. SCRED has received national recognition for its use of the Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. In 2007, SCRED received a legislative appropriation to fund a statewide Minnesota RtI Center for two years. Dr. Gibbons obtained her doctoral degree in school psychology from the University of Oregon where she received extensive training in the problem solving model, curriculum based measurement, and research-based instructional practices. Prior to her role as the Executive Director, Dr. Gibbons has worked as a director of special education, staff development coordinator, and school psychologist. She is active in state leadership and is the past-president of the Minnesota Administrators for Special Educators. Finally, she is the co-author of three books and has numerous other peer-reviewed publications. She is a sought-after consultant who has given numerous workshops throughout the nation. ●

Congratulations to our 2016 MASE Award Recipients!

MASE Special Education Administrator of the Year Award

Elisabeth Lodge Rogers
Executive Director of Special Services & Educational Programs
Intermediate School District 287

MASE Legacy Award

Karen Filla
Director of Student Services
Roseville Area Schools

MASE New Special Education Leader Award

Dustin Hinckley
Special Education Supervisor
Bemidji Regional Interdistrict Council

MASE Distinguished Service Award

Mia Urick
Director of Professional Learning
MASE & MASA

These individuals are representatives of the leadership excellence found in MASE members: the willingness to risk, strong communication skills, a progressive change agent with high expectations for self and others, and their commitment to shaping policies and practices which impact the quality of education for children with disabilities.



Award recipients will be honored during the 2016 MASA/MASE Spring Conference. You can learn more about the awards and the accomplishments of the recipients by reading the press releases available on the MASE website.



The Stenswick Benson Scholarship Award Program began in February of 1991 through MASE (Minnesota Administrators for Special Education). Its purpose is to recognize the legacy of the many leaders within Special Education represented by Ellsworth Stenswick and Loren Benson through a scholarship award to an individual completing exemplary graduate study in the field of special education.

Funds have been raised primarily through an auction now held every other year during the Special Education Directors' Fall Conference. The fund started

with \$4500 in 1991 and this year (2016) the endowment is more than \$225,000.00.

The Stenswick Benson Scholarship Committee will maintain its current practice of requesting that you identify scholarship candidates during 2016. Please distribute the application to highly qualified individuals you know are pursuing graduate special education studies. MASE, at the recommendation of the Scholarship Committee will offer four (4) \$2,000 awards this spring. We encourage you as Directors of Special Education to recommend a candidate you think deserving of this award.

Candidates must be in a private or public Minnesota graduate program leading to special education licensure. This includes psychology, and any related services as well as teacher licensure. It could also include someone entering the program to obtain Special Education Director licensure. (Note: Students attending non-Minnesota schools will also be eligible if the school the individual is attending is located geographically close to Minnesota). Strong consideration will be given to candidates working to obtain licenses in highest areas of need across Minnesota; regional needs will also be considered when they are different.

Please have the candidate complete their section; the Special Education Director will be responsible to submit the final document for consideration to Shannon Erickson by April 1, 2016. If you have questions, contact Shannon Erickson via email at serickson@fergusotters.org. Note that this year application materials can be delivered electronically.

Applications are available at www.mnase.org/stenswickbenson-scholarship.html

elections

It is a great honor to be nominated for the position of president-elect for the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education, and I am excited about the opportunity to serve as MASE president. I have been a member of MASE for a number of years and have appreciated the privilege of serving on the MASE board. In addition to my diverse experiences while teaching special education in both rural and urban areas, my administrative roles have included participation as a MASE representative on MDE task forces and committees with our partner organizations. These activities have given me the opportunity to see the critical leadership that MASE provides to its members, as well as the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Legislature.



Diane McCarron
 Director of Special Education
 Southwest West Central
 Service Cooperative

My priorities:

- Advocate for policies and legislation that address the current and future demands for qualified, licensed special educational professionals and administrators
- Strengthen our collaboration with partner organizations to provide quality programming for all children
- Provide high quality professional development to support new and experienced school leaders

It would be an honor to serve as your next MASE president-elect. ●

I am honored to be a nominee for the position of secretary on the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education Board. I have previously had the pleasure of serving as an Area 9 Representative on the Board, which I considered an exceptional opportunity.



Erin Toninato
 Region 9 Director
 South Central Service
 Cooperative

My time as the Area Representative allowed me to learn, first hand, the important work that is done throughout the state. It has provided me with an opportunity to develop a wide perspective regarding special education. It has allowed me to work closely with others who are focused on improving child outcomes and service to students receiving special education.

I appreciate the potential opportunity to continue to work within the MASE organization and be part of the work that can, and does, have an impact on special education in Minnesota.

I am honored to submit my name as a candidate for secretary of MASE. ●

Watch your email for the 2016 Election Ballots!



Once again this year's elections will be conducted online.

Electronic ballots will be emailed during the week of March 14. Be sure to watch your email for your login information! Ballots need to be completed by April 11.



SpEd Forms

Do you know why nearly 85% of MN districts and charter schools use SpEd Forms software? If not, maybe it's time you check us out.

www.spedforms.com

Save the Date!



MASE
 Best Practices
 May 4-6, 2016
 Madden's Resort, Brainerd

Special thanks to our 2015-16 MASE Business Partners!

The MASE Business Partnerships 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 1

Bethel University
cmERDC
Eide Bailly LLP
Foster, Jacobs & Johnson, Inc.
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Kennedy & Graven, Chartered
Media Line Communications
Robert W. Baird & Co.
Rethink

Rupp, Anderson, Squires & Waldspurger, P.A.
SpEd Forms
Strategic Staffing Solutions
Transition Assessments and Curriculum
UCP/Infinitec
University of St. Thomas, Dept. of
Special & Gifted Education
University of Wisconsin-Stout

Tier 2

Booth Law Group, LLC
Knutson, Flynn & Deans, P.A.
Ratwik, Roszak, & Maloney, P.A.
West Metro Learning Connections, Inc.

Tier 3

Achieve3000
Curriculum Associates
Pemberton Law
Voyager Sopris Learning

Finding Gumption from page 2.

education needs of its' future students. Fortunately, my superintendents listened to me and supported me. Because of that relationship, we were able to put into place an ECSE cochlear implant education program. We also designed a timely approach to addressing the needs of students on the autism spectrum. Please keep in mind my age...this was really new stuff! The daily tasks associated with being a special education director may consume much of your time, but do not let it consume you. A portion of your focus should be on anticipating the needs of your students well into the future. I suppose that is called visioning. Not only will it serve your district/s and its students well, but you may find it the strongest reason for being in our profession.

With spring around the corner, I wish you the gumption to make the hard and sometimes unpopular decisions, to look beyond the menial, the mundane and the downright stupid stuff that we have to do on a daily basis. If you do, "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." ●

Courageous Leader from page 7.

the profession. We need more leaders to encourage teachers to speak up to their union reps and state legislators about the paperwork. We need more leaders to question the rules and procedures from the state department that adversely affect teachers. We need more leaders to get involved in their state organizations and to keep the topic alive.

While it is not easy work being a leader, it is very rewarding to know that you can make a difference for kids and teachers in a positive way. Whether it's helping to guide a new teacher, spark a seasoned teacher, create a new program or change the direction of a current one, it all takes courage. Finding the courage means being willing to listen, to learn, to reflect, and then having the confidence and grit to make a decision. We all know leaders who are wishy-washy or take forever to make a decision. That is not courage. Courage means to take a stand, to face your fears, to be bold. If you believe you are doing the right thing for kids, then the courage will come. I wasn't a big John Wayne fan growing up, but I like this quote attributed to him: "Courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway." ●

MASE CALENDAR

2016

Wednesday, March 9

MASE Board of Director's Meeting
MASE New Leaders Cohort V
At Ruth's Table
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

Thursday-Friday, March 10-11

MASA/MASE Spring Conference, Marriott NW,
Brooklyn Park

Tuesday, March 22

MASE Day at the Capitol

Friday, March 25

Spring Holiday - MASE Offices Closed

Tuesday, April 5

Improving Content Area Literacy: Instructional
Strategies for Middle and High School (Grades 6-12),
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

Wednesday - Saturday, April 13-16

CASE CEC, St. Louis, MO

Thursday, April 21

MASE Leadership Issues, Sauk Rapids Gov't. Center

Wednesday, May 4

MASE New Leaders Cohort VI, Madden's, Brainerd

Wednesday - Friday, May 4-6

MASE Best Practices Conference, Madden's, Brainerd

Monday, May 30

Memorial Day Holiday - MASE Offices Closed

Thursday-Friday, June 16-17

MASE Board of Directors Retreat, Madden's, Brainerd

Wednesday, June 22

MASE New Leaders Cohort VII - Director's Session,
MASE Offices, St. Paul

Wednesday-Friday, October 26-28

MASE Fall Leadership Conference, Cragun's, Brainerd

Wednesday-Friday, November 16-18

Curriculum Leaders of MN (CLM) Conference,
Cragun's Conference Center, Brainerd

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Let us know if you are not receiving any of our following publications:

- Weekly eUpdates
- General emails
- Quarterly newsletter
- Members Only website passwords

Please contact us at members@mnasa.org.