

Getting to the Next Level

by Ric Dressen,
**MASA President and
 Superintendent,
 Alexandria Schools**

I am honored to serve as the 2004-05 MASA President. I am proud of the organization and the over 630 members it serves. I am committed to working through the organization to move MASA to the "next level" of performance.

MASA's successes as an organization are most impressive. Our challenge is to build on those successes and become committed to enhanced, improved and new performance strategies that will elevate our organizational achievement.

Focus on Action Goals

Our 2004-05 MASA Action Goals will serve as the leadership team's focus in guiding MASA to the next level. These goals are based on input received from our MASA membership through the 2003-04 Member Services Committee and the 2003-04 Board of Directors. The goals and action strategies were developed at the June, 2004 Summer Leadership Retreat in Brainerd. MASA Board Members from the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years as well as the 2004-05 MASA Committee Chairs participated in the retreat.

The four goals are noted in the insert on page 3. Each goal has identified action strategies and targeted measurements. The complete 2004-05 MASA Action

Goals can be found on our MASA website (www.mnasa.org). The goals were formally approved at the Fall Board of Directors' Meeting.

Keys to Successful 2004-05 Year

The Leadership Retreat participants also identified two keys to a successful 2004-05 year for MASA. These keys will be used to energize our efforts and work as an organization throughout the year.

1. Applying the Strengths of MASA

MASA has a strong foundation of core competencies and skills. We will need to call upon these strengths as we address the many educational challenges facing our organization and state. The identified strengths are:

- MASA staff,
- Leadership talent of members,
- Communication network of MASA,
- History of MASA success,
- MASA's connections with other educational groups.

2. Recognizing the Power of "Believing is Seeing"

MASA borrows a phrase from photojournalist DeWitt Jones who challenges leaders to recognize the value of "believing is seeing" versus "seeing is believing." We need to recognize the benefits of casting a vision of hope and possibilities for our organization and Minnesota public education.

The more we are able to do this, the more great things can happen for our young people. I challenge all of us to apply these identified strategies as we move into the 2004-05 school year. They include:



Ric Dressen

- Focus on investing in our future – educating our youth,
- Share positive student stories with the public,
- Recognize the opportunities within the challenges,
- Create reflective time for members to stay positive,
- Involve others with educational reform from former governors to current students,
- Build stronger collegial networks within membership,
- Focus on the MASA mission.

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Helping Your Employees Plan a Better Financial Future — A Partnership with Union Leaders



Charlie Kyte

by **Charlie Kyte,**
MASA Executive Director

Often school superintendents and administrators are placed in adversarial roles with employees of school districts.

Yet, as a leader, we should look for

ways in which we can work together to create the most favorable future for our employees.

Outside of the negotiations process, there is a potential for school leaders, union officials and representatives of employee groups to work together positively to find ways in which individual employees can create a better financial future for themselves. Herein lies an opportunity for school leaders to work together as

opposed to being an adversarial negotiation.

Some ideas of where employee representatives and school leaders might work together is in the education of employees on how better to manage their personal finances and to plan for their futures over the course of the year. Seminars held either at the district or at the building on subjects such as:

- Better utilization affects benefit plans
- The long-term power of tax deferred (403B) saving
- Analysis of long-term care insurance options
- Personal and family budgeting
- Home ownership
- Retirement planning (in mid to

larger size districts it is often possible to have a representative of TRA come out to meet with your prospective retirees)

- Healthy living style and wellness programs are all areas in which various groups of employees could benefit working together.

Employee representative leaders in combination with the school administration can help to arrange and provide such seminars.

MASA encourages school leaders to look for ways in which they can positively join with their employees to help individuals analyze and create their best possible financial futures. This is good business from a relationship standpoint and good business in terms of caring for those that work in your district. •

MASA/MASE — A Win-Win

by **Ric Dressen,**
MASA President and Superintendent,
Alexandria Schools
and
Don Schuld,
MASE President
and Director of Student Support Services, Stillwater Schools

The decade-long partnership between the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) and the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) has been beneficial to both organizations. While each organization has a different focus, our common mission – Young people’s future – holds us together. This partnership has created win’s

for both associations.

The benefits include maximizing our associations’:

- Support staff expertise,
- Conference planning and logistics,
- Communication effectiveness,
- Leadership training energies.

The close working relationship that we have in our districts can be mirrored at the state level through this evolving partnership.

We do recognize our partnership does struggle at times to stay connected. This, indeed, is part of the evolution of a partnership. We feel that out of the struggles a

partnership can be stronger and strengthen the win-win relationship.

We are committed to growing and defining our partnership to help us accomplish the goals of both associations and Minnesota public education. These are challenging times for all of us. We feel this partnership will be a great asset as we work to address our challenges.

Our leadership commitment for the partnership will include regular communications with one another to celebrate the partnership’s successes and problem-solve its challenges. If you have thoughts and ideas on the partnership, please feel free to contact either one of us. •

Leaders Forum
Fall, 2004

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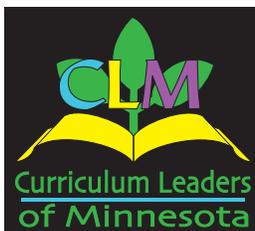
And Away We Go!

The 2004-05 MASA goals and success keys are already in motion. Numerous meetings, actions and activities have been occurring throughout the recent months. And, our next months are going to get busier. We are going to need everyone's help, support, assistance and energy to get MASA and public education to the next level of performance. It will take a team effort.

We can do it. We will do it. I believe it and look forward to seeing it occur during the 2004-05 school year. •

MASA 2004-05 Action Goals

1. Continue to strengthen the role of MASA as a premier organization speaking on behalf of children and as a respected leader for public education.
2. Continue to build the MASA leadership network to assist and support.
3. Continue to build working relationships with elected state officials and the Minnesota Department of Education, allowing MASA to be included in discussion and planning for initiatives shaping public education.
4. Continue to build a working relationship with elected federal officials and the AASA Legislative Team.



Curriculum Leaders of Minnesota (CLM) Provides Information and Support

Curriculum Leaders of Minnesota (CLM) is a group organized to inform and support curriculum development and instruction in Minnesota public schools. CLM provides a network of your colleagues as a meeting point for the issues and initiatives important to curriculum leaders throughout our state. CLM has begun a number of projects to support and inform, such as:

- **The CLM Fall Conference: Late note: as we go to press, registration is full! Get Connected to Curriculum!**

Join us in Brainerd this November 17 - 19 (Wednesday evening - Friday noon) at Cragun's Resort. The Get Connected to Curriculum Conference is an opportunity for school district curriculum leaders to participate in working sessions that provide a fertile culture for sharing, learning, and creating. Participants will return

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What Are The Odds? Random Drug Testing Of Students



Charlie Roach

by Charles A. Roach
Attorney
Rider Bennett,
LLP

With national surveys reporting that one-half of all students have tried an illicit drug by the time they finish high school and that one-third of 10th

graders have smoked marijuana in the last 12 months, school districts are looking at new ways to combat drug use by students. Many school districts already have policies that prohibit the possession or use of drugs on school property. But some school districts are finding that their existing policies are not enough to stem the tide of rising drug use by students. So what about supplementing these policies with a student drug testing program?

Student drug testing by public schools implicates rights guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution for people to be free from “unreasonable searches and seizures” by the government. Generally, for student drug testing to be lawful a school district either must have reasonable suspicion that a particular student has used drugs or there must be “special needs” to justify conducting a drug test without individualized suspicion. The U.S. Supreme Court has considered the issue of when “special needs” exist to justify random drug testing of students in two cases.

In Veronia School District v. Acton, the Supreme Court upheld a school district’s drug testing program that included random drug testing of all

students participating in interscholastic athletics. The Court found that the random testing program was reasonable given the special safety risks and lower expectation of privacy inherent in sports. Subsequently, in Board of Education Pottawatomie City v. Earls, the Supreme Court extended its reasoning to permit random drug testing of students who participated in voluntary, extracurricular activities outside the regular curriculum (e.g., band, choir, cheerleading), as well as student athletes. Based on these leading cases, an increasing number of school districts are looking at, and establishing, drug testing policies to combat the use of drugs by students.

For school districts that are considering whether to develop a student drug testing program, the following are some key considerations to keep in mind.

Who will be subject to a drug test?

The school district policies upheld in Veronia and Earls limited drug testing to only students who voluntarily participated in competitive, extracurricular activities. Additionally, policies that have required random drug testing of students who drive to school have withstood legal challenge in some jurisdictions. An important factor that underlies many of the court decisions on random testing of students is the voluntary nature of the extracurricular activities or privileges that trigger the testing requirement. In other words, the student has a choice to participate in the activity and be subject to random drug testing, or to forego participation in the activity and thereby avoid any testing.

It still remains to be seen whether the courts will permit school

districts to conduct random testing of all students. This does not seem likely, however, particularly in light of a recent Eighth Circuit case, which is the federal circuit that covers Minnesota. In Doe v. Little Rock School District, — F.3d —, WL 1837332 (8th Cir. 2004), the Court held that a school district’s practice of subjecting all secondary school students to random, suspicionless searches violated the students’ Fourth Amendment rights. The school district had a regular practice of choosing random classrooms and ordering the students to empty their pockets and place their belongings on their desk. After requesting the students leave the classroom, school officials would then search the students’ belongings. The Court noted that the school district “failed to demonstrate the existence of a need sufficient to justify the substantial intrusions upon the students’ privacy interests that the search practice entails.” Id. The Fourth Amendment analysis used by the Court in Doe, is the same analysis that would apply to the search of a student’s person in the form of a drug test. Thus, it appears unlikely that the Eighth Circuit would allow random, suspicionless drug testing of all students, and such a policy is not advised.

When will a drug test be administered?

The three most common situations when school districts require drug testing are: (1) pre-participation in an extracurricular activity, (2) on a random basis during participation or (3) based reasonable suspicion of drug use. A school district may also require a student who tests positive for drugs to take another drug test with a negative test result before he or she is allowed to

**Drug Testing ...
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Why me? Why you? A compelling case for public relations



Shari Prest

by Shari Prest
Ark Associates

“Whoever tells the story defines the culture.” – David Walsh, National Institute of Media and the Family

For the past decade the culture around education has been largely defined by political agendas rather than educational efficacy. To reverse this trend, informed educators and other school employees must be able spokespersons for their organizations.

The relationship school leaders cultivate with students, parents, staff, and the community can mean the difference between a referendum passing or failing, student enrollment growing or declining, state funding being frozen or increased, policies being driven by educational insight or political expediency...

Your career choice was educator, not public relations specialist—right? How did you get into this mess, and why weren't you prepared for it? Although colleges of education spend little or no time preparing school administrators to manage the public relations of their school(s), these are dynamic times, and PR has become a critical element of effective educational leadership. Lily Tomlin once commented, “I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that – then I realized I was somebody.” Similarly, educators may wonder why “someone” doesn't correct the preponderance of misinformation about the needs, challenges and accomplishments of public education, but often wait for

someone else to correct the record.

Why Me?

Superintendents and Principals

- School leaders are models for employees and peers. If you model thoughtful and thorough communications internally and externally, others are more likely to do the same.
- It is the school leader's job to ensure high quality schools, to frame the message, and to share honestly both challenges and successes.
- School leaders define expectations for staff. Every act of every employee has “the potential to build or break a relationship. The district's brand can be reinforced or whittled away by how well its systems and messages are aligned.” – Cheri Reese and Natalie Malphrus, *The monopoly is over: marketing public schools in turbulent times*.
- Public relations issues of school quality, communications, relationships, district/school image, and issue management are all part of the job description for superintendents and principals. “The public's attitudes toward the public schools shape the initiatives and strategies that can be brought to bear to improve those schools so that they can meet the changing needs of our society.” – Lowel C. Rose and Alec M. Gallup, *The 36th Annual Phi Delta Kappa Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools*.
- School leaders are the keepers of the schools' reputation.

Business executives and public relations professionals agreed in a 2002 survey that “corporate reputation is critical to the overall and financial success...The softer issues related to public relations – labor relations, culture, regulation, litigation, ethical standards and threats to the enterprise – easily can play second fiddle to proving the numbers.” – Kelly Groehler, *Star Tribune Business Forum*, August 23, 2004.

Why You?

Everyone Within the Organization

- Each person within the organization makes a difference. “We can have great talent, products, prices, and advertising. But if that sales clerk [teacher, paraprofessional, custodian, cook, coach, etc.] at the end of the line fails, the buyer doesn't return. And if the buyer suffers a very bad experience, he tells others not to come either.” – Harry Beckwith, *Marketing the Invisible*.
 - “In the case of a service industry like education, employees are the brand. How they perform is how customers perceive the brand performs.” – Cheri Reese and Natalie Malphrus, *The monopoly is over: marketing public schools in turbulent times*.
 - Improved public perceptions will bring increased public support, allowing schools to deliver even more effective academic and social opportunities to students.
- The very notion that a company [school] could be full of people who don't understand how they contribute to value creation should be unacceptable to any business [organization]. – Price Pritchett, *Tomorrow's coming, ready or not.* •

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MASA Requests Help from College Systems



Charlie Kyte

by Charlie Kyte,
MASA Executive Director

Last August, MASA President Ric Dressen of Alexandria and Executive Director Charlie Kyte sent a letter to the heads of Minnesota's University and College systems requesting help in two areas. First was help in persuading middle school and high school students to select rigorous academic courses as part of their preparation for higher education. Second was help in directing college students interested in teaching toward those areas in which there is a need for teachers.

The letter was sent to Dr. Bruininks of the University of Minnesota, Chancellor McCormick of MnSCU and David Laird, President of Minnesota Private College Council. A copy of the letter is reprinted below.

August 24, 2004

President Bob Bruininks, University of Minnesota
Steve Yussen, Dean, College of Education, University of Minnesota
Chancellor James McCormick, Minnesota State College and University System
Vice Chancellor, Linda Baer, Minnesota State College and University System
David Laird, Director of the Minnesota Private Education Council

Dear President Bruininks,

We are writing this letter on behalf of the K-12 public education leadership and specifically from the Minnesota Association of School Administrators. Please disseminate this letter, as appropriate, to your college presidents and deans.

We are asking for your help on two issues regarding public education. Working together, college presidents and education deans could utilize your voices to improve and enhance public education in the Minnesota. Your consideration and your help would be deeply appreciated.

The issues are:

1. Help in convincing middle school and high school students, and their parents, of the need to take rigorous course work as preparation for higher education.
2. Direct college education majors toward areas in which there is need for teachers and opportunities for employment.

Rigorous Course Work:

Strong public, and coordinated, statements by the leaders of our higher education institutions would go a long way to convince families and students of the need for selecting rigorous courses throughout the secondary school experience. We all want well-rounded students, but it is clear we need students to take a heavier and more rigorous course load in the core academic subjects of math, science,

writing and English. This need is a necessity whether the student is planning to attend a four-year liberal arts institution, a four-year state university, or a technical college.

Strong statements on your part in regard to the need for rigorous training, and specifics regarding that training, would go a long way toward driving student course selection and would encourage parents to direct students toward rigorous courses.

Teacher Supply:

MASA has operated the "MASA Jobsite Online and Applicant Site" for the past five years. Many school districts use this site to post teaching vacancies. It is evident that there are areas in which we are training significantly more young people to become teachers than our schools can employ. There are other areas where there is a dire shortage. Here is a snapshot of what we have been seeing on our jobsite this year.

Since the beginning of January 2004, over 2,000 jobs have been posted on our jobsite. The raw data shows that most of the jobs posted are in the following areas:

- a. 35% of all jobs posted on the jobsite are for special education positions. Speech/Language Pathologists, EBD teachers and LD teachers are most frequently posted. This is consistent with feedback we receive from school administrators telling us that special education positions are difficult to fill.
- b. Science positions are frequently posted and are almost exclusively for high school level.
- c. Math positions are frequently posted. About 75% of the math positions posted are for high school level positions.
- d. English/Language Arts are frequently posted. Over 80% of these positions are posted for the high school level.
- e. World language positions are frequently posted.
- f. Less than 5% of the positions posted are for elementary classroom teaching positions. It appears many districts no longer post these positions because they have such a large backlog of elementary candidates applications on file.

Help Requested ...
Continued Page 11

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Drug Testing ... Continued from Page 4

continue participating in the extracurricular activity. The circumstances of when a student may be subject to a drug test should be clearly described in a written policy.

How will the drug test be performed?

The most common type of drug test is urinalysis, which requires the collection of a urine specimen from the student. Importantly, students should be permitted to provide a urine specimen in private (an unobserved collection), as was the case with the policies in both [Veronia](#) and [Earls](#). School districts may also want to consider the use of alternative specimens for testing, such as saliva, hair or a sweat patch, which are beginning to receive greater acceptance within the drug testing industry.

In any event, a school district is well advised to use a testing laboratory that is certified by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) to perform a confirmatory drug test. The use of a Medical Review Officer – a licensed physician to review test results and evaluate potential legitimate medical explanations

(prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications) – as part of any drug testing program is also recommended.

What will be the consequences for a positive test result?

The goal of any student drug testing should be prevention and intervention. Accordingly, in the event a student tests positive for drugs, most policies require a meeting with the student's parents and potential referral for evaluation and/or counseling. The policy may also provide for suspension from the extracurricular activity for a period of time. However, school districts should be careful not to impose any academic penalties or curriculum-based disciplinary actions as a result of a positive test result.

Who will have access to the test results?

The results of any student drug test must be kept in a confidential file with limited access. Only school employees with a legitimate need to know should have access to the test results. The test results themselves should be maintained in a secured file separate and apart from the student's academic records. Also, the school district should not report drug test results to law enforcement.

In conclusion, given the constitutional and other legal issues raised by the prospect of implementing a student drug testing program, it is imperative that school districts consult with legal counsel in the development of a written policy and procedures. Also, a school board is well advised to seek input and support from school officials, teachers, substance abuse professionals as well as the local community before adopting and implementing a student drug testing policy. •

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Help Requested ... Continued from Page 8

g. We receive almost no listings for physical education positions, although there is still an interest in hiring people with coaching capabilities.

We need to direct those young people who are interested in becoming teachers toward special education, Science, Math, English/ Language Arts and World Languages. We are significantly overproducing young people to become elementary and physical education teachers.

We recognize that students are being advised of where positions may be available and where there is a significant oversupply. **We would ask that you consider going to the**

next step. We are asking that colleges begin constricting the number of candidates that are accepted into certain oversupplied fields and expand opportunities in majors where there are significant shortages.

We are also articulating these concerns to political leaders and will encourage them to look for ways to provide “incentives” to individuals and institutions to help meet these needs.

In conclusion, we recognize that we all need to work together. The issues identified above cannot be solved by higher or K-12 education alone. At the K-12 level your help is needed. Your ability to articulate the need for

rigorous secondary education training and your ability to help us produce a flow of teachers into the areas where there is the greatest need is essential. Thank you in advance for your willingness to disseminate our concerns to key individuals within your institutions and to help with these issues.

On behalf of a well-educated citizenry,

Dr. Ric Dressen
President, MASA

Dr. Charles (Charlie) Kyte
Executive Director, MASA

cc: Governor Pawlenty, Representative Sykora, Commissioner Seagren, Senator Kelley, John Kavanaugh, Charlie Weaver, Scott Croonquist, Brad Lundell, Jerry Ness, Michael Wilhelmi, Mary Ann Nelson •

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BUILDING YOUR *team*

Coming in December: Jobsite Membership Renewals!

MASA's Jobsite Online can save you money and help you recruit the best and brightest staff members for your district. It is tailor-made for you if you are looking for an easy, efficient, and cost effective way to post jobs and find candidates. Now is the time to subscribe or renew!

The Jobsite Online is a companion set of Internet web sites—Job Site and Applicant Site. These two MASA sites make posting jobs and looking for talented educators a snap.

We recognize that money is tight in most school districts and that some districts believe hiring will be at a minimum. In reality, there are always vacancies and job changes. In a year when finances are tight, the changes often come later in the summer and an online service helps you to quickly find applicants when they are needed.

This job service is cost effective. You can eliminate the need to make direct contact with placement bureaus and colleges. In the case that a variance is needed, the MASA Jobsite

qualifies as a widespread advertising vehicle eliminating the need to advertise in major newspapers. For the price of one ad in the Star Tribune or the Des Moines Register, you can nearly pay for the entire use of the MASA Jobsite for an entire year.

In addition, the MASA Jobsite lists all school district administrative job postings **free of charge to all school districts in the state**. Just call Jeanna Quinn at MASA (651-645-6272) or email her at members@mnasa.org. Jeanna posts jobs each Friday.

The real strength of this on-line job and applicant site comes with full participation of the districts in Minnesota. With strong district participation, applicants also flock to the site. Thus, it is easier for the districts to find quality applicants and we create a win-win situation.

The hiring season will be here before you know it! Let the Jobsite help you fill those positions with "bright new members for your brilliant school district team!" •

What does a school district do to find great staff?



Minnesota Schools Jobsite Online is an effective, inexpensive way for school districts to advertise job openings on the internet. Districts can post unlimited vacancies, for all levels of positions, for a small annual fee. People looking for positions can browse those jobs at no cost.

The Jobsite's applicant site streamlines the hiring process for both school districts and applicants. Applicants for licensed positions complete an online screening form that member districts can use to electronically screen applicants according to their own criteria.

Applicants may post their credentials (transcripts, license, letters of recommendation, etc.) to the site.

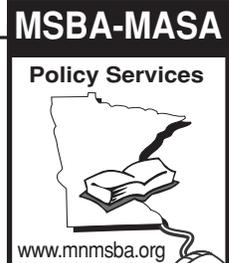
For most school districts, the annual subscription cost is less than the cost of advertising just one position in the newspaper. And the jobsite postings and applications are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Rates are determined according to district size.

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Are You Keeping Parents Informed About Your AYP Status?

by Forest J.C. Hertlein, Ph.D.
Federal Programs Specialist
TransACT Communications, Inc.

Many schools throughout the nation opened the 2004-05 school year identified for the first time as needing improvement as required by NCLB. Such a designation requires careful attention to planning and communication with parents and the community. However, according to some observers, districts are not doing a good job keeping parents informed about their rights and options for their children.

Create a Parent Communication Plan

Create a parent communication plan to build understanding and support for school and district efforts to achieve AYP. Parents will be much more receptive of “needs improvement” news if given plenty of time to process complex information about decisions to transfer schools or changing transportation schedules.

For many schools, it will not take a statistician to determine the chances of making AYP for the second or more consecutive year. If you anticipate not making AYP, start now to answer the following questions prior to preparing and sending parent notices regarding their options:

- What schools are available for students to transfer into?
- If no schools are available, what alternatives will be offered to parents?
- Has it been determined “practicable” to offer interdistrict transfer for choice? If so, what districts and what schools are available?
- Will the district allocate more than 5% of the required set-aside for choice transportation?
- Who will identify the lowest-performing students from low-income families to receive priority for choice, transportation, and supplemental services? How will this be accomplished?

Districts receiving funds under Title I are required to notify parents of all students in qualifying schools—not just those receiving Title I services—of their eligibility to transfer. Parent notices must be in a “common format” to assure that parents throughout the district are receiving uniform information. One way to become vulnerable to parent complaints is to allow each building to develop their own parent notices without central office review for consistency and compliance. Subscribers to the TransACT® Compliance & Communication Center™ are assured that each building has on-line access to a common set of notices that comply with NCLB requirements. In addition, tools available on the new TransACT website allow a district administrator to view, track, and evaluate usage of NCLB parent notices.

NCLB requires districts to give priority for transfer and transportation to the lowest achieving students from low-income families. It is possible, therefore, that all available space at a receiving school will be taken by all or a portion of prioritized students. In this instance, the district may not be able to offer choice to all students and must seek an alternative. If the opportunity does not exist for parents to transfer their child to another school, NCLB compliance monitoring will require districts to document their efforts to establish interdistrict agreements and reasons why it was not practicable to seek other interdistrict alternatives. Some district school boards are adopting resolutions or policies that guide or establish determination of what is practicable regarding public school choice.

What Happens if No Choice

Opportunity Exists?

When no opportunity for transfer exists, districts must still notify parents of their right to (1) make such a request, (2) the reason(s) why the opportunity to transfer is not available, and (3) provide alternatives to transfer. Answers to the following questions will help prepare for determining what alternatives should or can be offered:

- Will you offer supplemental educational services as an alternative to school choice during the first year of school improvement?
- Are state approved supplemental service providers located within the district or available via long-distance technology?
- Should or can the district become a state approved provider of supplemental services?
- Are there bargaining issues that need to be addressed regarding teachers providing before and after school supplemental services?
- Can or should the district offer additional instructional support without being identified as a supplemental educational service provider?

It is prudent to begin planning early and identifying choice options as soon as possible. Beyond planning for transportation, the district should analyze staffing and programs at receiving schools to determine the ability to accommodate the needs of special education and limited English proficient students.

For example, many districts are
Toolbox ...
Continued Page 19

Have you renewed your membership?

Membership materials have been mailed. For more information or additional membership materials, contact the MASA office or visit our web site—
651/645-6272 or
members@mnasa.org.

Quality Conferences
Network of Your Colleagues
Skill Development Workshops
Publications
State and National Legislative Advocacy
Legal Consultation
and Much More!

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Curriculum Leaders ... Continued from Page 3

to their districts recharged and reconnected, with a product of work based on the conference activities. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to get connected! Registration materials are available on the MASA web site (www.mnasa.org).

Conference participants will be eligible to win a Palm Zire 71, "a handheld to organize your life!"

- **The Curriculum Discussion Board** provides an online resource for conversation and document sharing. Most identified Minnesota Curriculum Leaders have already been registered as users and have received instructions about how to use the Board. If you have not received this information, contact Kris Nielsen, Executive Director of the Minnesota Administrators Leadership Forum, at kris@mn-admin-forum.org. All of the supporting documents from the fall conference will be available on the Board! There is no charge for this service.
- **Email updates.** Identified curriculum leaders will receive a monthly update via the Minnesota Association of School Administrators with communications of interest to Minnesota Curriculum Leaders.
- **Plans for the Future!** The CLM Planning Group develops conference/professional development offerings and is planning for the future! Ideas include workshops, online resources, and communications. If you would like to be involved with this group, contact Mia Urick, Director of Communications and Professional Development at MASA at urickm@mnasa.org.

Curriculum leaders may participate in CLM activities as members or nonmembers. Members receive a number of benefits, including access to professional development at discounted rates.

CLM members are served by the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA). There are 2

types of CLM membership:

1. MASA members may elect to be designated as a CLM member at no additional cost. To be eligible for active MASA membership, you must be a superintendent, central office administrator, instructor or administrator in a postsecondary institution, or a staff member of the Minnesota Department of Education. MASA membership information can be found on the MASA web site (<http://www.mnasa.org>).
2. Curriculum leaders who are not MASA members may also join CLM. Anyone in a curriculum leadership role may join for \$50 per year (July 1 - June 30).

Benefits of CLM membership include:

- A Support Network of Colleagues
 - Professional Development Opportunities at Member Rates
 - The CLM e-Newsletter and Discussion Board
 - Special Communication on Current Issues in Curriculum Leadership
 - Participation on Task Forces and Statewide Committees
 - Access to Sample Documents
- To join at this level, simply send an email to Jeanna Quinn at MASA@mnasa.org.

Thanks for helping us grow! •

Site is Forum for Administrators

The Minnesota Administrators Leadership Forum has contracted with Atomic Learning to provide an interactive website that is private to school administrators in the state of Minnesota!

This free site includes:

- an interactive, word searchable online discussion board – share ideas with and ask questions of your colleagues across the state!
- a calendar of events sponsored by the Forum,
- a "knowledge base" feature that will host technology information and Quicktime movies,
- a one-way informational listserve which will provide information about upcoming events and new technologies twice per month.

This site will be separate from the standard Atomic Learning site. Subscriptions to the standard Atomic Learning site may be purchased directly through Atomic Learning.

Please contact Dave Girtz at dgirtz@atomiclearning.com for school purchasing.

Existing Users

For existing admin forum members, the Minnesota Administrator Forum Site, will not change. Your usernames and passwords will work as they did previously. If you are a member and have forgotten your username or password, please contact Brian Westerberg at Atomic Learning (bwesterberg@atomiclearning.com).

New Users

If you are a new member, signing up for Admin Forum is a simple process.

Simply go to http://custom.atomiclearning.com/mnadmin_sign_up.

This form will allow you to create a new account and also will take you to a form to sign up on the MN Admin listserve. •

Parents in Minnesota are getting involved in their children's education. In Minnesota, 100% of 4th grade parents participate in parent-teacher conferences. – Education Week, *Quality Counts 2004, State of the States*

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MASA Foundation Supports Professional Development

One of the primary goals of the MASA Foundation is to promote leadership development among Minnesota's school leaders. In support of that objective, the Foundation Board has created a permanent endowment. The endowment and its earnings will be invested in developing opportunities for MASA members to further their education in educational administration. Earnings will also be used to provide outstanding programs in professional development to new members and mid-career members.

The Foundation is working with each MASA component group to identify activities to fund that will be the most meaningful to their members. These might include activities for aspiring administrators, orientation for leaders in new positions, or training for seasoned administrators. Some possibilities include:

- Week-long comprehensive academies for superintendents, special education administrators, or other administrators, somewhat like a mini Bush experience.
- Support for administrators to attend national seminars or conventions, or perhaps an international experience.

The Foundation is able to move in this direction because it has spent a number of years raising the principal to begin the endowment. Funding activities have included personal gift campaigns, the Fall Foundation Golf Tournament, and the Spring Silent Auction. The Board is proud of its past efforts and is ready to move to the next level. In order to make that a reality, the Foundation needs the help of each and every MASA member.

The Foundation is asking current and retired MASA members to participate in a four-year pledge commitment of a minimum \$50 per year as a small way of giving back to their profession. If you haven't made a commitment already, please consider filling out the pledge form in this newsletter (at right) and sending it to MASA. The Foundation will ask donors to begin meeting their commitments this fall.

If each MASA member pledge their support, a minimum of \$200,000 new dollars for the endowment can easily be raised in the four-year period. But more importantly, the Foundation will use this demonstration of support to approach companies who do business with schools to ask them for their financial support for the endowment as well.

It is within our power to create an important source of funding to benefit the school administrators of MASA. Please consider carefully what the Foundation Board is trying to accomplish on your behalf and pledge a minimum of \$50 or more dollars a year for four years. •

Looking for PR Resources?

Try the Minnesota School Public Relations Association web site: <http://www.minnspra.org>

It is well documented that the more people know about and are involved with schools the higher they rank them. Publicity about

I would like to help!

Here is my pledge for my annual contribution to the MASA Foundation Endowment Fund.

I will pledge:

_____ \$ 50 Annually

_____ \$ 100 Annually

_____ Another Amount Annually (please specify)

All gifts are tax-deductible.

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone

Email

Thank you for your pledge.

We will send you an invoice this fall, so you can honor your pledge in time to claim the tax deduction for the calendar year. The MASA Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization.

Thank you!

the vision and accomplishments of schools is one way to help people feel more informed and to encourage them to get involved. "Getting publicity doesn't have to cost a fortune. But you will have to substitute for cash with even scarcer resources—your time, energy and creativity ... Create a community around your product by involving your customers in the business and let them become your ambassadors." – John M. Morrison Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of St. Thomas

Toolbox ... Continued from Page 14

struggling with how to offer choice options for low-incidence, severely impaired special education students when the school available for choice does not have an existing program or proper facilities. It is the responsibility of the district to ensure that such students are provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the student's IEP and match the abilities and needs of a student with schools that have the ability to offer FAPE. However, if no schools exist within the district with the ability to offer FAPE, little guidance is provided by the U.S. Department of Education on how to proceed except that choice must be offered and that districts must comply with non-discrimination provisions of federal and state law.

What about Students with Disabilities?

How choice works for students with disabilities is not totally clear at this time and the answer will most likely be determined through costly and time-consuming due process hearings. According to the Center for Law and Education, there are no absolute answers to the following critical questions:

- Must a school district allow students with disabilities to transfer to the same school(s) that it has identified as the choice option(s) for students generally, or may a district deny a transfer to a particular school on the grounds that needed services and supports are not available there, or that the school is otherwise incapable of providing a free appropriate public education?
- To what extent must the particular transfer options offered students with disabilities be comparable to those offered all other students?

- What is the role, if any, of the Individualized Education Program and placement team in deciding to which school a student may transfer once NCLB choice requirements have been triggered?

Can a district or school in school improvement or corrective action provide supplemental services for its own students?

Yes. According to a Policy Letter from Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, dated October 21, 2003, highly qualified teachers in schools or districts that do not make AYP can be approved as supplemental educational providers. First, if a school is in improvement, highly qualified teachers from other schools can be the provider under the auspices on the district. In fact, highly qualified teachers from that school can also be the provider if the district is approved. If the district is identified for improvement, highly qualified teachers can provide supplemental services if they form "an entity" other than the district. For example, the teacher's union in that district could be approved as a provider. This Policy Letter also admits there is confusion over this issue and the U.S. Department of Education may provide further guidance and clarity regarding approved providers.

Summary

It is too early to determine the impact of choice and supplemental services on students, schools, and districts. Setting aside 20% of a district's Title I allocation has created challenging situations in which some schools are faced with beginning the year with reductions in budget and corresponding loss of supplies, materials and staff. However, most districts will probably find that set-aside funds will mostly be required for supplemental services. National trends and surveys disclose that parents prefer to keep their child at their current school and opt for additional help. Initial data indicates that when additional help is aligned with the school's instructional strategies and curriculum, there can be significant growth in student achievement. The jury is still out as to whether such growth will help every child attain proficiency on state standards by 2013-2014.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a common set of notices be made available throughout the district to meet the NCLB requirement that "information must be in an understandable and uniform format." One valuable resource for meeting this requirement is the collection of parent notices available at www.transact.com. The collection is also available in a growing number of languages to assist districts communicate with parents in a language they understand

If you have questions or comments, please email forest@transact.com. •

Attention, Members!

Mark your calendar for the **2005 MASA/MASE Spring Conference**

**Thursday-Friday,
April 21 - 22
at the
Sheraton Hotel,
Bloomington**

Information will
be mailed—and
will also be
available at
www.mnasa.org.
See you there!

- Leading Keynote Speakers
- Cutting Edge Breakout Sessions
- Legislative News
- Networking
- Latest Products and Innovations
- Much, much more!

Calendar 2004 - 05

November 17
MASA Foundation Board Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

November 17-19
Conference: Connecting to Curriculum
Cragun's, Brainerd

November 25 - 26
Thanksgiving Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

December 1
MASA Executive Committee Meeting
9 - 10:45 am
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
11 am - 4 pm
MASA Offices, St. Paul

December 9 (*tentative*)
Referendum Workshop
Metro Area

December 23 - 24 and
December 31
Winter Holidays
MASA Offices Closed

2005 ...

February 2
MASA Executive Committee Meeting
9 - 10:45 am
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
11 am - 4 pm

February 9
MASA Foundation Board Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

February 11
Newsletter Submissions Due

February 17 - 20
AASA National Convention
San Antonio, TX

March 25
Spring Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

April 20 (at Spring Conference)
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel
MASA Executive Committee Meeting
9:00 - 10:45 am
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
11:00 am - 4:00 pm
Board of Directors & Past Presidents Dinner
5:30-8:30 pm

April 21 - 22
MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Sheraton Bloomington Hotel

May 11
MASA Foundation Board Meeting
MASA Offices, St. Paul

May 13
Newsletter Submissions Due

May 30
Memorial Day Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

June 14 (*tentative*)
MASA Executive Committee Meeting
11 am - 12:30 pm
MASA Board of Directors Meeting
1:30 - 5:30 pm
Minnesota Science Museum,
St. Paul

June 15 (*tentative*)
Board Meeting Continues
9 am - 12 noon

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