

Meaning, Purpose and Service to Others

Early this fall I wrote about the pursuit of educational excellence and the development of the key skills needed to be leaders of our organizations. Membership in MASE provides us with many opportunities to grow those skills. One of the nine principles I shared in the fall message is to "build a culture around service." Our work utilizing the MASE Strategic Plan helps us to focus our collective work to serve students with disabilities and their families as well as people in our organizations. We do this in many ways including our state and federal advocacy work, providing excellent professional development and support to our members.

There is nothing more encouraging than to hear firsthand where the people in our organizations find meaning and purpose in their work. Connecting our work to our purpose has a positive effect on our culture. Positive culture allows people to thrive and reinforces where they want to learn and work. We can reinvigorate our leadership and our districts by providing opportunities for our staff to identify where they find the meaning and purpose in their work.

I am excited to see our growing membership numbers and the level of participation on our committees. The MASE strategic plan acts as a compass to help guide our work. The hard work and focus of our committees and area members have helped us to progress toward our goals and reinforces a culture of service to others.



Cheryl Hall

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

Over the past year, the area representatives and committee chairs have reported on their progress at the quarterly board meetings. They have also completed a Plus/Delta activity at our annual board retreat in June. During our annual meeting at the fall conference, our members participated in an activity to review the data and identify possible next steps for the 2019-20 committee work. Below is a review of our current MSP goals.

MASE Strategic Plan Goals and Benchmarks:

Membership:

- By 2021, have a broader representation in MASE.
- Increase the number of "traditional" members.
- Increase the number of superintendents who are in the component group.
- Connect to student members (those working toward director).
- Communicate with clarity - why be a MASE member?
- Area Director Representatives connect to all members within their area.

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Special thanks to our 2019-20 MASE Business Partners!

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

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What's New?

I believe that there is a role for special education directors in the statewide efforts to address educational disparities. I encourage you to read the Star-Tribune Op-Ed (October 13, 2019) entitled, "Educational disparities still plague Minnesota students," (<http://www.startribune.com/educational-disparities-still-plague-minnesota-students/562859282/>). It was submitted by Neel Kashkari, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and Alan Page, Minnesota Supreme Court Justice (ret.). They encourage us to consider not just scores on standardized tests, but also graduation rates and more importantly (in my opinion), indicators of college readiness. I will also admit that the op-ed suggests that poverty be considered the primary factor impacting school performance rather than ethnicity or where you live in the state. I encourage you to read the op-ed. Then read the executive brief. This will hopefully lead you to read the entire report at www.minneapolisfed.org/achievementgaps.

Last year, at this same time, I wrote the following:

"It happened again last week, a young education professional began the process of turning in their keys to the district and moving on. Unfortunately, not to take on a new position. Not to accept a well-earned promotion, but to a new career outside of the field of education. I have known this individual since he first began his administrative career as a newbie, fresh from the classroom, assistant high school principal. It was immediately evident that he was a bright, highly ethical and articulate problem-solver with great leadership potential. His career trajectory took him to a position as the high school principal and most recently almost three years as a school superintendent. His school district benefited from his leadership as they worked their way out of significant financial challenges. All reports suggest that the school board was highly pleased with his job performance and was in the process of negotiating a new three-year contract. We've visited many times over the years and most recently he expressed frustration that he could not move his school district as far or as quickly forward as he would like. I also sensed that he was feeling challenged to find a work/home balance. Being truly present for his wife and children appeared to be something that was taking a back seat to his job."

The good news is that this same individual came to recognize that the world of private business has

its own silly rules, monolithic approval structures and practices that generate reams of paperwork. He also found that moving an organization is a challenge regardless of whether it is private or public. Finally, he recognized that his passion is in public education and he is helping to lead a school district where he can focus on instructional services and improving the outcomes for their diverse student population. I, for one, am pleased.



John Klaber
MASE Executive Director

So, what else is new? I've been to about a third of our area meetings and am scheduled into almost every remaining area. In preparation for the upcoming legislative session, **Brad Lundell**, our lobbyist, MASE President **Cheryl Hall** and I are meeting with MDE staff to see if there is a way forward on some form of ADSIS legislation. We continue to support various organizations as a member of the Special Education Funding Work Group. We are awaiting feedback on the financial runs based on the newest legislation to determine if there are positive and equitable outcomes for all of our members from those changes. I would appreciate hearing back from members as to how the new legislation has impacted their state funding. I will be attending a PELSB meeting with other stakeholders to discuss the process for reviewing the ABS license. My current position is that the changes that we put in place removing the requirement for additional graduate credits to renew the initial license should remain. If you have thoughts on the license, please email me. Cheryl Hall and I will be joining the MASA leadership team traveling to Washington D.C. in February to lobby Congress. Speaking of lobbying, now is a great time, before the Minnesota Legislature is called into session, to visit with your local legislators. Please invite them out to your site so that they may better understand the services and supports that you provide to the children of Minnesota.

At the October MASE Board meeting action was taken to reduce the membership fees for our student and retired members. Additionally, those two groups are excluded from our yearly cost of living increases. This

Executive Notes continued on page 7.



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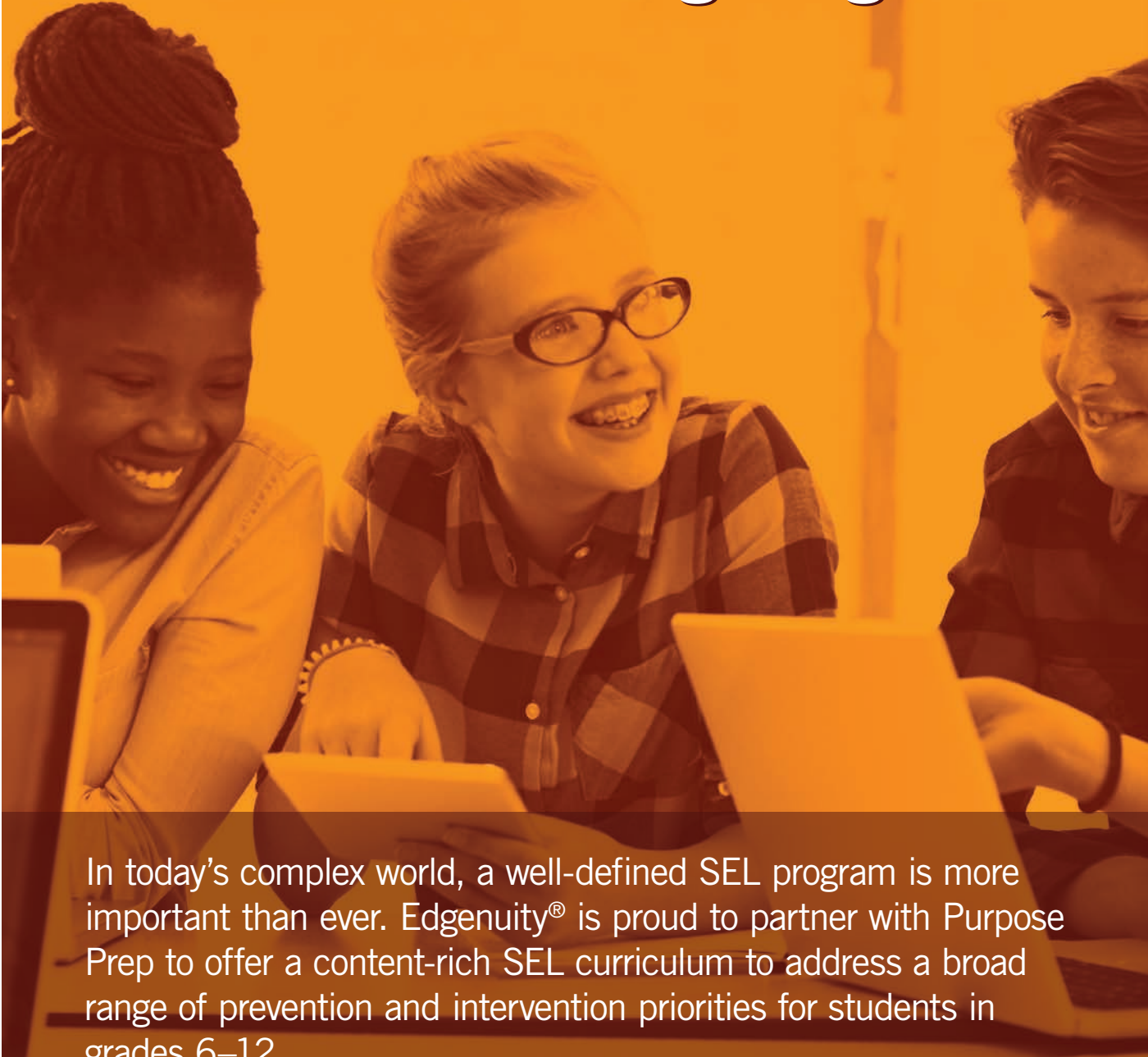
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A Comprehensive Social and Emotional Learning Program

A photograph of three students, two girls and one boy, sitting at a desk and looking at a laptop screen. They are all smiling and appear to be engaged in a collaborative activity. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter.

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MASE IMPACT
Winter 2019

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Send materials to be considered for publication to:

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Assistant Superintendent of Specialized Services, Saint Paul Public Schools

Executive Director

John Klaber

President's Message from page 1.

Professional Development:

- By 2021, all directors will have the opportunity to attend the finance boot camp.
- All MASE members will be familiar with strategic plans.
- PD committee will look at ways to support Tier 1 and 2 teachers, plus directors who oversee them.
- Get strategic plan compiled and provide a visual.
- Analyze SpEd 101 and determine how MASE can continue the opportunity to help teachers reach deeper levels of understanding.

Legislative:

- By June of 2021, the MASE membership will be active advocates for meaningful legislative change.
- Training membership to "tell our story."
- Building personal relationships with legislators and advocates.
- Increased communication with lobbyists.

Federal Advocacy:

- By June 2021, increased knowledge of our members to communicate on a federal level and increase their knowledge of changes to IDEA so that MASE can build consensus on how to respond.
- Provide members language to communicate with legislators consistently.
- Members will be able to identify congressional representatives by region and residence and make contact, with representatives, annually.
- Committee will utilize list-serve to encourage members to contact legislators promptly (fostering relationships).
- Regional representatives could share this in each region.

Area Representatives, committee chairs and board members identified present levels of performance on each goal, noting growth towards the identified benchmarks. They also identified areas of need and the next steps to be taken. Updates were then provided to committee chairs and area representatives.

During the next legislative session beginning in January, we will have another opportunity to demonstrate our service leadership. It will be important for members to share the MASE legislative platform (now on the

President's Message continued on page 7.

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.

Know someone who still needs to renew their membership?

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

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

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

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MASE Website) and our local stories with our state representatives. The MASE legislative committee developed a wonderful document to help others understand our platform to improve services for students. The committee has also developed training videos and documents to help our members share their stories. John Klaber and I, along with MASA Executive President, Gary Amoroso will be traveling to Washington D.C. in late February to participate in federal advocacy meetings with congressional representatives. I hope you will also join us at the MASE day at the Capitol on March 5, 2020, to bring our message to our state legislators.

Please consider opportunities to utilize your skills in pursuit of leadership excellence and help spread a culture of service by sharing the MASE platform with others and by telling your story. I thank you for the important work and service you provide on behalf of students with disabilities each and every day. ●



CEC Convention

February 5-8, 2020

Oregon Convention Center
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Register today!

www.cecconvention.org

Executive Notes from page 3.

was only possible because of the improved financial health of our organization. Your membership fees and willingness to attend our conferences and trainings over the past few years is the primary reason for that improved status. The board also determined that the time of a separate MASE Leadership Issues (Rural Directors) meeting has passed. Attendance over the past few years has dwindled even with web-enabled attendance. The last two meetings will be January 10, 2020, and a yet to be determined date in the spring. The board took action to support MREA's legislative initiative allowing special education cooperatives and education districts to levy for facility improvements. I appreciate that the board also took action to cover the costs associated with my overnight travel to area meetings and other MASE functions.

I encourage you to review the list of MASE Business Partners posted on our website. These partners help us provide the services and supports to our members. Finally, speaking of our website. It was recently updated to a more contemporary style.

Thank you to for all you do on behalf of all the students in Minnesota! ●

FALL CONFERENCE

thank you



2020 MASA/MASE Spring Conference!

Wednesday-Friday

March 12-13, 2020

Minneapolis Marriott Northwest,
Brooklyn Park

Thanks to everyone who made our 2019 MASE Fall Leadership Conference a great success! We had three wonderful days of learning, networking, and fun.

Congratulations to Area C, winner of the coveted Wine Tasting Trophy for their jumpsuited ode to "Orange is the New Black."

Applause for **Gaynard Brown**, recipient of the 2019 MASE Legacy Award.

Thanks to all who participated in the fundraising events — because of your generosity, we raised \$13,292.86 for the Stenswick-Benson Scholarship Fund. This is a significant increase (about double) from previous years, thanks to the active and energetic fundraising committee, including co-chairs **Keith Erickson**, retired Director from Albert Lea, and **Chad Williams**, Director of Special Services for the Jordan Public Schools; scholarship committee chair **Shannon Erickson**, Director of Special Education, Fergus Falls Area Special Education Cooperative, and retiree volunteers **Stephanie Corbey** and **Barbara Troolin**.

And enthusiastic thanks to our business partners and exhibitors for their valued support!

MASE Fall Conference Handouts Available <https://www.mnase.org/fall-conference-handouts.html>

2019-20 MASE Legislative Platform and Online Resources!

The Minnesota Legislative Session will begin on February 11, 2020 and MASE will be at the Capitol to support the Association's legislative priorities.

Thank you to all of you who participated in the development of MASE's 2019 platform, especially the Legislative Committee Members, Area Representatives, and members who offered input and feedback. We will also provide the services and support you need to actively advocate for your own students, staff and community.

The MASE Legislative Committee asks for your help and support. Please contact your senator(s) and representative(s) personally to briefly introduce yourself and tell them that they will soon receive a copy of the MASE legislative platform for this year. This is a great way to reconnect if you already have a relationship with the person or to introduce yourself as a resource for them in the area of special education if you have not talked with them in the past.

MASE will provide several supports, including:

✓ The 2020 MASE Legislative Platform - find it at www.mnase.org!

This document will also be sent to the Governor and all legislators, education lobbyists, other education associations, and MDE leaders. The platform features three key areas of focus:

- Increase Educational Efficiency
- Recruit and Retain Qualified Teachers
- Equitable and Sustainable Funding Systems

✓ Regular Legislative Updates via email from MASE's legislative consultant Brad Lundell.

✓ Plan to attend the MASE Day at the Capitol. All MASE members are welcome to attend!

March 5, 2020 • 8 am • Location - Best Western Capitol Ridge • Capitol Hall East

✓ MASE has a wealth of information on our web site that may come in handy during the session. See our legislative page, <https://www.mnase.org/legislative.html>, for info and resources.

Minnesota Administrators
for Special Education
Legislative Platform 2019-2020



Mission

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

MASE is organized to promote professional leadership, provide the opportunity for study of problems common to its members, and to communicate, through discussion and publications, information that will develop improved services for exceptional children. Further, its purpose is to foster high quality programs of professional development for members, to make studies of selected programs that relate to services to children with disabilities, improving the leadership of administrators for special education and to be active in the legislative process.

When the holiday season descends upon us, it means several things. Along with all the usual festivities, those of us who spend a lot of time at the Legislature have the bonus of knowing that the next legislative session is just around the corner. The 2020 legislative session convenes on February 11 (closer to Valentine's Day than Christmas, which can only mean a session when the Legislature will love everyone's proposals—I wish).

MASE is aggressively preparing for the session with the platform completed and meetings with decisionmakers on the docket. The MASE platform addresses a wide range of topics spanning the need to bring greater efficiency to service delivery to revisions in the special education funding formula. While changes in the funding system will likely have to wait until 2021 (more on that later), the opportunity to make substantive policy changes in the coming session does exist and one hopes there will be an appetite to tackle issues that do need to be addressed.

One set of proposals that fell by the wayside in 2019 was the list of paperwork reductions put together by the New Ulm School District. Only two of the seven suggestions were adopted, but the interest in pursuing these items remains strong and discussion of the proposed changes will once again take place in 2020. It was extremely disappointing that all of these modest and straightforward paperwork reductions were not approved, but I expect there is still a chance for success in the coming session. While these changes don't put a major dent in the paperwork burden faced by special education teachers, approving them would show a seriousness on the part of the Legislature to address the paperwork burden and would be a strong first step toward tackling even heavier burdens in this area.

It is also hoped that the proposal contained in last year's House bill to allow school districts to serve students with an IEP in an unrelated disability category with ADSIS dollars. This measure was well on the way to gaining approval in 2019 when it was discovered there was a fiscal note attached to it. Given the other special education funding priorities in the omnibus education funding and policy bill, the fiscal note sounded the death knell for this initiative. However, discussions are ongoing with the Minnesota Department of Education to try to find a way to make the proposal revenue neutral. This would provide

districts with greater flexibility in identifying students who would benefit from ADSIS.

The MASE platform also promotes the expansion of third-party billing to include mental health services provided within the IEP to be reimbursed from Federal Medicaid funds. Currently, special education staff can receive reimbursement for services delivered in the

evaluation stage for determining the eligibility of students for special education services, but they are prohibited from receiving reimbursement for mental health services provided once eligibility has been established. This issue has been discussed for years at the administrative level but reaching an agreement between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Education has proven to be, if not insurmountable, exceedingly difficult to accomplish. Perhaps a legislative push will prove helpful in moving this along.

As stated earlier, the chances for significant revision and improvement of the special education formula are extremely low this year. Last year's actions should hold the cross-subsidy in line, but clearly, more work needs to be done. The Governor has appointed a working group to deal with education funding across-the-board and that group will have a comprehensive set of proposals ready for the 2021 legislative session and I am reasonably certain that changes to the special education formula will be included in that set. The special education community is well represented on this working group, with Goodhue County Education District Executive Director **Cherie Johnson** and St. Paul School District Assistant Superintendent **Marcy Doud** both serving as participants. Their wide range of experience should help the working group as a whole understand the complexities of the special education formula and what changes are needed to make the system better.

If you have questions or comments, don't hesitate to contact me at lundelllegislative31@gmail.com or 612-220-7459. Thanks for all you do for students with special needs throughout Minnesota. It is my honor to work with you. ●



Brad Lundell
MASE Lobbyist

Steering Clear of Custodial Disputes:

Legal obligations to unmarried, separated and divorced parents in the special education context

More and more, schools are being pulled into adversarial custody disputes. From data request fishing expeditions to conflicting parental input during an IEP meeting, these situations can be quite precarious and require careful navigation on the part of school staff. Generally, as a best practice, schools should refrain from picking sides. Schools need not (and should not) be a mediator for custodial disputes. However, to ensure that schools remain compliant with the law, even when wedged between a metaphorical rock and a hard place, it is important for school staff to have a working knowledge of parental rights and how various custody arrangements impact those rights.

Schools have a number of legal obligations to parents. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, for example, school officials are required to provide a full right of access to student records to *both parents* unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state statute, or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation, or custody "that specifically revokes these rights." 34 C.F.R. § 99.4. A noncustodial parent has the same right to (1) access and to receive copies of school records and information pertaining to their child; (2) attend conferences; and (3) to be informed about their child's welfare, educational progress, and status. Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, subd. 1a. This is true for general education students as well as students who receive special education and related services.

In contrast, schools may not release data about a student's parent to the parent's ex-spouse. Data on parents is considered "private data" under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and must be maintained and disseminated accordingly.

When it comes to students receiving special education and related services, schools also have a legal obligation to provide the parents of a child with a disability an adequate opportunity to meaningfully participate in the IEP process. To that end, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), all significant decisions regarding a child's IEP must be made, in the first instance, by the IEP team, including the parents.

Per the IDEA a student's parents are entitled to

participate in the process of creating an IEP for the child. 34 C.F.R. 300.321(a)(1). "Parents," for purposes of the IDEA, refers to individuals who have the right to make educational decisions for a child. See 34 C.F.R. 300.30(a). Under the IDEA, a "parent" also includes "an individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare." 34 C.F.R. § 300.30(a).

In the case of children born to a married couple, a school must assume that both parents have full parental rights and share custody and decision-making authority. Unless the parents are *legally separated*, the parents are still married, even if they are not living together. If the parents are legally separated, schools should review a copy of the separation order, to determine the effect of the separation on custody. Absent a legal separation decree, agreement, or court order that provides otherwise, both separated parents have equal decision-making authority. As for unmarried parents, the biological mother of the child has sole custody of the child until paternity has been established or until custody is determined in a separate proceeding. Minn. Stat. § 257.541, subd. 1.

When the parents of a child with a disability are divorced, the parental rights under the IDEA apply to both parents, unless a court order or other state law specifies otherwise. 71 Fed. Reg. 46,568 (2006). Therefore, schools must consider the input



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of both parents unless a court order explicitly grants educational decision-making authority to one parent over the other. For example, in *Cape Henlopen Sch. Dist.*, 114 LRP 35279 (SEA DE 2014), because a state court order expressly granted educational decision-making power to the mother only, the school district wasn't required to consider the father's input in the development of student's IEP and placement.

The key takeaway when determining custody is to presume that parents share educational decision-making authority until a court order to the contrary is in hand. When a parent insists that the school should limit another parent's access to school records or limit another parent's participation in the special education process, the response of school staff can be simple and concise (not to mention Jerry Maguire-approved): "Show me the order."

Notably, parents have the right to participate, not to dictate the IEP team decisions. *Slama v. Independent Sch. Dist. No. 2580*, 259 F.Supp.2d. 880, 885 (D. Minn. 2003). While the IEP team must consider parental input, the term "consider" does not mean that the team must acquiesce to every demand the parent makes. Indeed, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals has specifically noted that the term "consider" is not synonymous with "accept," "agree," or "incorporate." *K.E. ex rel. K.E. v. Indep. Sch. Dist. No. 15*, 647 F.3d 795, 805-06 (8th Cir. 2011). It is up to the IEP team to decide what the student needs in order to receive a free appropriate public education ("FAPE"), even if what the student needs is not necessarily consistent with what the parent is requesting.

In some cases, the interests of the student and the interests of the parent may diverge, leaving the IEP team in a challenging position. For example, the obligations owed to the student and to the student's parents can come into conflict when parents demand services that the other members of the child's IEP team believe to be inappropriate for the child. When differences of opinion between the parent of a child with a disability and the other members of the IEP team arise, it is imperative that staff feel empowered to do what is best for the student. For example, if a goal is to increase a student's independence, providing excessive, unnecessary accommodations and/or services at the request of the parent is not serving the best interest of the student. While parents may certainly and often do bring valuable information to the table, special education staff are the subject matter experts. Parental input must be considered by the child's IEP team as a whole, but a school's

obligation to provide a FAPE cannot be delegated to the parent. It is the IEP team that is ultimately responsible for determining what the student needs in order to receive a FAPE.

What should the IEP team do if two parents have conflicting points of view with respect to their child's needs? Again, the obligation of the team is to *consider* the input of both parents and then make a determination based on all of the available information. If tensions get high during an IEP meeting, staff should try to focus the discussion on the student, not the parent(s). It may also be helpful to draft an agenda for the meeting to help the team move forward and not get bogged. If a parent begins to exhibit intimidating or hostile behavior toward school staff, staff should refrain from engaging, and, if the conduct persists, conclude the meeting.

At the end of the day, a school's obligation is to the student, who is entitled to receive a FAPE. This substantive obligation to provide a child with FAPE differs from the procedural obligations that schools have to provide the parents of a child with a disability the opportunity to participate in the special education process. Remember, the student's right to FAPE always trumps the parents' procedural rights and the school must refuse to provide the service it believes would be inappropriate for the child. ●

MASE Leadership Issues *(Formerly "Rural Issues")*

January 10, 2020
Benton Stearns Education District
Sartell, MN
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!

WELCOME

new members

Saido Abdirashid, Assistant Director of Special Education, Creatively Focused

Tonya Allen, Principal, Intermediate School District 287

Pat Ames, Assistant Director of Special Education, Zumbro Education District

Emily Aust, ECSE Coordinator, Belle Plaine Public Schools

Greg Beeck, Interim Principal, Intermediate School District 287

Adrienne Cauldero, Special Education Coordinator, Lakes International Language Academy

Kathleen Cooney, Specialized Programming Director, Hiawatha Academies

Ariella Degner, Assistant Director of Special Education, Creatively Focused

Meghan Dobson, Dean of Students, Intermediate School District 917

Jennifer Drummond, Assistant Director of Student Services, Roseville Area Schools

Allison Eitheim, Assistant Director of Special Education, SWWC Service Cooperative

Tara Gann, Title I, Princeton Public Schools

Cassandra Gohman, Due Process Specialist, SW Central Service Cooperative

Daniel Gregory, Special Education Coordinator, Elk River Area School District

Caren Heltne, Alternative Site Specialist, MAWSECO

Tonia Humble, Special Education Teacher / Student in Special Education

Director program, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Schools

Perry Iberg, District Special Education Coordinator, Goodhue County Education District

Jen Johnson, Assistant Director of Special Education, Bemidji Regional Interdistrict Council

Nicolle Johnston, Special Education Teacher (Graduate Student for Special Education Administration), Minneota

Tiffany Kanz, School Psychologist, Edina Public Schools

Jennifer Kimman, Assistant Director of Special Education, SWWC Service Cooperative

Angela Kleinedler, Coordinator Early Childhood Special Education, Minnetonka Public Schools

Amanda Klutman, Principal, Intermediate School District 287

Amy Krueger, Assistant Director, Mid-State Education District

Sarah Lancette, District Behavior Specialist/ Lead Mentor Teacher, Osseo Area Schools

John Larson, Student Support Services Supervisor, White Bear Lake Area Schools

Angie Lauderbaugh, Special Education Coordinator, Meeker-Wright Special Education Cooperative

Anna Lloyd, Special Services Director, Grand Rapids School District

Stacy Magnus, Special Education Coordinator, Blooming Prairie Public Schools

Jennifer Marquardt, Special Education Coordinator, Goodhue County Education District

WELCOME

new members

Min MartinOakes, Early Childhood Coordinator, Goodhue County Education District

Danielle Mehr, Special Education Supervisor, St. Cloud Area School District

Katie Mitchell, Special Education Teacher, St. Michael-Albertville School District

Judith Nagel, Special Education Supervisor, Anoka-Hennepin School District

Tracy Oliver, District Special Education Coordinator, Goodhue County Education District

David Orlowsky, Assistant Superintendent, Shakopee Public Schools

Tiffany Palmer, Special Education Coordinator, Bemidji Area Schools

Michael Parry, School Psychologist, Paul Bunyan Education Cooperative

Amy Peterson, Special Education Coordinator, Elk River Area School District

Melinda Peterson, Student, N/A

Alexia Poppy-Finley, Principal, Intermediate School District 287

Julie Przekwas, School Psychologist, Northland Learning Center

Hanna Rodenbaugh, Assistant Special Education Director, Northland Learning Center

Nathan Rudolph, Superintendent, Cambridge-Isanti Public Schools

Heidi Ryan, Special Education Supervisor, Bemidji Regional Interdistrict Council

Bonnie Schmitz, Evaluation Manager, Stewartville Public Schools

Jaclyn Smith, ECSE Special Education Building Coordinator, Osseo Area Schools

Sonia Smith, Director of Special Education, Goodhue County Education District

Samantha Steinman, Assistant Director of Special Education, Mankato Area Public Schools

Jill Sundblad, Special Education Supervisor, Meeker-Wright Special Education Cooperative

Shelly Theis, Special Education Coordinator, Hutchinson Public School

David Thomas, Special Education Coordinator (TOSA), White Bear Lake Area Schools

Travis Tucker, Special Education Supervisor, Anoka Hennepin School District

Heidi Van der Hagen, Assistant Director of Special Education, BlueSky Online Charter School

Jill Waldvogel, Director of Special Education, St. Cloud Math & Science Academy

Kimberly Welsh, Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator, Rochester Public School

Ami Wold, Assistant Director of Mental Health & Crisis Intervention, Intermediate School District 287

Crystal Wolfram, Assistant Director of Special Education, Creatively Focused

Deirdra Yarbro, Director of Special Services, Brooklyn Center Community Schools

Award Nominations Are Open Until January 6, 2020

Each year, MASE provides an opportunity to recognize outstanding members who are dedicated leaders and advocates for children and Minnesota education. We encourage you to consider nominating yourself or a colleague for recognition. Nominate someone who you feel reflects the qualities of a leader who is committed to education and who is an exemplary representative of MASE. Please remember that anyone can nominate for MASE awards. Please feel free to share award nomination information with your staff and community.

All the award applications can be found on the MASE homepage or at www.mnase.org/awards - look in the right hand column.

All nomination materials are due to dchristians@mnasa.org by the end of the day **January 6, 2020**.

2020 MASE Distinguished Service Award

Nomination form and info: www.mnase.org/mase-distinguished-service-award.html

MASE has periodically selected recipients to receive the MASE Distinguished Service Award. The award is presented at the MASE/MASA Spring Conference. The award is not necessarily given on a yearly basis, but is presented when a recipient of particular merit is identified.

2020 Special Education Administrator of the Year Award

Nomination form and info: www.mnase.org/mase-special-education-administrator-of-the-year

The MASE Board of Directors established this award for members in the spring of 1991, and the first awards were presented at the 1992 Spring Conference. The purpose of the award is to honor one or more administrators from throughout Minnesota for excellence in special education leadership.

2020 MASE Legacy Award

Nomination form and info: www.mnase.org/mase-legacy-award

An important focus of the work of MASE is the support of emerging educational leaders. The MASE Legacy Award recognizes a member for their commitment to encouraging, developing, and mentoring leaders who reflect MASE's mission.

2020 MASE New Special Education Leader Award

Nomination form and info: www.mnase.org/mase-new-special-education-leader

This award is given annually to a new leader who exhibits the leadership excellence required to be effective in challenging times. These skills include: a willingness to risk, an ability to collaborate, skills in listening and communicating, and a broad understanding of the educational system. Further, this award is given to a new leader who has demonstrated passion and commitment to the MASE mission of shaping policies and practices which impact the quality of education for students with disabilities.

MASE Nomination FAQ's

Who can nominate?

MASE voting members may nominate officer candidates. Anyone may nominate award recipient candidates.

How do you submit a nomination?

Complete the nomination form(s) and submit to the MASE office by January 6, 2020.

Where do I get the nomination forms?

Forms are sent to all members via email and are available on the MASE web site (www.mnase.org).

Is it required that you nominate through your region?

No.

Why does the committee need all the information for the award nominations?

To make a well considered and deliberate selection.

Leadership Nominations Are Open Until January 6, 2020

Nominate someone who you feel reflects the qualities of a leader who is committed to education and who is an exemplary representative of MASE!

Nominations for MASE Leadership Positions

MASE officers must be:

- *Active Members in good standing in MASE.
- *Members of CASE while serving their terms of office.

Nominations are **open until January 6, 2020 at 4 pm** for the MASE offices of: President-Elect and Secretary.

Fill out the online nomination form at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/THBJKQ6>

MASE President-Elect 2020-21

The President-Elect serves one year, followed by one year as President and one year as Past President.

Duties as President-Elect:

The President-Elect shall serve in the event of resignation or absence of the President. S/he shall serve as Co-chair of the Strategic Planning and Federal Advocacy Committees, appoint a Chair/Co-chair-Elect to each Standing Committee, and have such other responsibilities as necessary in regard to matters as delegated by the President and/or Board of Directors.

The President-Elect travels to Washington, D.C. for CASE summer legislative and CASE fall Board meeting.

Duties as President - 2021-22:

The President shall preside at the annual business meeting of MASE and at the meetings of the Board of Directors. S/he shall appoint ad hoc committee chairpersons subject to the approval of the officers. This officer shall act for MASE between annual meetings, clearing, by mail, telephone, e-mail or other forms of electronic communication whenever necessary, important actions with the officers. The President, or such alternate as s/he may designate, shall represent MASE at meetings of other groups where MASE representation is desired or required. The President may appoint a parliamentarian to serve at all business meetings of MASE. The President shall serve as a standing member of the Business Partnership Committee.

MASE Secretary 2020-22

The Secretary serves a two year term.

Duties as Secretary:

The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of MASE meetings and meetings of the officers. S/he shall carry on correspondence and other responsibilities as necessary in regard to matters as delegated by the President and/or Board of Directors.

A list of all eligible MASE voting members can be found online at <https://www.mnase.org/2020-board-nominations.html>.

Fill out the online nomination form at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/THBJKQ6>

Nominations are open until January 6, 2020 at 4 pm.

Nomination FAQs

Who can nominate?

MASE voting members may nominate officer candidates.

A list of eligible voting members can be found online here: <https://www.mnase.org/2020-board-nominations.html>

How do you submit a nomination?

Complete the online nomination form online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/THBJKQ6>

Where do I get the nomination forms?

The nomination form is sent to all members via email and are available on the MASE web site (<https://www.mnase.org>).

Is it required that you nominate through your region?

No.

Getting Active at the Federal Level

Several people have commented that they don't know how to advocate at a federal level. In reality - there are only two small differences between advocating at a state level versus a federal level:

- It is not as easy to go to your representative's office as it is at the state level. (However, that is certainly not a requirement for advocacy.)
- It is not as easy to get an appointment with the representative; however, you can get an appointment with their staff (and they are the ones actually doing the work).

What are some ways that you can advocate at a federal level?

- An opportunity to have conversations with federal advocates is at regional MASA meetings. Each region typically brings in state legislators to visit with the superintendents. This is a great time for making sure we are advocating for students with disabilities. If you aren't a MASA member (consider joining), connect with a superintendent to find out when they will be holding these meetings.
- Federal legislators have people in their MN office to make connections. Think about contacting these state offices to invite legislators to your area.
- Email is an efficient tool and can be an effective way to communicate with legislators. To find your federal legislator, go to the CASE Legislative Action Center at <http://bit.ly/SpedAction>. In the middle of the page enter your zip code and it will bring up all of your legislators.
- Use CASE resources, on the Action Center on the same page as in the previous bullet.

There are a lot of federal discussions happening regarding IDEA funding. Please consider reaching out to federal representatives. ●



Sarah Mittelstadt
Director of Special Services
Southern Plains Education
Cooperative
MASA Federal Advocacy
Co-Chair
2019-20 MASE President-Elect

Save the Date!



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

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

Time: Meeting will begin at 8 am
Location: Best Western Capitol Ridge
Room: Capital Hall East

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

All MASE members are welcome to attend!

More details to come!

RESEARCH TO *practice*

Dispelling Myths about the Science of Learning: How do Educators think Student's Learn Best?

There is a plethora of research from the past several decades that link effective teaching practices to improved student learning. While it is encouraging that so much research exists, the challenge for educational leaders is how to ensure that teachers are applying these practices in the classroom. Although it may seem intuitive to identify these practices and provide training on how to implement them, ensuring classroom application of effective practices relates to how teachers think. Research has focused on teacher mindframes which are comprised of individual's beliefs, thoughts, actions, and results. In their recent book *Mindframes*, Hattie and Zierer (2017) identified ten mindframes that lay the groundwork for educator's actions and decisions. These mindframes are founded on the principle that teachers are evaluators, change agents, learning experts, and seekers of feedback who are constantly engaged with dialogue and challenge. Thus, integrating the science of learning into teaching practice requires an understanding of teacher beliefs about learning and teaching.

But, what if teacher beliefs about learning and teaching are inaccurate? A recent survey of over 200 educators on how students learn found that myths about student learning are prevalent among educators, and that many educators do not have a robust understanding of the principles of learning (Boser, 2019). The survey explored teacher beliefs around several myths about learning including teaching to learning styles, tailoring instruction to right or left brained learners, and the belief that intelligence is genetically determined. In addition, the survey focused on six instructional strategies that have well-established support in the research literature:

1. Elaboration – making connections between new information to other information (e.g., experiences, memories, prior knowledge) in a meaningful way.
2. Retrieval Practice – actively trying to recall information that we want to remember rather than rereading books or notes.

3. Metacognition – reflection one's own understanding and strategies for solving problems.
4. Spaced Practice – practicing and reviewing skills in smaller chunks of time to promote long-term retention.
5. Interleaving – practicing several skills at a time versus one skill at a time by mixing up problem types to facilitate the ability to apply the right procedure to the right problem.
6. Dual Coding – combining verbal materials with visual materials (visuals, texts, diagrams, graphic organizers) in a way that facilitates conceptual understanding.



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

Results of the survey identified myths about student learning and a disconnect between specific research-based teaching strategies and their use in the classroom. For example, 77% of survey respondents agreed with the notion that students are either left-brained or right-brained and that this difference influences how students learn - despite that fact that there is no scientific support for it in the research literature. In addition, 97% of educators endorsed the concept of categorizing students into one of several learning styles (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.) and then teaching to this style to maximize student outcomes. While students may report that they have different preferences for learning from visual or auditory material, research has proven that these preferences do not impact learning outcomes (Willingham, Hughes, & Doboyli, 2015). In our current educational landscape, many district educators are having conversations about individual and personalized learning as ways to increase student outcomes. It is imperative that these conversations must emphasize the difference between ideas that do not impact student outcomes (like learning styles) and

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Research to Practice from page 17.

ideas like student prior knowledge that can have a significant impact on student outcomes.

Just as the survey identified myths about student learning, results also pointed to a disconnect between specific research-based teaching strategies and their use in the classroom. For example, retrieval practice which involves students actively trying to recall information that they want to remember is a more effective strategy for long-term learning than simply rereading material. However, only 31% of survey respondents endorsed retrieval practice over rereading when asked which strategy would be the most effective for learning (Boser, 2019). Many researchers have hypothesized various reasons for the disconnect between research and practice.

One hypothesis for why teachers may have difficulty identifying effective learning and teaching strategies, is that some teacher training textbooks contain little or no discussion of the large body of learning research. In fact, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released a report in 2016 that presented findings of textbooks used in teacher training and whether these textbooks covered fundamental instructional strategies identified by the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) practice guide as having strong to moderate research evidence. These strategies included: (1) pairing graphics with words, (2) linking abstract concepts with concrete representations, (3) posing probing questions, (4) repeatedly alternating solved and unsolved problems, (5) distributed practice, and (6) assessing to boost retention. The NCTQ review examined a sample of 48 textbooks used in 48 elementary and secondary teacher preparation programs to determine the extent to which these six strategies were covered. They found that none of the textbooks used in the sample accurately described all six fundamental instructional strategies. In fact, at most, only two of the six strategies were covered in any particular text. Moreover, when strategies were mentioned in textbooks, the discussion may have been as little as 1-2 sentences in a text that was typically several hundred pages in length (NCTQ, 2016).

While textbooks are important for pre-service teacher training, practicing educators tend to learn about new research in education through professional development and teacher conferences/workshops. Providing accurate information through these channels could be useful ways to dispel some of the widely believed myths and misunderstandings about

teaching and learning. As district leaders, we need to continue focusing on providing teachers with the knowledge and skills to improve instruction based on the science of learning. We also need to work to create time and space for professional learning communities to integrate and test their knowledge in the classroom using student outcome data.

At CAREI, we understand that it is sometimes hard to identify research that is empirically-validated and replicated over time. Check out these resources to help in your quest to identify evidence-based practices:

- Boser, U. (2019, July 1). What Do Teachers Know About The Science of Learning? <https://www.the-learning-agency.com/insights/what-do-teachers-know-about-the-science-of-learning>
- Evidence for ESSA <https://www.evidenceforessa.org/>
- Hattie, J., & Zierer, K. (2017). 10 Mindframes for Visible Learning: Teaching for Success. Routledge. <https://corwin-connect.com/2016/02/john-hatties-10th-mindframe-for-learning/>
- Pashler, H., Bain, P. M., Bottge, B. A., Graesser, A., Koedinger, K., McDaniel, M., & Metcalfe, J. (2007). Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning. IES Practice Guide. NCER 2007-2004. National Center for Education Research. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED498555.pdf>
- Pomerance, L., Greenberg, J., & Walsh, K. (2016). Learning about Learning. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED570861.pdf>.
- Willingham, D. T., Hughes, E. M., & Dobolyi, D. G. (2015). The scientific status of learning styles theories. *Teaching of Psychology*, 42(3), 266-271. <http://www.danielwillingham.com/>

Please feel free to contact me at kgibbons@umn.edu if you need help deciphering the research! ●

MASE CALENDAR

2019

December 10

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

2020

January 10

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

January 24

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

February 5-8

CEC Convention and Expo
Portland, Oregon

March 5

2020 MASE Day at the Capitol
Best Western Capitol Ridge, Capitol Hall East

March 6

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

March 11

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

March 12-13

MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

April 17

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

May 8

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

May 13

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

May 13-15

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

June 25-26

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

July 1

Membership Renewal

Save the Date!

2020 MASE Fall Conference is moving!

The fall conference will be October 21-23,
2020 at Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd!

Stay tuned for more details!