

## Together We're Better

**D**uring difficult times we have so much to do, so much stress, and we are so overwhelmed, but we need to keep in mind that we are not in it alone. Together we can work together to meet the many demands.

As an organization, we work closely with other organizations to meet these demands. Recently MASE was awarded the Friend of Social Work award by the Minnesota School Social Workers Association (MSSWA). We have been working together with them for many years to ensure we are meeting the needs of all students. However, recently our relationship has strengthened as we have advocated to bill medical assistance for services provided by social workers without having to meet all of the requirements of CTSS.

We work closely with many other organizations as well. Through our work with MSBA, MREA, MASA, and others we are able to advocate with a common message for what is needed to meet the educational needs of students. Through our collaborative

relationship with MASA, we are able to share in professional development and the fabulous office staff that help make all of the wheels of MASE run.

Our relationships with other organizations are endless and can go on forever, but our most valuable relationships are those of our membership. As an organization, we are 515 members strong; working to build professional development, advocate, and learn from one another to make a difference for the students we serve. Each of you as a member provides value to our organization. Whether you are taking a role as a board member, a committee member, a participant in the Slice of Collaboration, sharing with a colleague how you are supporting your teachers during COVID, or offer a listening ear to one of your colleagues, you are each a valuable member.

In the words of Hellen Keller, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." ●



**Sarah Mittelstadt**  
Director of Special Services  
Southern Plains Education  
Cooperative  
MASE President

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MASE was recognized by the MN School Social Workers Association as its 2020 Friend of School Social Work. Pictured (L-R): Sarah Mittelstadt, MASE President; Molly Fox, MSSWA President; John Klaber, MASE Executive Director.

Special thanks to our 2020-21 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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# EXECUTIVE *notes*

I hadn't planned on starting with the following, but it is a big deal: As of November 13th our membership information shows that MASE has 515 members. This represents an over 10% increase in the size of our organization since last year. Thank you to all of you who chose to be part of MASE, noting the many retired members who continue to identify with MASE. A special thank you to those of you who encouraged and facilitated our newest members to join MASE.

## **"No matter where you go, there you are."**

We are certainly there...quarantined, isolated, safe, distant, but not alone. Unfortunately, you may also be aware of someone who is struggling, has struggled with the virus and unfortunately lost the battle. As I write this, holiday gatherings are in the process of being canceled, travel plans, if at all, now involve charting a non-stop drive through particular states. Parents are welcoming their college students home, not just for the holidays (challenging even during the best of times), but potentially for a second semester learning from home. Let's embrace these new opportunities.

MASE, as a newly minted platinum affiliate of the Council of Administrators for Special Education (CASE), has been contributing to the conversations about how the federal government can assist states in addressing the challenges of delivering services to students with disabilities. We were also well represented at the recent CASE board meeting and continue to meet on a monthly basis with our organization's national leadership.

Our fall conference was a resounding success. Over 215 participants joined us, including representatives from CASE. This is the first time in recent memory that we have been fortunate to have the president, president-elect, and the executive director all in attendance at one of our conferences. A special shout-out to Professional Development Committee chairs Holle Spessard and Melanie Kray and to the MASA/MASE staff lead by Mia Urick for pulling off a remarkably powerful conference where we were able to address both the heart and the head needs of our members.

"The more things change, the more they remain the same"...not so much!

I recently visited with a retired special education director with more than 30 years of experience in

the field. In that conversation, I mentioned that MASE was now being consulted and asked for input prior to new guidance coming from MDE. His response was initially stunned silence and then a comment that in his entire career he had never experienced having the department ask for input prior to any new guidance being disseminated. I am aware that the department is also seeking input from the advocacy community. For their efforts, I want to say thank you to the department. I want you, our members, to be aware that in response we have pulled together a group of directors from diverse locales who stand ready (on short notice) to represent you in responding to requests from the department for our thoughts and impressions regarding potential guidance.

Our committees continue their work on behalf of our members. The Legislative Committee has met multiple times this fall and has finalized our platform for the upcoming legislative session. In the interim, our lobbyist, Brad Lundell has been asked to monitor any discussions regarding efforts to support school districts with the financial stressors caused by significant dips in enrollment. These "hold-harmless" proposals assure that a district receives no less state general fund support moving forward than it did pre-COVID. Our request is that similar consideration be given to state supported special education funding. A legislative brochure has been developed and work is underway for you to have increased access to your legislators via a collaboration with CASE. We will soon be rolling out an on-line legislative contact system that will streamline your ability to advise and influence your legislators on the issues important to MASE. While we are also preparing for our MASE Day at the Capitol (March 4, 2021), we also need to be prepared for the potential of a legislative session where limited face to face contact is the norm. The Federal Advocacy Committee long considered moribund may have new life with President-Elect Joe Biden's professed desire to pursue full funding of the federal government's obligations under IDEA. There has always been bipartisan



**John Klaber**  
MASE Executive Director

***Executive Notes continued on page 4.***

**MASE IMPACT**  
**Winter 2020**

IMPACT is a publication of the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education,  
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**Marcy Doud**

Assistant Superintendent of Specialized Services, Saint Paul Public Schools

**Executive Director**

**John Klaber**

**Executive Notes from page 3**

support, admittedly tepid, for this piece of legislation. With leadership coming from the president's office there is a possibility of seeing some movement. The most likely scenario being a phase-in over 10 years to reach full funding. The Nominations Committee has met and is fielding candidates for our various awards and open positions within MASE, including president-elect. ....if asked, please say "yes."

I continue to relish the opportunity to visit with you during your area/region meetings. I think of those opportunities as the silver-lining in the pandemic. I can get anywhere in the state at a moment's notice and it gives me some of the "people fix" that I need. Thinking of needs, please take time to address your personal needs. It is not selfish and is necessary for you to be the person that you want to be or, better yet, the person that you think your dog wants you to be. ●

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## Yet Another "Transition" for 2020: Presidential Transition Team Priorities for Special Education

Cheryl Johnson, Executive Director, Goodhue County Education District, CASE Liaison

The federal government of the United States is one of the largest organizations in the world, and the process of transferring control from one group of political leaders to another is incredibly complex. There are thousands of real-time decisions that will have to be made from the moment the next president takes office. There are organizational competencies that have to be developed. There is a long-standing tradition where as soon as the result of the election becomes apparent, the incumbent administration undertakes to help the incoming administration take up the reins. While this transition has been stilted this year, it is still proceeding through the work of many groups, one of which is the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE).

The next president has to be ready to govern on day one. While the constitution says almost nothing about presidential transitions, other than that the next president is going to take office on January 20, the Presidential Transition Act, passed in 1963, sets forth processes and requirements that govern both before and after a presidential election.

One of these processes is for critical updates to be presented to the Presidential Transition Team. CASE delivered such a document to President-Elect Biden's Team on November 16, 2020. The CASE Priorities for special education begins with a statement on the Impact of COVID-19 on Special Education. All of us have witnessed firsthand some of these impacts. Special education staff have risen to the occasion by completing more due process in a few months than in a usual year, learning new technologies, attempting to engage all of their learners during distance and hybrid learning models while supporting the increasing mental health needs of their students and each other. The looming maintenance of effort issues that we will have to tackle soon will serve to only complicate the task of meeting the needs of our students and staff. The ask for the new administration is that they "[adopt] a cohesive education policy that provides a significant infusion of additional federal dollars, addresses the continued need for flexibility within IDEA which was not written anticipating implementation in a pandemic, and supports

communication and collaboration among the U.S. Department of Education, state departments of education, and local school districts."

In addition to the challenges of COVID-19, CASE set out three priorities for the new administration. The first of these priorities is funding for IDEA which also encompasses keeping public funds in public schools. The second priority is to focus energy on interagency collaboration focused on school and community health supports. Lastly, CASE asked the new administration to lean in on educator and leadership development, including growing, recruiting, and retaining the workforce and collaborating with higher education to help address educator shortages.

Briefly, for the first priority CASE is asking for an infusion of dollars for districts for COVID-19 relief and then a glide slope to full funding. You all know that "in the beginning" the federal government planned to provide for 40 percent of the excess costs of educating students with disabilities. Twenty-five years later that still has never happened. The current administration's budget proposes major cuts to education. CASE is asking for "a one-time amount for COVID-19 relief of \$13 billion for IDEA and then to phase up to 40 percent."

Mental health support for students was a priority before the pandemic. COVID-19 has served to exacerbate the level of need. In order to meet this need, public agencies will need to support each other to make sure students and families receive the care they need. CASE, in the second of their three priorities, "supports embedding social and emotional learning in all instructional areas" and "coordinating services among community providers, designated agencies, and schools, focusing on positive behavioral and mental health supports". The pandemic has had adverse social and emotional impact on our students, families, staff and community. The new administration must work with us to meet this challenge.

The last of the three priorities set out by CASE is

***CASE Update continued on page 7.***

## The MASE Fall Raffle

### Fall Fundraising a Virtual Success!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the fall fundraising benefitting MNSELF. Because of your generosity, MNSELF received \$7,688.14 to support their mission of service to special education leaders, a considerable result given that we were unable to have the wine tasting, silent auction, and other events supporting the fundraising.

Thank you to committee co-chairs Keith Erickson and Chad Williams for their months of work, and congratulations to the prize winners!

### CASE Update from page 6.

the need to attract, prepare, and retain high quality educators. With special education teachers leaving the profession at nearly twice the rate of their general education peers, both rural and metropolitan districts have struggled to fill their staffing needs. With impending retirements, the loss of enrollment in teacher preparation programs and now the impact of COVID-19 on the profession, this staffing crisis will only worsen.

Each member of MASE has stories to share about how these priorities impact students with disabilities. When you think of these examples, I encourage you to write them down. Then over the coming months, contact your federal legislators and share those stories, send them on to me or do both. I will compile examples and make sure that our representatives have them. Those stories can impact change.

We have a lot of work to do. Together we can create change. ●

### 2020 Annual CASE Fall Conference - Recordings Available!

For those of you that attended the Virtual CASE Fall Conference and were unable to attend all of the sessions you would have liked to attend. You now can. Most of the sessions were recorded. You can access them by using the same login you did for the virtual conference. Click the session you want to view, scroll down to the "description session" and then to "session recording." The Pheedloop portal will remain open through December 30, 2020. ●



### SAVE THE DATE! 2021 MASE Fall Leadership Conference

October 27-29, 2021  
Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd, MN



MASE  
Best Practices  
May 12-14, 2021  
Madden's on Gull  
Lake, Brainerd



## Award Nominations Are Open Until January 11, 2021

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](http://www.mnase.org/awards) - look in the right hand column.

All nomination materials are due to [dave.christians@mnase.org](mailto:dave.christians@mnase.org) by the end of the day **January 11, 2021**.

### **2021 MASE Distinguished Service Award**

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

### **2021 Special Education Administrator of the Year Award**

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

### **2021 MASE Legacy Award**

Nomination form and info: [www.mnase.org/mase-legacy-award](http://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.

### **2021 MASE New Special Education Leader Award**

Nomination form and info: [www.mnase.org/mase-new-special-education-leader](http://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 11, 2021.

#### **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/awards](http://www.mnase.org/awards)).

#### **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 11, 2021

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 11, 2021 at 4 pm** for the MASE offices of: President-Elect and Secretary.

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

### MASE President-Elect 2021-22

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 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 - 2022-23:*

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.

The President travels to Washington D.C. for the fall MASA/MASE federal advocacy trip and CASE spring Board meeting

### MASE Treasurer 2021-23

The Treasurer serves a two year term.

Duties as Treasurer:

The Treasurer shall oversee the receipt and disbursement, upon proper authorization, all funds of MASE. S/he shall keep an accurate record of receipts and expenditures, and present a report at each annual meeting. The Treasurer shall draw up a proposed budget for the forthcoming year and submit it at the annual business meeting. S/he shall carry on financial and other responsibilities as necessary in regard to matters as delegated by the President and/or Board of Directors.

The Treasurer chairs the Business Partnership Committee.

The Business Partnership Committee:

1. Recruits MASE business partner members;
2. Monitors business partner member relationships;
3. Reviews and makes recommendations to the MASE Board of Directors regarding business partner membership benefits; and
4. Performs other similar duties at the direction of the President and/or Board of Directors.

A list of all eligible MASE voting members can be found online at [www.mnase.org/2021-board-nominations](http://www.mnase.org/2021-board-nominations).

# LEGISLATIVE *update*

The votes have been counted and the composition of the Legislature for the coming biennium has been established barring any change due to recounts in close legislative races. As it stands right now, the Senate remains under Republican control with a line-up of 34 Republicans, 31 DFLers, and two members of a newly-established Independent Caucus. The DFL retained control of the House of Representatives, although they lost five votes from their majority and the partisan balance in the body sits at 70 DFLers and 64 Republicans.

In the days following the election, I stated that I believed that all of the education-related chairs would remain the same as partisan control of each body remained the same. Not so. In the vein of "the only thing that surprises me is sometimes I am still surprised," chairs in both legislative houses changed. While Representative Jim Davnie retained his status as Chair of the House Education Funding Division, Representative Ruth Richardson will serve as Chair of the House Education Policy Committee. Representative Cheryl Youakim, who chaired the House Education Policy Committee last biennium, will move to the Chair of the House Property Tax Division. In the Senate, Senator Roger Chamberlain and Senator Carla Nelson are switching committees, with Chamberlain assuming the helm of the E-12 Finance and Policy Committee and Nelson taking over the Tax Committee. Committee membership has yet to be determined, but given the tight partisan balance in both houses, expect one or two vote majorities on each committee.

Elected officials received mixed news on December 1 with the release of the state budget forecast for the current fiscal year and the coming biennium. The short-term news was surprisingly good as the rebound in the economy—as uneven as it certainly is—has given the state a surplus of \$621.0 million for the remainder of this fiscal year. The outlook for the next biennium is not nearly as rosy, as there is a projected shortfall for the biennium of \$1.3 billion. It is important to remember that these figures are projected estimates. The Minnesota state economist reported last week that Minnesota's diversified economy has the state poised for a strong recovery once the country gets past the CoVID-19 virus and that could certainly make our financial picture look much better a year from now, but for the meantime the Legislature is almost

certain to err toward the frugal side during the 2021 legislative session. In the short term, expect that the Legislature and Governor Walz will come together with a business relief package during the December special session that will likely dip into the bottom-line surplus that currently exists.

The state's economic challenge will probably impact the education finance working group that has been toiling away since mid-2019 developing a set of education funding and policy proposals to bring greater adequacy and equity in Minnesota's education funding system. MASE members Cherie Johnson—who served as one of the working group co-chairs—and Marcy Doud were working group members and were able to apply their extensive knowledge and experience in helping craft a set of meaningful proposals to make special education funding reflect the true needs of districts and distribute revenue through a set of equitable formulas. Included in the working group recommendations as



Brad Lundell  
MASE Lobbyist

*Legislative Update continued on page 13.*

## *Save the Date!* *2021 MASE Day at the Capitol*

**Date:** March 4, 2021

**Time:** Meeting will begin at 8 am

**Location:** Drury Plaza Hotel St. Paul Downtown

**Room:** Empire Room

**The day will begin with refreshments and a legislative meeting and then the group will head to the capitol to meet with various legislators. The group will then reconvene back at the to-be-determined meeting location at around 2:30 pm.**

**All MASE members are welcome to attend - so mark your calendars!**

## "Can You Hear Me Now?"

### *Strengthening Our Voice on Capitol Hill*

One of the main ways we can strengthen our voice at the federal level is through our partnership with the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE). CASE has [created an Action Center](#) to assist us all in our advocacy efforts. The following legislative priorities are currently featured on the Action Center:

- Addressing Educator Shortages Must Be a Priority for Congress
- Tell Congress to Support Education Funding in FY 21
- Support Additional Relief for Schools in a COVID-19 Relief Bill
- Support Positive Mental Health Support in Schools
- Support Narrow, Targeted, & Temporary Flexibilities in IDEA

Once you click on a specific topic, you will be taken to a short legislator-friendly brief with a built-in opportunity for you to reach out to your federal legislator(s) through an email, tweet, and/or phone. For all three of these communication methods, you are provided with a template message or script that you can choose to tweak or use as is in your advocacy efforts. This feature really helps me not only feel confident about my message, but reduces the amount of time it takes to engage in this important work exponentially! And don't worry about locating your legislator's contact information! Your legislators will be automatically populated based on your address. You can also select to receive text and email alerts and for the Action Center site to remember you for future use.

On the Action Center homepage, you will also find an opportunity to sign up for alerts, locate legislation by entering keywords, and identify your elected officials and/or candidates.

I'd like to encourage you to take a few minutes to try out this amazing federal advocacy resource that we have at our fingertips! Our federal legislators need to hear from us now more than ever. Let our collective voice be heard! ●



**Jamie Nord**  
Executive Director  
St. Croix River Education District  
MASE Federal Advocacy Co-Chair  
2020-21 MASE President-Elect



As the nation navigates the COVID-19 pandemic, parents and families of students with disabilities have collaborated with school districts and state education agencies from across the country to ensure every child is provided the **free appropriate public education** guaranteed to them by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We are asking for **narrow, temporary, and targeted** flexibilities in implementing IDEA during this pandemic so that we can keep our focus on collaborating with parents and families and on providing appropriate services to students with disabilities.

MASE does not support waivers to the IDEA. We fully support maintaining the integrity of the IDEA, including the foundational principles of the right to FAPE in the IRE. We urge you to take action now by writing and calling your Member of Congress today. Then, be sure to share this message on social media using the hashtag #FindTheFlexibility

## 2020-21 Membership Renewal

If you need to renew your MASE membership -or- if you know a colleague that would benefit from joining MASE. Please visit <https://events.resultsathand.com/membership/1194>

## Business Partnership Renewal

This year, renewing your business partnership membership will be even easier because we have established an online platform for your renewals. You can renew your membership online at this link: <https://events.resultsathand.com/mase/1198>.

## Accessible Technology & Section 504: At school and at home

**S**ection 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is, at its core, a civil rights and anti-discrimination law. In short, Section 504 requires school districts refrain from discriminating against students with disabilities. Under Section 504, schools have a legal obligation to ensure that qualified students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to access and participate in school programs and activities.

If the student meets the definition of a qualified individual with a disability under Section 504, the school district must provide the student with a Free Appropriate Public Education ("FAPE"). 34 C.F.R. § 104.33(a). A FAPE involves the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services that are designed to meet individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of their nondisabled peers. 34 C.F.R. § 104.33(b).

Ensuring that students with disabilities receive a FAPE often involves providing aids and services in the form of accommodations and program modifications that address the needs of students with disabilities. This means that schools may need to change the way things are usually done in order to take into account a child's disability-related needs. In practice, this can look like modifying rules, policies or practices; removing architectural or communication barriers; or providing other supports, aids, or services. Reasonable accommodations will allow students with disabilities to receive equal access to classrooms, digital media, websites, applications, and digital documents without barriers.

When formulating Section 504 plans for students with qualifying disabilities, consideration should be given to what assistive technology, if any, would allow a student with a disability an equal opportunity to access and participate in school programs and activities. For example, some 504 students may require specific assistive technology to access their educational programming, such as a screen reader to access the online content via a computer or a computer program that allows the student to access content without the use of a standard mouse or keyboard. Looking at the individual needs of the individual student is what matters most.

Furthermore, technology used inside or outside the classroom for school-related purposes must be accessible to students with disabilities in order to ensure equal access. Some students may need information provided in a different format in order to gain equal access. For instance, a student might require a format that allows for adjustable text size. Other students may need accessible PDFs to ensure equal access. Consider whether the student needs captioning for videos and recorded instruction. Transcriptions of audio or video files may also be appropriate in some cases. may benefit from having a checklist to run through when considering a student's individual technology needs.

Technology continues to be a major component of the modern-day classroom. However, with many schools shifting educational programming to a distance learning or hybrid learning format, students and families are being asked to access and engage with educational programming in a new way—at home, without a classroom teacher sitting in the room with them. So, it is arguably more important than it has ever been in the past to ensure that the technology that students are using at home is accessible.

Proactive and ongoing communication with families to find out what is and is not working is paramount. School districts may be able to avoid discrimination claims under Section 504 by identifying, and



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Attorney & Shareholder  
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Attorney  
Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, P.A.

***Legal Notes continued on page 13.***



### ***Legal Notes from page 12.***

reidentifying, barriers to accessibility as they come up (as opposed to down the road). Identifying problems is the first essential step to identifying solutions. If school staff are noting that a student is not participating in online learning, steps should be taken to follow up with the student and the family at the earliest possibility in order to assess whether there is an issue with access or engagement. In either case, schools should provide accommodations or modifications that would mitigate these issues. This might look like additional technology support to the student and/or parents. Alternatively, schools may need to modify the technology that the student is being asked to utilize to accommodate the students' needs. For instance, a student may need to have all of her materials centrally located in one document or file as opposed to using a number of different programs, formats, and/or links.

Reviewing and revising Section 504 plans to take into account a new learning environment is also a good idea. If a student's environment and the manner in which he accesses his education has changed, the accommodations or modifications in that student's 504 plan might need to be adjusted as well. Review and revise 504 plans with purpose and intention to ensure that accommodations that are no longer needed by the student are removed and that any necessary new accommodations or modifications are put into place and implemented by staff. ●

### ***Legislative Update from page 10.***

they relate to special education are:

1. Replacing the three current formulas used to calculate initial special education aid with a single formula reimbursing 50% of prior year nonfederal special education expenditures and 100% of special education transportation expenditures.
2. Replace the two formulas used to calculate the excess cost with a single formula.
3. Increase cross-subsidy reduction revenue and fund it through a highly equalized aid/levy formula.
4. Reform charter school tuition calculations.
5. Strengthen third party billing to allow school social workers to third party bill.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the state budget, it is unlikely that the working group product will be able to be implemented aggressively beginning in 2021, but that should not stop the discussion of the many strong proposals contained in the final report from receiving extensive study and discussion and perhaps the beginning of a phase-in for many of the report's elements.

As usual, if you have questions or comments, don't hesitate to contact me at either [lundelllegislative31@gmail.com](mailto:lundelllegislative31@gmail.com) or 612-220-7459. Thanks for all you are doing to help the most vulnerable students in Minnesota. ●

## **CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

As we attempt to keep you updated with the latest (and constantly evolving) information regarding COVID-19, school closures, and student/ staff support, MASE and MASA will be collaborating to get information to you as quickly as possible.

**MASE has a COVID-19 resource page on our web site at [www.mnase.org/covid-19](http://www.mnase.org/covid-19)**

Site content postings will be in chronological order, with the most recent posts first on the site.

All email communication from MASE will be sent to all MASE and MASA members.

# RESEARCH TO *practice*

## Identification of Needs and Resources to Support Educators During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has permeated all aspects of our daily lives since March 6, 2020, when Governor Walz issued Executive Order 20-01 declaring a peacetime emergency. It seems like there isn't a single area that has been spared ranging from healthcare, the economy, our social lives, all levels of the educational system, entertainment, travel, to the political landscape. As educators, we've had to become adaptive and nimble in ways that most of us have never experienced. As the state's land grant institution, The University of Minnesota has been working to gather information to assist educators in gathering information to help inform state and local decision making. The Wisconsin Minnesota Comprehensive Center (WMCC) located within CAREI analyzed over 300 district distance learning plans and conducted 33 focus groups comprised of multiple stakeholders in the spring to help identify strengths, barriers, and potential solutions in the delivery of instruction. During the summer, the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) developed and disseminated a survey to gain feedback from educators to inform the University on how the CEHD might be helpful in providing supports to PK-12 schools and share that feedback with the state as a whole. A total of 13,077 educators representing 409 Districts and Charter Schools across the state of Minnesota responded to the survey. As a result, multiple sources of data converged to generate several themes.

### Themes Across Data Sources

1. Relationships Matter: Educators' number one worry was relationship building and the ability to socially connect and engage with students and families.
2. Technology is Important: Technology was a significant concern and hardware, internet connectivity, and technology support needs contributed to inequities across the state.
3. Educators are Worried: Educators were significantly worried about many factors related to learning in the 2020-2021 school year, from how they will build relationships in distance learning to how they will be able to stay healthy in in-person learning.

4. Equitable Access to High-Quality instruction: Educators reported great concern about whether they can meet students' needs academically, socially, and emotionally through distance learning. They were particularly worried about students receiving special education services, multilingual learners, and traditionally marginalized students.
5. Learning Occurred for Educators: While distance learning presented many challenges, educators also reported that there were lessons learned and skills acquired that they would carry with them into whatever this school year brings and, eventually, their classrooms.
6. Assessing Student Outcomes: Many districts are experiencing challenges with assessing student outcomes. Grading remains a consistent theme across all sources of information, and there is a need for guidance on high quality, equitable practices around grading and administering assessments. Schools have had a challenging time assessing for proficiency and monitoring students' progress.



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

### Our Current Reality

Currently, the pandemic rages on and continues to require the educational system to be adaptive and flexible. However, we are in a much better place to respond and adapt given our past experiences. To that end, CAREI is working to address some key themes listed above and provide resources and guidance to address these needs.

#### *Building relationships and increasing student engagement*

Recognizing educators' needs to specifically address the social-emotional needs of students, families, and staff, CAREI developed a professional learning sequence focused on recovery and redesign with

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## Research to Practice from page 14.

an intentional focus on the whole child. This is an on-demand self-paced course that includes seven short video modules focused on (1) key ingredients of a whole child recipe for recovery and redesign, (2) educator stress, coping and resilience, (3) cultivating healthy social connections, (4) establishing and teaching shared expectations and routines, (5) teaching and learning to promote student emotional well-being, (6) reflective practices and data-based decision making to promote equity, and (7) sustained action to acknowledge and address issues of racism. More information is available on the CAREI website: <https://www.cehd.umn.edu/carei/>

### *Assessing Student Outcomes*

Due to the absence of 2020 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment data and the challenges being reported by districts in assessing student learning, the WMCC will be partnering with the Minnesota Department of Education to develop specific guidance for districts on how to assess student learning across in-person, hybrid, and distance learning modules. In addition, protocols will be developed to guide districts in their review of student learning and strategies will be shared around how to help close any gaps in learning due to the pandemic. This information will be provided in a variety of formats including rapid topical briefs, webinars, videos, and data protocols.

### *Continuous Improvement*

The WMCSS will be partnering with the Minnesota Department of Education to develop and deploy surveys for educators, families, and students to aid in monitoring system progress toward identifying successes, challenges, communication, and learning. We anticipate surveys to be available to administer Winter, Spring, and Fall 2021 with state and district level reports available.

The University of Minnesota wants to identify ways we can be helpful to the educational community. However, the University is a large system, and I often hear that it is difficult to know who to call. I would encourage you to think of CAREI as the entry point. Please feel free to reach out to me at [kgibbons@umn.edu](mailto:kgibbons@umn.edu) or 651-303-4141 with any questions, and I can help direct you to appropriate resources. ●

### Resource Links

[CEHD Survey Results](#)

[Focus Group Summary](#)

[Distance Learning Summary](#)

## Save the Date! 2021 MASA/MASE Spring Conference

March 11-12, 2021

Minneapolis Marriott Northwest

Brooklyn Park, MN



### CEC Convention

March 8-13, 2021

Virtual

Register today!

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



### Special Education Legislative Summit

July 11-14, 2021

Alexandria, VA

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

# MASE CALENDAR

## 2020

### **December 10**

MASE New Leaders Cohort - Full Group  
Virtual

### **December 11**

MDE Special Education Directors' Forum

## 2021

### **January 4**

MASE New Leaders Cohort - Directors' Session  
2-4pm, Virtual

### **January 8**

MDE Special Education Directors' Forum

### **January 11**

MASE Awards and Leadership Nominations Due

### **January 22**

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

### **February 4**

MASE New Leaders Cohort - Directors' Session  
2-4pm, Virtual

### **February 12**

MDE Special Education Directors' Forum

### **March 4**

MASE Day at the Capitol

### **March 5**

MDE Special Education Directors' Forum

### **March 10**

MASE Board of Directors Meeting  
MASE New Leaders Cohort - Full Group  
Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

### **March 11-12**

MASA/MASE Spring Conference  
Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

### **April 8**

MASE New Leaders Cohort - Directors' Session  
2-4pm, Virtual

### **April 9**

MDE Special Education Directors' Forum

### **April 16**

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

### **May 7**

MDE Special Education Directors' Forum

### **May 12**

MASE New Leaders Cohort - Full Group  
Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd

### **May 12-14**

MASE Best Practices  
Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd

### **June 11**

MDE Special Education Directors' Forum

### **June 25-26**

MASE & MASA Board of Directors Retreats  
Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park

### **October 27**

MASE Board of Directors Meeting  
Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd

### **October 27-29**

MASE Fall Leadership Conference