



IMPACT

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

Spring 2017

The Places They Will Go...the Things They Need to Know *Recruiting and Supporting New Leaders in Special Education*

It's 8:45 on a Friday night and class was just wrapping up in the Education Building at St. Cloud State University. After a long week of teaching, individualized education program (IEP) meetings, parent phone calls, staff development and trying to balance the rest that one's life throws at them, twelve committed adult learners were spending the better part of their weekend in class with the hopes of becoming one of our state's future school administrators. Over the course of the class, robust discussions took place focusing on the challenges faced by special education administrators across a wide range of issues – teacher recruitment and retention, litigation, compliance, complexity of student needs - the list goes on. Finally, at one point a student asked, "Why would anyone want to be a special education director?"

That question was a good one, and one which has been raised many times. Why would anyone want to be a special education director? I began to explain. We current leaders get so focused on the stressors of the job that we forget to share the myriad amazing things that make the job so incredible. Each day in the life of a director is different. Every decision and interaction has the ability to impact the outcomes for students, those both with and without disabilities. Special education directors have the gift of serving and

supporting all the moving parts of a school district: teachers, parents, administrators, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, and volunteers - all dedicated and passionate about creating opportunities for success for our students. We have the honor of watching a young learner with multiple needs supported and take their first steps, and 15 years later can watch that same learner walk at their graduation. Each child is impacted by hundreds of dedicated professionals and thousands of hours of support and education – and it is humbling to be a part of that work.



Mary Clarkson
MASE President
Executive Director of Special Programs
Richfield Public Schools

After sharing the benefits of being a leader in special education, we took advantage of the wonderful resource in front of us - the students - and asked what they felt they needed to be supported and successful as new special education administrators. They listened intently as we shared the rewards of the job, and we administrators then listened just as intently as they, readying themselves to pursue administrative positions, expressed their needs, wants, and questions. The expected support needs were shared: guidance on finance, staffing, programming, and compliance, as well as some of the more tenuous challenges even the most experienced director struggle with, such as legal issues, resource management. They also shared ongoing concerns about meeting the increasingly complex needs of students in our schools.

As the class became more comfortable and the conversation flowed more freely we began to hear more clearly what new leaders need from their supervisors – many of which were the same supports

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The Places They Will Go continued on page 5.

Special thanks to our 2016-17 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.

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Moving the State Forward

Looking out the window as I write what will be an article for the spring newsletter, I am struck by how much things have changed and how much they have remained the same. I use as a point of reference my first spring newsletter article that I wrote three years ago.

We are a month into the current legislative session and are very busy trying to move the state forward toward a focus on student outcomes and away from due process compliance. We are doing so by engaging our legislators who have shared with us a desire to truly address the paperwork issues faced by our teaching staff. I wrote of similar efforts three years ago, although it was in preparation for a short legislative session. In addition to the concerns expressed by legislators, we are hearing similar concerns expressed by MDE leadership. We are hopeful that this means that there is a growing recognition that reducing due process monitoring expectations is laudable, but that it does little for the day-to-day work of our staff members. I am pleased that the legislative concerns have come from both sides of the aisle. We can speculate what might be motivating the legislative interest, but we must appreciate that a positive outcome may be the result. Quite honestly, the challenge is identifying specific changes to due process. From the legislators' perspective, it might appear to be an easy proposition. MASE should just provide a list of paperwork activities that we consider excessive and direct MDE to no longer require them. By contrast, as we work to provide a coherent message, we are struck by the reality that due process is generally a matter of degree rather than a yes or no proposition. The challenge is that a case can almost always be made that there is some benefit to the due process practice, but at what cost to limited resources and job satisfaction.

We have current and potential sponsors for our ABS bill. Our message, which we will be asking you to carry to your legislators, is a simple one. We should not be placing an additional financial burden on our young teachers. They are already struggling with paying back a typical national average \$37,000 of college debt. Many are facing the challenge of determining whether a career in education is the right choice. They may be trying to make a commitment to their community by purchasing a home and may be considering starting a family. At the same time as they are being expected to cover \$6,000 to \$10,000 in graduate school costs and possibly additional lost income.

We are also acutely aware that the political landscape has changed to the point where we will likely be asked to weigh in on issues of scholarships and vouchers. These

efforts have had limited traction in our state, but our colleagues from across the country have shared that early efforts promoted by Republican controlled legislatures are generally introduced by selecting students with disabilities and their families as the direct beneficiaries. In some states, it has been popular to include the students of veterans as similar beneficiaries of these same



John Klaber
MASE Executive Director

vouchers and scholarships. We will oppose those efforts and expect that we will find common ground with our state special education parent advocacy groups. By the same token, I would be remiss by not advising you that our legislative efforts have found support from both parties with Republicans taking the lead in the passage of our electronic paperwork legislation that allowed for local decision-making, as well as last year's legislation formally calling upon MDE to reduce paperwork demands by 25%.

At the national level, we now have at the head of the U.S. Department of Education an individual known for her advocacy for vouchers and scholarships that benefit private and parochial schools and an individual who seemed, during her confirmation hearings, to have little or no knowledge and possibly no apparent commitment to the federal government's role in assuring appropriate services to students with disabilities via IDEA. I recently visited with Senator Klobuchar's staff, and they appear to be preparing a defense of IDEA from a civil rights perspective. We have now moved beyond the issue of full funding of IDEA to a possible defense of its actual existence.

Three years ago, I also wrote of what appeared to be a burgeoning change in the state special education department toward greater collaboration with special education directors. I am pleased that the trend continues as you share generally more positive experiences with the department's staff, including the Division of Compliance and Assistance. You also credit the department for their efforts to reach out to the various regions in order to facilitate face-to-face conversations surrounding the issues. Yes, we continue to come from differing perspectives as it relates to the value or necessity of what we believe to be excessive due process expectations and the new funding special education funding formulae has created significant

Executive Notes continued on page 5.

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Executive Notes from 3.

losers. I understand that the phrase is typically "winners and losers," but I have yet to hear of any winners, only those who haven't lost as badly as others. Again, to their credit, we are hearing from the department that they have recognized problems with the funding model and are working on corrections. A real question is whether there will be any effort to undo the harm currently being experienced by districts. Equally important to our directors is the lack of predictability of the model as we try to help our superintendents and their districts make financial decisions. Quite honestly, many of our folks have taken personal pride in being able to provide such budgetary advice and are now struggling to do so.

The MDE Restrictive Procedures workgroup continues its work and we continue to struggle with the limitations placed on how to support students with significant issues with mental illness and in some cases violent behavior. It appears that even the most rudimentary response of limiting the challenging stimuli in order to calm and support the student is being questioned. We are also represented on the MDE Student Discipline workgroup. We all hope the outcome will be a safe environment for students and staff alike. We support a more positive school experience for all students and a reduced likelihood of discipline, suspension and expulsion for students, especially for Native American and Black boys.

Finally, I hope to make it to all of the regional meetings at least once this year. I continue to look forward to the "Rural Directors" meetings and have found a great counterbalance with attendance at the metro directors meetings. I thank you for your willingness to accept presentations from our business partners, whose support both financially and in the products and services that they provide benefits MASE and the work of its members. I welcome your emails and phone messages and as always I look forward to the opportunity to serve you. ●

The Places They Will Go from page 1.

that we, the more tenured administrators, needed as we entered into our first administrative positions. They asked for permission and time to learn from their mistakes as well as their successes. They asked for guidance on how to navigate the politics and subsystems that are present within every school district, including school boards, community, unions, and power-players within the system. They shared the desire for one-on-one time with their supervisor to gain clarity on expectation and priorities, especially when everything appears to be a priority. Finally, they expressed the desire for ongoing mentorship and time to network with others in the field who are experiencing similar challenges and opportunities.

As class wrapped up it was clear that veteran special education directors responsible for supervising new leaders and the MASE organization have an incredible responsibility when it comes to recruiting and retaining the future leaders in special education. The messages we send about the position we hold as well as the supports we provide to our new leaders as they enter the administrative ranks will have lasting impacts on the success of our future leaders. We are at that time of year when many districts are recruiting for these leadership positions within their organizations. We must remember to tell the story of what makes our work rewarding and the position desirable, and walk next to our new leaders as we create a system that will ensure every one of our students – and staff – succeed. ●

Are You Receiving Our Communications?

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

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

Please contact us at members@mnasa.org.

SPRING CONFERENCE

preview

A “best practice” is a method that reliably leads to desired results. 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. A best leadership practice in school districts manifests itself in strong systems that support those targets and therefore excellence for all students. Join your colleagues this spring as we share our own regional best leadership practices.

Friday will feature a keynote address from **Kim Gibbons**, Associate Director of Innovation and Outreach, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota and **Jim Rickabaugh**, Senior Advisor, The Institute for Personalized Learning, A Division of CESA #1 who will present "Cross-walking the Approaches of Explicit, Data Driven Instruction and Personalized Learning: A Leadership Conversation." We will also hear from the **MASA Region 6 Leadership** about their professional development grant usage in "Reflective Conversations that Enhance Professional Practice with Jim Roussin." The final keynote speaker is **Derreck Kayongo**, Business Visionary, Global Soap Project Founder & CEO of the Center for Civil and Human Rights who will present "Harnessing Your Power to Create Change."



Join us for our eighth annual “**At Ruth’s Table**” conversation on Wednesday, March 8 (refreshments at 12:30; program at 1 pm). This is an opportunity for education leaders who are women to gather for learning, networking and idea sharing. Each practicing education leader is encouraged to bring a guest who is a woman considering a career in education leadership. On Thursday from 4:30-6 pm, everyone is invited to attend the **Riley Reception**. This event is in honor of our MASA retirees, an opportunity for retirees and others to gather for homecoming and networking. These both are ticketed events - please register on the conference registration form.

Thursday will feature a variety of **EdCamp** sessions providing an opportunity for all of our participants to design their own conference experience by exploring the topics you determine. Our Edcamp subcommittee will be on hand to help participants arrange for the conferencing spaces and to extend invitations to the discussions. Our members ARE our experts, and here is a great chance to share knowledge and ideas.

We are featuring **10 breakout sessions** on topics of particular interest to our members. These hour long sessions address topics such as instructional leadership, community engagement, strategic planning, improvised leadership, equity analysis, school finance, and more! See all the sessions online at www.regonline.com/2017MASAMASE.

Be sure to visit Thursday’s **Exhibit Fair!** With more than 80 exhibitors offering innovative products and services, you’ll discover the latest educational technology available for your students and communities.

Throughout the conference we will be celebrating the **service of our colleagues**. In addition to celebrating our 2017 retiring members, we will present the Special Education Administrator of the Year Award, New Special Education Leader Award, and the Distinguished Service Award.

The MASA and MASE conferences are digital, featuring program information, session handouts, contact lists and more on our conference app. Please bring your computer, tablet or smartphone with you to stay connected!

2017 MASA/MASE Spring Conference

Our Best Leadership Practices

March 9-10, 2017

**Minneapolis Marriott Northwest
Brooklyn Park, MN**

www.regonline.com/2017MASAMASE

Meet Your Keynote Speakers...



Kim Gibbons



Jim Rickabaugh



Derreck Kayongo

Schedule At-a-Glance

Wednesday, March 8 - 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
- 6-8 pm MASA Past Presidents & MASA Board Dinner
- 8-10 pm Conference Reception

Thursday, March 9

(Registration open 7 am)

- 8:30-9:30 am Conference Welcome
MASA Foundation Fundraising Kickoff
Awards Presentation
EdCamp Topics
- 9:45-10:45 am Breakout Sessions I
- 10:45 am-3:30 pm Exhibits Open
- 11:15 am-12:15 pm Breakout Sessions II
- 12:15-1:15 pm Lunch
- 2-3 & 3:30-4:30 pm EdCamp Sessions
- 4:30-6 pm Riley Reception

Friday, March 10

(Registration open 8 am)

- 8:30 am-12 pm Awards Presentations
Retiree Recognition
MASA & MASE Officer Candidates
Keynote Speakers:
Kim Gibbons
Jim Rickabaugh
MASA Region 6 Leadership
Derreck Kayongo

The 2017 Legislative Session is underway and with \$1.4 billion on the bottom line of the state's fiscal books, an optimistic tone has governed the session to this point. Early indications are that the Republican-controlled Legislature will try to find places where it can agree with the Governor and work forward from those agreements to fashion an orderly session that will end on time and avoid Minnesota's growing tradition of special legislative sessions to reconcile budget issues.

I don't want to insinuate that things will go swimmingly throughout the session. Clearly, the Legislature will want to cut taxes (and some programs) more than the Governor and the Governor will want to spend more on a variety of state programs than the Legislature, but it appears the Legislature will try to construct its budget bills early and allow the entire month of May for negotiations. There just appears to be a real commitment to come to agreement on large parts of the budget where it can be easily reached and allow plenty of time to iron out those areas where an ideological chasm exists.

The Governor has come forward with a very aggressive commitment to public education. His budget proposal calls for an additional \$609 million investment in public education (\$19 million of the package is tax relief for districts with high levels of building debt). Included in his proposal are:

- A 2% increase on the general education basic formula in each of the next two years.
- An additional \$40 million in special education funding for the pupil weighting component of the special education formula.
- \$75 million in increased funding for voluntary universal pre-kindergarten programming.
- \$68 million to help defray district contributions to remedying the shortfall in the TRA fund.

One item in the Governor's budget I was surprised to see was the inclusion of \$1.4 million for continued work on the on-line IEP system that I thought was put to rest with the decision not to fund the program last biennium. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) wants to continue this discussion and contends it will

reduce paperwork. Whether that is the case is an iffy proposition, but it appears we are destined for another discussion of the project.

I believe there will be progress made toward reducing paperwork in the coming session. The directive to MDE to reduce special education paperwork by 25% is being taken seriously by the Legislature and there will be on-going discussions about this initiative as MDE has requested input from the field (and many of you have responded) about how paperwork can be reduced.

Lastly, there will be discussion of changes to the Academic and Behavioral Strategist (ABS) license this session. The bill has been introduced in the House (HF 494) and will be introduced in the Senate by the time you are reading this. There is a lot of interest in eliminating the requirement that teachers who hold an ABS license as their initial license receive advanced training in a single disability category to maintain their license past five years. This has contributed to the special education teacher shortage (along with a variety of other issues). Hopefully, progress can be made.

As usual, you can contact me with any questions and comments that you have on legislative issues. I can be reached at 612-220-7459 or brad.lundell@schoolsforequity.org.



Brad Lundell
MASE Lobbyist



SAVE THE DATE!

2017 MASE Fall Leadership Conference

October 25-27, 2017

Cragun's Conference Center, Brainerd

RETIREE *perspectives*

"Age is a matter of mind. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter."

Jack Benny once said, "Age is a matter of mind. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter." I think those words ring true. Many people talk about how they "can't wait" to retire and have time for themselves to be able to accomplish all those previously unattainable personal goals.

Well, I'm here to tell you that I can wait.

After retiring from being an executive director for a small cooperative in west central Minnesota, I was offered another position that allowed me to get closer to students again. I have been serving as the School Psychologist and the Special Education Director for Stride Academy Charter School in St. Cloud four days a week. Working with kids again on a daily basis has been a real boost for me. After sitting in an office for a number of years, being in a position to turn a frown into a smile on a young person's face has given me renewed purpose and satisfaction.

The challenge that I see for those approaching retirement is to find the right blend of intellectual stimulation and freedom from the daily grind. I found that I personally still enjoy assisting people with their due process questions and assessing and interpreting results for students, but I did not really enjoy managing people as much as I did once before. Once I realized what it was that I did well, and concentrated on enhancing that endeavor, taking on a new job seemed the right thing to do.

In the end, the old adage about doing what you love really is true. While I may get weary once in a while, I really enjoy the feeling I get when I'm working with a kid and all of a sudden something they do clicks and allows me to see things that others take for granted. I can then take that nugget of understanding and help the student's teachers see that student in a new light. That is very gratifying, and allows me to feel comfortable waiting a little longer to completely "hang it up."

For those of you that are comfortable with full retirement, I am very happy for you. I see friends and acquaintances posting on Facebook about their trips and family activities, and while I appreciate it, I know that my re-entering the work world was a good idea.



Doug Millaway
MASE Retiree & Former Executive Director
West Central Education District

Some of this may have to do with my re-birth nine years ago when I was diagnosed with colorectal cancer. I was one of the lucky ones who beat the Big C, and so in a strange way, retirement did not signal a slowing down, but a sort of ramping up for Life 2.0.

And so, yes, I can wait, and I will wait. I'll wait until my daughter graduates high school. I'll wait until I have grandkids. I'll wait until the Vikings win the Super Bowl. I'll wait until I'm ready.

I like being "retired with a twist."

For me, it works well. ●

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@mnsa.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.

Save the Date!

MASE Day at the Capitol

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Meeting Begins at 8 am

*Best Western Capitol Ridge, St. Paul
Sibley Room*

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 to the hotel at around 2:30 pm.

All MASE members are welcome to attend!

If you need lodging, call the Best Western Capitol Ridge at 651-227-8711 to request the MASE block.

A Moving Target: Special Education and Social Media

Tweeting. Snapping. Posting. Blogging. With the continual advent of new technology, the law regarding student speech is evolving. This is especially true when the students in question qualify for special education services. While each situation will be unique, all educators should be familiar with some basic guidelines about responding to student (and staff) e-speech.

Disciplining Online Student Speech

The 2015 *Sagehorn* decision from the Minnesota federal district court brought student e-speech issue to the forefront of public discussion. In that case, an honors student responded affirmatively to a web site posting that asked whether he made out with a teacher. 122 F.Supp.3d 842 (2015). His electronic speech was made outside of school hours, not on school grounds, and using no school property. The district disciplined the student for the speech.

The student sued, alleging that the discipline violated his First Amendment free speech rights. Applying past precedent, the court held that the student's speech was protected by the First Amendment. Specifically, the court ruled that the student's speech was not obscene and did not constitute a "true threat." The court then held that school districts may regulate otherwise protected student speech occurring off campus if it is both "(1) reasonably calculated to reach the school environment; **and** (2) so egregious as to post a serious safety risk or other substantial disruption" to the educational environment. Under this analysis, and based on the specific facts of that case, the court refused to dismiss the claims against the school district.

When disciplining any student for online student speech not involving the school's equipment, educators must first consider the *Sagehorn* standard. As with any disciplinary matter, when the student in question is a special education student or has a 504 plan, educators must also remember to conduct a manifestation determination if the proposed discipline results in a removal for more than ten cumulative days or five consecutive days. It is also important to keep in mind that the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act counts partial day suspensions towards this limit. Minn. Stat. § 121A.43(b).

Data Privacy Concerns

Like other teachers, special education teachers generally enjoy sharing the positive things happening in their classrooms. Like other teachers, special educators also need to be careful about protecting their students' data privacy rights. In the case of special education students,

this includes being careful to not identify the fact that a student receives special education services.

Subject to limited exceptions, educational data about students is private and requires consent before it may be released. One exception to private educational data is "directory information." Directory information is classified as public data and does not require consent before it is disseminated. Minn. Stat. § 13.32, subd. 5. What constitutes directory information is set forth in school policy and often includes data such as the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student. 20 U.S.C. §1232g(a)(5)(A).

Whether a student is receiving special education services is typically not directory data and, therefore, may not be disclosed without consent.

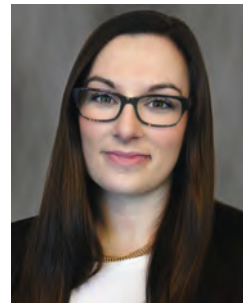
The protections on student educational data go beyond the obviously prohibited posts such as "Jimmy has shown great improvement despite his dyslexia," or "Jane is really acting out today thanks to her EBD." Something as innocuous as a teacher posting pictures from a special education field trip or a paraprofessional tweeting a picture of students working diligently in a special education setting. These types of posts could potentially violate the data privacy laws if a reader received enough information to identify a student who was receiving special education services. Accordingly, even posts, tweets, snaps, etc., made with the best of intentions, could expose a school district to liability.

Cyberbullying and Harassment of Special Education Students

Cyberbullying is a growing problem, and it raises additional challenges and considerations in the special education context. School districts are faced with special



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Emily J. Schnaidt
Attorney
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Legal Issues continued on page 13.

Congratulations to our 2017 MASE Award Recipients!

MASE Special Education Administrator of the Year Award

Jill Skarvold
Region 4 Low Incidence Facilitator
Lakes Country Service Cooperative

MASE Legacy Award

Keith Erickson
MASE Retiree & Former Director of Special Services
Albert Lea Area Schools

MASE New Special Education Leader Award

Tim Finn
Director of Special Services
St. Francis School District

MASE Distinguished Service Award

Michelle Jones
Division of School Finance Funding and Data
Minnesota Department of Education

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 2017 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

I feel privileged to be nominated for the position of President-Elect for the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education. Given the opportunity, I will continue the crucial work of MASE and support its mission to build strong leaders who work on behalf of the students with disabilities. I have over ten years of experience as an administrator and fourteen years teaching and coordinating programs serving students with a wide range of abilities and ages. I've been fortunate to have great mentors in my professional life and strive to do the same for others.



Laura Pingry-Kile
Director of Special Services
Eastern Carver County
Schools

I am excited for the opportunity to continue serving the members of MASE in a new and different capacity. I recently completed a term representing Area H directors on the MASE Board of Directors and I am currently serving on the MASE Professional Development Committee and representing MASE on the Minnesota Board of Teaching Standards and Rules Committee. I hold my fellow special education administrators in high regard and greatly respect their work and dedication to our field. I look forward to learning from those around me while working in collaboration on the issues that matter most - our student's success.

My priorities:

- Work collaboratively with Minnesota's educational leaders to keep children at the center of every decision.
- Recruit, build, and support new and veteran administrators and leaders in special education.
- Provide personalized professional development opportunities in line with MASE's strategic plan that meet the needs of all current and future leaders.
- Keep focused on ensuring progress on the action steps of MASE's strategic plan.
- Collaborate with other educational organizations to present a strong, unified front and continue to strengthen opportunities for students with disabilities in our schools.

Our advocacy and involvement in federal and state issues related to educating children with disabilities is important, now more than ever! We have an

I want to tell you what an honor it is for me to be nominated to serve as your Treasurer! I have been an educator for 32 years and have been an administrator in Special Education for 18 of those years.



Linda Gardner
Director of Special Services
Hopkins Public Schools

This is my first time stepping out to work for MASE in a broader capacity and I'm excited to be a contributor to our professional organization.

I am hopeful that this opportunity will allow me to become more knowledgeable about the world of special education and to bring my own strengths to the efforts we all make every day - to create a better future for our children with a variety of special needs. ●

Watch your email for the 2017 Election Ballots!



Once again this year's elections will be conducted online. Electronic ballots will be emailed during the week of March 13. Be sure to watch your email for your login information!

obligation to uphold the rights and responsibilities of our students. Through strong collaboration with our members and other organizations, we are a strong voice for students with special needs and their positive contributions to Minnesota's educational system. Contributing to the success of our organization is important to me. It would be an amazing opportunity and my honor to serve as your next MASE present-elect. ●

RESEARCH TO *practice*

Does Heroic Intervention Come at Cost to Sustained Improvement?

In his recent New Yorker article “The Heroism of Incremental Care,” Atul Gawande discusses how medicine has a savior complex that rewards heroic intervention while ignoring the value of incremental care. He notes, many physicians are drawn to medicine by the chance to charge in and solve a dangerous problem. In fact, the highest-paid specialties in medicine are orthopedics, cardiology, dermatology, gastroenterology, and radiology. Specialists in these fields receive an average income of \$400,000 per year. They are the “interventionists.” Most of their income is generated through defined procedures such as surgeries, conducting and reading MRIs, and other diagnostic procedures. They intervene with a procedure and then move on. On the flip side, the lowest paid specialties in medicine are pediatrics, endocrinology, family medicine, infectious disease, and immunology. Physicians in these fields earn about \$200,000 per year. They are the “incrementalists.” These practitioners focus on a person’s health over time – often for months or even years. They collect data, evaluate the impact of various treatments, and continually adjust treatment in response to the data. For incrementalists, success isn’t judged by momentary victories, rather by steps that result in sustained progress. And interestingly enough, there is research that demonstrates the value of primary-care physicians including lower rates of general mortality, infant mortality, and mortality from heart disease and strokes.

Gawande goes on to provide another example of incremental vs. heroic intervention. In 1967, The Silver Bridge that spanned the Ohio River collapsed, killing 46 people and injuring many more. The National Transportation Safety Board investigated the collapse and determined that corrosion along with an outdated design had caused the collapse. Inspection could have caught the issue, but until 1967, officials regarded these catastrophes as random and unavoidable. They found that investments in maintenance and improvement could extend the life of old bridges by decades and at a much lower cost than replacement. So, why do we still have over a hundred thousand problem bridges despite knowing that preservation is cheaper? Gawande argues that we continually raid funds intended for incremental maintenance to pay for new construction. He says “It is obvious why. Construction produces immediate and viable success; maintenance doesn’t.”

How does all of this relate to education? I would argue that parents, educators, and policymakers often put heroic intervention over an incremental approach.

Education has long been known for embracing the fad of the day and then moving on to the newest “intervention” without really giving things time to work. Huge investments are made in curriculum, instruction, and technology without ever evaluating the impact. Most districts now have systems to monitor student progress to evaluate the impact of interventions. When progress monitoring data show a lack of progress, interventions are abandoned and replaced with something else without finding out whether the intervention was being implemented with integrity. Today, many districts examine student data and allocate resources to provide extra help to students without looking at the implementation of universal instruction. If large numbers of students are below grade-level standards, providing extra instruction to large numbers of students is not only economically unfeasible, it also doesn’t fix the underlying issue.

The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) is partnering with districts to take an incrementalist approach to system improvement. We are working alongside districts and non-profit organizations to improve programs and practices. Not only do we collect information on whether a program, practice, or framework works, we also collect information to figure out how to make the program better so that it can be maintained over time and enhance student outcomes. We are also engaged in collaborative partnerships to try to secure legislative funding to support districts in the areas of research, evaluation, and assessment. We want to support school districts to conduct needs assessments to pinpoint areas for improvement, build tools to assist in the needs assessment and monitoring student achievement, engagement, and teacher/leader effectiveness. We also want to support districts to conduct their own program evaluation through templates and protocols. Finally, we hope to provide school districts with resources, professional development, and technical assistance. We are open to your ideas and input! Feel free to e-mail me at kgibbons@umn.edu! ●

The Heroism of Incremental Care: <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/01/23/the-heroism-of-incremental-care>



Kim Gibbons
Associate Director
Center for Applied Research
and Educational Improvement

Membership Made Easy

Membership in CASE (Council of Administrators of Special Education) has just been made much easier for you! This year, thanks to MASE working with CASE and CEC (Council Exceptional Children), we will be able to sign up for membership in CASE at the same time and same manner as we do with MASE. Please be on the look-out for the yearly membership materials this spring from MASE which will also list CASE membership. Many members have asked to have the CASE membership sent out at the same time in order to enable our MASE members to sign-up for CASE if they choose. A number of people have worked diligently with CASE and CEC to make this happen in Minnesota so we are very excited to be able to provide the opportunity.

It's important to always remember why we are members of an organization. Three valued aspects of CASE membership are: Influence, Leadership, Resources. During these very changing times in education, being able to turn to MASE as well as CASE as we do our work is very important. Just as we have a partner in MASE, CASE is our partner that influences policies and practices nationally, not only for students with disabilities, but all students, as well as providing opportunities for personal and professional growth. Become a member in CASE when membership materials come out to you this spring! ●



Jill Skarvold
CASE Liaison, MASE

Legal Issues from page 9.

education complaints and due process hearing requests arising out of bullying incidents with alarming frequency. When addressing cyberbullying, districts should be aware of their obligations to special education students, whether the student is the target or the perpetrator of bullying.

The Safe and Supportive Schools Act sets forth specific obligations with which schools must comply when addressing bullying, including cyberbullying. This law requires each district to adopt either its own anti-bullying policy or the state's model policy. Minn. Stat. § 121A.031, subd. 3. In either case, statute mandates that the district's policy require a "child's individualized education program or section 504 plan to address the skills and proficiencies the child needs to **respond to or not engage in** such conduct." Id. at subd. 4(a)(8). This provision effectively requires schools to involve IEP teams and 504 teams in responding to instances where a disabled student bullies, or is bullied by, another student. At a minimum, the team must decide whether it is appropriate to change the student's IEP or 504 plan to address the behavior. If the team decides that such a change is appropriate, then, of course, it will have an additional role as it amends the student's IEP or 504 plan.

Keeping lines of communication clear between administrators and special education teams is key to legal compliance in special education discipline matters. After all, a team cannot determine whether it is appropriate to change a student's IEP or 504 plan to address bullying if it is not aware of the incident. Nor can a team conduct a manifestation determination. Procedures should be in place for administrators to notify IEP teams or case managers when a student with a disability is the perpetrator or victim of bullying so they can respond as legally required.

In addition, harassment based on disability is a form of unlawful discrimination prohibited by Section 504, the ADA, and the Minnesota Human Rights Act. When online harassment is severe enough to create a hostile environment, it may violate a student's rights under these laws and may result in a denial of FAPE under the IDEA. While staff cannot be expected to know everything students do, they must take appropriate steps to respond to reported instances that could be considered harassment. The failure to do so could expose the school district to liability under state and federal law. ●

2017 MASE Leadership Issues (Formerly "Rural Issues")

April 17 - Benton Stearns
Education District, Sartell
10 am - 2 pm

Agenda:

10 am - Build Agenda
10:15 am - Discussion
12 noon - Lunch
2 pm - Adjourn

Join your colleagues from across the state for good company and great discussion about current topics in special education leadership!

MASE CALENDAR

2017

March 2

MASE Day at the Capitol

March 3

Special Education Directors' Forum
8 am-4:30 pm
Conference Center B, Rooms 15 and 16
Minnesota Department of Education, St. Paul

March 8

MASE Board of Directors Meeting
MASE New Leaders Cohort
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

March 9-10

MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

April 17

MASE Leadership Issues
10 am-2 pm
Benton Stearns Education District, Sartell

May 10

MASE New Leader's Cohort
Madden's Conference Center, Brainerd

May 10-12

MASE Best Practices
Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd

May 19

Special Education Directors' Forum
8 am-4:30 pm
Conference Center B, Rooms 15 and 16
Minnesota Department of Education, St. Paul

June 15-16

MASE Board Retreat
Crowne Plaza Minneapolis West, Plymouth

July 1

MASE Membership Renewal

September 8

Special Education Directors' Forum
8 am-4:30 pm
Conference Center B, Rooms 15 and 16
Minnesota Department of Education, St. Paul

October 25

MASE Board of Directors Meeting
Cragun's Brainerd

October 25-27

MASE Fall Leadership Conference
Cragun's, Brainerd

December 8

Special Education Directors' Forum
8 am-4:30 pm
Conference Center B, Rooms 15 and 16
Minnesota Department of Education, St. Paul