

## Living in Interesting and Magical Times

by Ken Dragseth,  
2002-03 MASA President and  
Superintendent, Edina Schools

An old Chinese proverb states "May you live in interesting times." Last summer as I assumed the presidency of MASA from a very excellent leader, Jerry Jensen, I had no idea how really interesting this year would be.

Many events impacted our lives this year, some very positive and others less desirable. The fall and spring conferences with large attendance and excellent presenters helped to promote our professional development. More members this year engaged in professional dialogues, participated on important committees, testified at the Legislature, and promoted the value of educational leadership in our state in many different venues. MASA members held conversations with legislative and political leaders that were geared to advocate for children in our state. The fall election brought a change in philosophy to Minnesota, and the economic times seemed a little less positive for children and schools. Political leaders campaigned on the need to serve children, and then after the election I wondered if some had simply used the slogan but really did not have the desire to fulfill that pledge.

We lost a great leader for education. I remember driving away from a panel presentation at the MREA conference in Alexandria in the fall and turning on the radio to hear the

sad news that Senator Paul Wellstone, members of his family, and staff had died in a plane crash. It was a sad moment after a pleasant day with colleagues. When Charlie Kyte and I accepted a posthumous educational leadership award from AASA for Senator Wellstone at the national convention last February, it was a moving moment.

The fall election offered Minnesota many new faces and ideals, and the opportunity to interact with them and hear their perspectives for education has been interesting and enlightening. I've learned that education has many friends in politics, but we also have many who need to be educated about the needs of children. This has been a year of politics and personalities, and we have had to adapt so that the needs of schools and children continue to be put in the forefront of the discussion.

I had three goals when I began serving MASA members. The first goal was to help define ourselves as the most respected and influential education organization in the state. I feel that with the guidance and assistance of many of you, we are well on our way to this goal. We are asked for advice and have access to those who influence educational policy in Minnesota. Different lobbying groups such as MREA, SEE, AMSD, and Lake Superior Schools have met many times with assistance from MASA to develop strategies to stand united in our quest for what is good for Minnesota education. We have experienced

intense discussions at these meetings, but we have all come away with a better appreciation for each other's views.

The second goal was to expand the leadership of MASA to include more diverse ideas and perspectives. I felt that we needed to

reach out more so that administrators from urban, suburban, large cities in greater Minnesota, and rural areas were involved in decision making. We needed to welcome greater ethnic and gender diversity in our leadership structure and organizational activities. It is a great benefit, I think, that a new leadership model was developed by the Member Services Committee and our executive director, and that it was supported by the membership. This new structure helps ensure that all MASA members are represented in an equitable manner.

The third goal was to promote the value of educational leaders. To this end we needed to encourage young educators to pursue leadership roles in our schools. We needed to **Interesting and Magical ...**

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Ken Dragseth

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## Reflections on a Marathon Session



by **Charlie Kyte**,  
MASA Executive  
Director

This last legislative session was a marathon. Over the course of the months that I was involved, I grew to admire the work of the many lobbyists that

represent individual school districts and the various factions of school districts and school employees. I was also moved by the difficult pressures put on individual legislators as they tried to balance the state's budget shortfall with the need to fund programs in all areas including public education.

Below are a few observations that I took away from the session:

- The amount of money allocated to fund our public schools is very thin. There was a combination of reductions in funding for programs, a reliance on using local property taxes in future years, a significant number of accounting shifts, and no money was allocated for inflation. This is going to push school districts to their financial limits very quickly.
- I was glad to see that most of the policy initiatives brought forward by both the House and the Senate were dropped from the final education bill. There were significantly more "bad policy" issues within the bills than there were good ones.
- An amazingly small number of legislators make the final decisions on major bills. In the

case of education, there were no more than six key players at the end that made the big decisions and they were all made behind closed doors.

- Passing the revised standards and repealing the Profiles of Learning was a major positive achievement. Hopefully, this issue will now exit from the political stage and we can get down to implementing the standards in our schools.
- The public employee unions are very strong when they finally get their backs up. The Governor's proposed statewide public employee pay freeze came up late one evening in the House Government Operations Committee, a committee

**Marathon Session ...  
Continued Page 7**

## Mary Ann Nelson Named Assistant Commissioner of Academic Excellence



Commissioner Cheri Pierson Yecke has announced that Mary Ann Nelson, former superintendent of the Fridley Schools, has accepted the new position of Assistant Commissioner for

Academic Excellence. Assistant Commissioner Nelson takes responsibility for Minnesota's Academic Standards, statewide assessments, professional development and school choice programs in a renamed and reorganized education department focused on achievement and accountability.

"I am thrilled to have Mary Ann Nelson heading our academic excellence team," said Yecke. "Her leadership and program experience will help us improve education for all Minnesotans."

Nelson brings a strong record of achievement in a variety of education leadership positions. During her nine years as Fridley superintendent, she oversaw a district that got more "bang for the buck" with one of the state's lowest percentages in administrative spending per pupil. All Fridley schools now conduct annual self-assessments for performance excellence. She also has helped seven different Minnesota schools achieve the National School of Excellence Award while working in St.

Louis Park and Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan.

"I'm excited about this new and different challenge as a supporter of change and doing what's best for children and students," Nelson said. "Having worked in many different Minnesota schools, I see excellent people in education who often feel trapped in a system that resists the common sense improvements needed to raise student achievement. I believe Commissioner Yecke and Governor Pawlenty's education initiatives focus on the same things that our best teachers promote—rigorous standards, motivating students to attend and

**Assistant Commissioner ...  
Continued Page 10**

# Special Education Alternative Dispute Resolution

by **Charlie Kyte,**  
**MASA Executive Director**

Minnesota's legislature passed new legislation regarding alternative dispute resolution and due process hearings. This legislation will help school districts and special education administrators utilize the process of conciliation and mediation to help reduce the number of times that a school district is either forced or threatened with a special education formal hearing. The new legislation is contained within Article III of House File 52 (Omnibus K-12 Education Act). Section 9 of Article III details the new alternative

dispute resolution process.

Also, within Article III, Section 18 is a three-year pilot project to test the impact of waiving specific special education requirements in Minnesota that exceed Federal law. This section is relatively limited and was first proposed by the Rochester School District.

It allows the Rochester School District and up to three other school districts or cooperative units selected by the State Department of Education to determine what impact waiving specific state special education requirements has on the quality and cost-effectiveness of the instructional services provided to eligible students.

It will also look at the cost-effectiveness as compared to the educational outcomes of the students in the participating districts. For school districts interested in participating in this three-year pilot project, you may want to contact Jerry Williams, Superintendent in Rochester and also the Special Education Department at the State Department of Education. •

## **More on the 'Net ...**

A pdf document of the Omnibus K-12 Education Act can be found on the MDE web site at [http://education.state.mn.us/stellent/groups/public/documents/translatedcontent/pub\\_007885.pdf](http://education.state.mn.us/stellent/groups/public/documents/translatedcontent/pub_007885.pdf) •

### **Leaders Forum**

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**Leaders Forum is your newsletter and we encourage your input!** If you have ideas or an article to share, please contact Mia Urick, MASA's Director of Communications and Professional Development (contact information is listed above).

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## Religion in the Schools— Challenges to School District Decision-Making



Kimberly H. Boyd

by **Kimberly Hewitt Boyd**  
**Attorney,**  
**Rider Bennett**

School District officials are regularly faced with decision-making that is complicated by questions associated with freedom of religion

in the context of the school environment. What do you do if a student prolife organization wants a picture in the yearbook? Can your school dress code prohibit clothing that features a religious statement that could be considered anti-gay? How do you accommodate the religious needs of an increasingly diverse student/faith community that might conflict with school rules? Can the basketball team conduct a prayer before games or during time-outs? Making these decisions is challenging because the scenarios are complex and the legal standards are undergoing continuous analysis and change. This article will provide you with an overview of the legal standards and most recent case law relevant to schools and provide an analysis of interesting potential scenarios.

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution has two religious liberty clauses. The purpose of the Establishment Clause is to prevent the state, in our case a school district, from promoting religion in general or preferring one religion over another. The Free Exercise Clause, on the other hand, establishes the freedom of every citizen to hold and practice or change their religious beliefs without government interference.

The Supreme Court has created a three-pronged test to determine whether or not government action

violates the Establishment Clause.<sup>1</sup>

1. Does the government (school district) action have a bona fide secular purpose?
2. Is the effect of the action neutral, in that it neither advances nor inhibits religion?
3. Does the action avoid excessive entanglement with religion?

If the answer to each of these questions is yes, then the action in question is constitutional and does not violate the Establishment Clause.<sup>2</sup>

To determine whether or not school district action violates the Free Exercise clause a separate test should be applied. The Sherbert test, which arose out of a 1963 Supreme Court decision Sherbert v. Verner, 374 U.S. 398 (1963), involved an employee who was not available to work on certain days because of his religion. According to the Sherbert test, the individual must show that their actions were:

1. Motivated by a sincere religious belief; and
2. That the beliefs were substantially burdened

The free exercise clause was contemplated in the school context in an important decision, West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943) prohibiting a state law requiring students to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance. Courts generally impose restrictions on the free exercise of religion where such restrictions serve an overriding public purpose (i.e. maintain separation of church and state).

Most issues arise in the school context as a result of the tension between the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. Because of this tension school district decision-making requires

careful analysis regarding when a school district should interfere with student or employee religious practices in order to maintain the separation of church and state.

### *Scenarios*

#### *Right to Life Group*

A religious right to life group would like a picture in the school yearbook. How should the school district respond?

If your district has allowed other, non-school sponsored organizations to appear in the yearbook, this right should likewise be extended to religious or political organizations. However, if the school policy is clear that yearbook appearance is limited to school sponsored activities, you could reject the organizations' request to appear in the yearbook.<sup>3</sup>

#### *T-shirts with Religious Message*

Members of a religious student group wear T-shirts with a quote from the Old Testament condemning homosexual conduct. Can the school district prohibit the students from wearing the T-shirts at school and discipline students who wear the T-shirts to school?

In a Minnesota case, a student challenged the school district's decision to prohibit him from wearing a T-shirt to school that said "Straight Pride." The court found that the shirt could result in a "substantial disruption of or material interference with school activities." Another court determined that students who wore T-shirts with a display of the confederate symbol in school could not be suspended without violating the free speech rights of the students. Likewise, in the above example, unless there is

**Religion ...**

**Continued Page 15**

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## Interesting and Magical ...Continued from Page 1

provide mentor opportunities and professional development so that they succeeded. This goal is still in progress. Every day MASA is developing more and better programs and activities to assist in providing quality leadership for schools in Minnesota and elsewhere.

It has been an honor to serve you this year as president. The job has been made easier by the incredible talent of administrators and staff who support the organization. The Executive Board (Toni Johns – President-Elect, Connie Hayes – Treasurer, Jerry Jensen – Past President) and the Board of Directors provided great leadership and vision for the organization. These people are leaders that get things done. I especially thank Past President Jerry Jensen for his advice, support, and friendship in the transition into this office. Thanks to all of you for your time, expertise, and commitment to MASA!

Executive Director Charlie Kyte is a great asset to the organization. His tireless energy, thoughtful insight, contacts in the political arena, organizational skills, and uncanny predictions made it easy for all of us to do our work. Office personnel Mia Urick, Mary Law, Stephanie Kastanos, and Jeanna Quinn

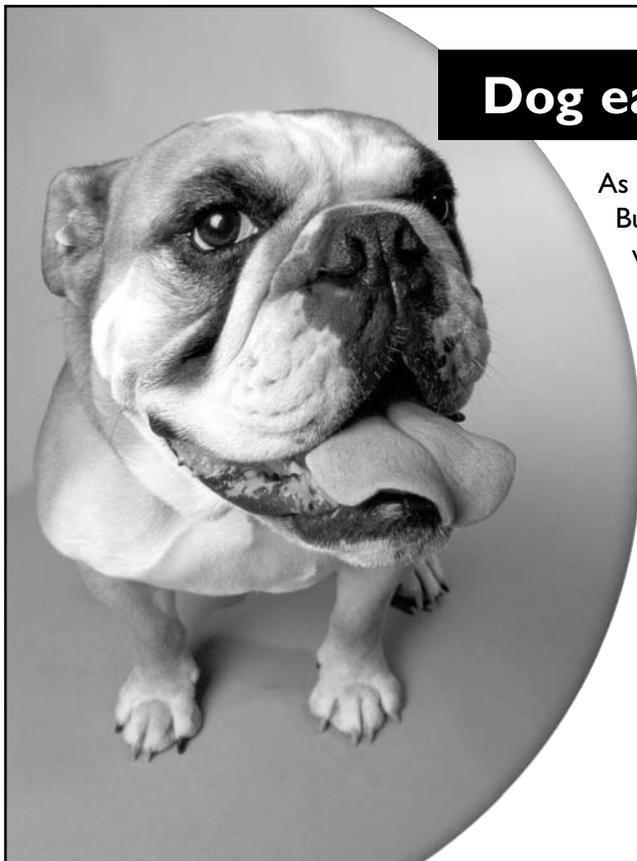
and support personnel Sarah Fredrickson, Shannon Kallas, and Kris Bryan Nielsen have done a wonderful job of operations, planning, and the daily running of the organization. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to MASA!

The working committees under the leadership this year of Ric Dressen – Legislative, Don Helmstetter – Organizational Development, and Mike Kremer – Member Services have provided strong work plans for the organization to follow. Thanks to all committee members for your leadership and direction for MASA.

Earlier this year I used a quote from Tom Robbins that states, “If you take any activity, any art, any discipline, any skill, take it and push it as far as it will go, push it beyond where it ever has been before, push it to its wildest edges, then you force it into the realm of magic.” The membership of MASA has done that this year. Your energy, effort, and vision have created magical

moments for us all, and I have been blessed with the opportunity to get to know many of you better. It has been a humbling experience as I observed your talents and passion for children. May you continue to find that magic borne of extra effort in your personal and professional lives.

Thank you, again, for giving me the opportunity to lead this great organization. I have lived this year in interesting and magical times and have shared them with people who make my life so rich. MASA is a great organization and will be served well next year under the leadership of President Toni Johns, President-Elect Ric Dressen, Treasurer Connie Hayes, our Board of Directors, and the excellent MASA staff. Have a great summer, protect your health, and enjoy your family and friends. May we look forward to next year with confidence for what we can do for the children of Minnesota! •



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## Plan to attend the **MASA 2003 Fall Conference** September 28 - 30 Duluth Entertainment Convention Center

As school leaders, we know that when we work together, we gain strength in our numbers and our voices are amplified by our common agenda. Join your colleagues this fall and explore the importance of connections among colleagues—and celebrate our education leadership community! Watch your mail for registration materials, but mark your calendar today!

### Some Conference Highlights ...

- Don't miss the Foundation **Golf Tournament Mixer** Sunday afternoon at Enger Park. The tournament will

benefit the work of the MASA Foundation, enhancing the leadership development of educational administrators.

- Celebrate the service of our honored peers at the Sunday **Awards Banquet**. Service recognition and the **Morris Bye Memorial Award** will be presented. Entertainment will be by the Duluth Schools' *Sterling Strings!*
- Monday keynote speaker **John Busacker** of the Inventure Group will challenge participants to think about what their role as a leader means to them. While many speakers focus on the "what" of leadership, John

Busacker concentrates on who participants are as leaders and on developing their natural strengths for leading authentically.

- The **Exhibit Fair** is a convenient way to visit with representatives of companies offering the latest products and services of value to school leaders.
- Smaller group **Breakout Sessions** offer cutting-edge information on a variety of topics.
- Well-known author, researcher, analyst, and speaker **Gerald Bracey** will keynote our Tuesday sessions with his perspective on the challenges and successes of educational leaders.
- Unwind and enjoy the attractions of Duluth and Canal Park. Whether it is a walk to enjoy the fall colors, a trip to the Omnimax, a great meal, or a little shopping, there are many choices for you and your family to enjoy when sessions adjourn for the day.

**Registration materials will be mailed in early August and will also be available on the MASA web site ([www.mnasa.org](http://www.mnasa.org)). See you in Duluth!**

## Marathon Session ...Continued from Page 2

dominated by the Governor's supporters. The room was filled with public employee members and lobbyists and the debate was fairly intense. In the end, that committee folded and voted 22-0 to not implement a statewide public employee wage freeze. You could feel the unions flexing their muscles in that room.

- It is much easier to control a caucus when there is a significant majority as compared to a slim majority. This year, Speaker of the House Sviggum had about 15 extra votes in the

Republican House Caucus and thus could let a few members off the hook on almost every vote and still pass legislation. That was not true for his caucus two years ago. On the other hand, Senate Majority Leader John Hottinger had only the thinnest of majorities and just one or two rebel senators defecting could cause him major problems. We watched this happen, especially around the issue of tax policy in the later part of the session.

- There are a number of very effective lobbyists at the Capitol. One of them is Bob Meeks, who

will now be taking over as Executive Director of MSBA. We will be very supportive of Bob and wish him great success in his new role. However, he will not have the time to lobby with the intensity that he has dedicated to this mission in the past. The management side of public education will have lost a very effective force within the legislative process.

I enjoyed being involved in the process of creating legislation at the Capitol. I'm also glad to return to a normal routine of work, relaxation and sleep. The latter two elements of my life had truly disappeared during the last couple of months of the legislative session. •

## A Year in Review



Shari Prest

by Shari Prest  
Ark Associates

2003 has certainly been a year to remember. Many of us have been glued to our TV sets to find the latest news about Osama Bin Laden, or to follow along with “embedded”

reporters as they trek through the human and material devastation of war. Some of us have followed the national politics of taxation or the Minnesota budget deficit and resulting spending cuts.

Then there are the significant stories that don’t make the headlines, such as:

- In Minnesota, 1 in 13 children lives below the poverty level
- Poor children are at increased risk of educational problems, including lower test scores and higher drop out rates
- At least 5% of teenagers experience an episode of major depression
- More than 1 in 5 6th graders and nearly half of 9th grade girls report they have thought about killing themselves
- In absolute numbers, the majority of high-risk behaviors occur among populations that demographically are considered low risk
- Regardless of income, adolescents who move frequently between households are more likely to drop out of high school than their more rooted peers
- Ninety percent of high school seniors intend to attend college
- Overall teen pregnancies have declined in the last ten years, and Minnesota has one of the lowest

overall teen birth rates in the country, but our youth of color have one of the highest teen birth rates

- The average teen spends 2.9 hours a day watching TV
- What emerges most consistently as a critical need for teenagers is a feeling of connectedness with parents and family—feeling loved and cared for is a key predictor of positive and healthy youth outcomes
- There has been a 16% decline in children’s “free” or “outdoor” play time
- Obesity is considered to be at epidemic proportions for children. In Minnesota, 1 out of every 10 children is obese and 25% are at risk for obesity.

### September, 2002

The kids and staff are back and filled with enthusiasm for another year of challenges and opportunities. The next nine months represent growth and potential for each and every person who steps across the threshold of your schools.

Teachers are developing and implementing the academic standards. Even as the political rhetoric suggests that the mandated investment of time, talent, and money will fall by the wayside before its potential is fully realized.

School districts *subtract* classroom hours to *add* more precautionary safety drills.

### October, 2002

The Taxpayers League continues to be a dominant force in the media and has enlisted several legislative and one gubernatorial candidate. The league, a relatively small coalition comprised primarily of wealthy individuals, sponsors a \$1 million

campaign to persuade voters that the state is facing an unacceptable 14.4% rate of growth in state spending.

### November, 2002

Representative Tim Pawlenty, who has signed a “no new taxes” pledge, is elected to be the next governor of Minnesota. A scarcity mentality is fostered at the state level and an unparalleled deficit is promoted at the national level. Dollars that could be used to meet special education commitments, reduce health care costs, improve our quality of life, or reduce the deficit are committed to homeland security, international aggression, and tax cuts.

### December, 2002

The holidays are ahead and Minnesotans anticipating reduced tax burdens continue to spend cautiously because the war on terror is daily and frightening news, as is the sense that a “preemptive” war on Iraq is imminent. The stock market continues to vacillate in response to perceived international threats and instability. Human rights expectations within the boundaries of our own country are challenged.

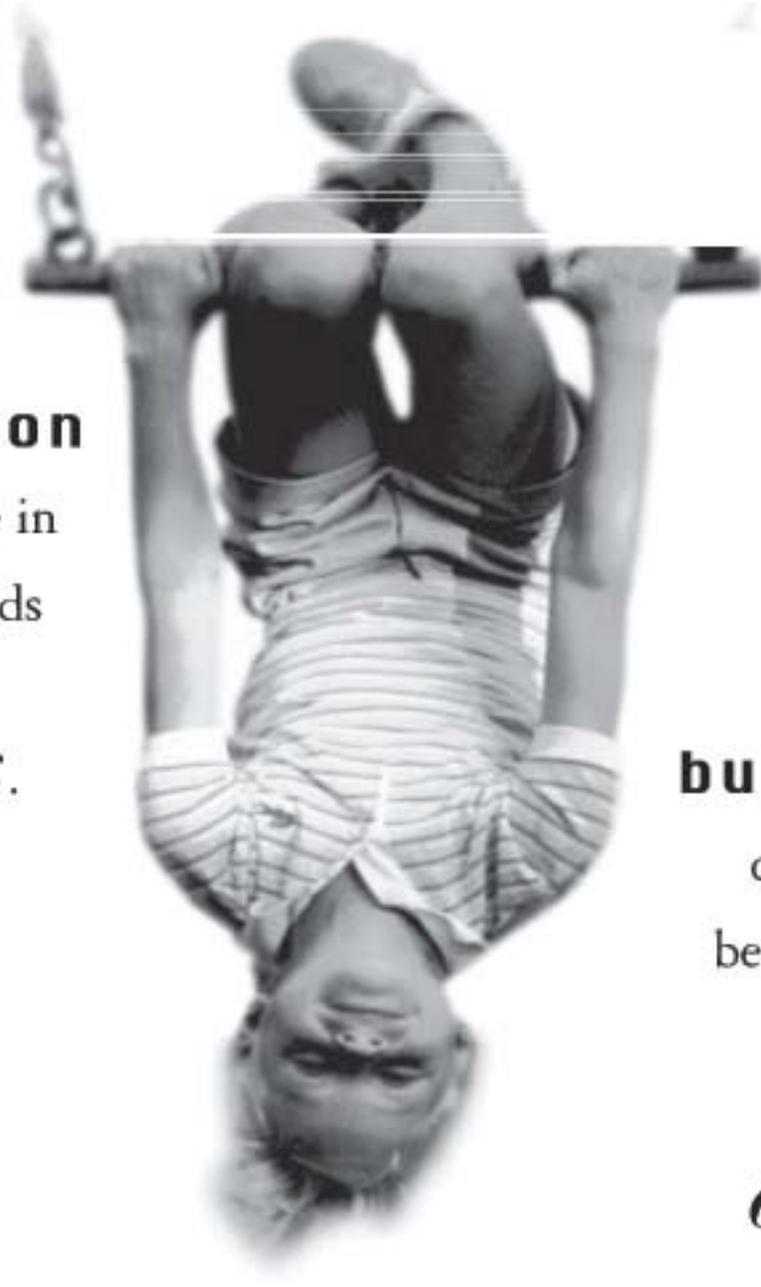
### January, 2003

President Bush gives his State of the Union Address and includes a brief reference to education and the No Child Left Behind Act. “To lift the standards of our public schools, we achieved historic education reform—which must now be carried out in every school and in every classroom, so that every child in America can read and learn and succeed in life.”—President George W. Bush

Tim Pawlenty is sworn in as governor of Minnesota and he reiterates his commitment to “no new taxes.”

**Year in Review ...  
Continued Page 10**

His  
**education**  
couldn't be in  
better hands  
than  
*yours.*



Your  
**buildings**  
couldn't  
be in better  
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# Year in Review ... Continued from Page 8

## February, 2003

The Governor delivers his first State of the State Address, praising our state, calling for shared sacrifice, and promising to support our schools. The next day the governor cuts funding to schools.

Some Minnesotans begin to understand that the projected growth in state spending was a combination of tax refunds and spending shifts and that real spending growth, after accounting for inflation, was actually projected to be between 1.1% and -.2% annually. Further, the reality of how the budget deficit combined with the “no new tax” approach may negatively impact quality of life issues and the state’s economic future became increasingly apparent.

Edina, Minnesota, public school superintendent, Ken Dragseth is named National Superintendent of the Year.

## March, 2003

Basic Skills Test (BST) for math and reading given to all eighth graders during March show high passage rates but little change over the last six years. Eighty-one percent of all students taking the test in reading pass, while 72% pass the math test. Writing test results show a 91% passage rate for the 64,738 tenth graders who took the test. Unfortunately, an achievement gap remains for disadvantaged children, including children of color. Black children who took the math test pass at a rate of only 33%, compared to 78% for white children. Hispanic and Native American children pass at a rate of 43%, while Asian children do moderately better at 61%. Results for reading show a less pronounced gap.

## April, 2003

For a record seven years in a row, Minnesota is named the nation’s Most Livable State. The award is announced in *State Rankings 2003*, an annual reference book of state statistics published by Morgan Quitno Press of Lawrence, Kansas. “Our Most Livable State Award is not a measurement of which state is most fun or the best place for everyone to live,” said Morgan. “It is based on statistical indicators that reflect the kind of lifestyle that most Americans agree is positive — affordable housing, safe streets, good employment opportunities, a strong education system and a healthy state economy.” Minnesota is also named the fifth healthiest state in which to live.

## May, 2003

Four former governors (3 republicans, 1 democrat) publicly disagree with Governor Pawlenty’s no-new-taxes pledge as a way of addressing the budget deficit. They believe that a balanced approach of spending cuts and tax increases is the best remedy for the floundering budget, and they worry about the erosion of the common good.

The special session is out, and new laws are in. New taxes are out, and budget cuts are in. The Profile of Learning is out, a weekly recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance is in, and guns in most public places (including school parking lots) are in.

## June, 2003

The Department of Children, Families, and Learning begins holding meetings across the state to familiarize teachers and school officials with the new Minnesota Academic Standards. In addition, they hold in-depth workshops to help schools better understand how the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act will work in Minnesota.

The legislature reaches agreement to do, among other things, the following: reduce compensatory revenue for urban and suburban school districts; increase the shift of payments to school districts from one year to the next from 17% to

20%, creating a cash flow issue for already financially stressed districts; reduce learning year program funding; cut Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) funding by 20%; keep the per pupil funding formula amount flat, at \$4,601 for the next two years; suspend for two years the requirement for districts to reserve staff development funds, waive for two years the January 15 PELRA deadline for teacher negotiations; eliminate after school enrichment funding; and provide inflationary indexing for referenda caps for the next four years.

Every issue you have read about in this article represented an opportunity for you to build relationships and influence the future. You don’t have the time today? Clear and consistent communications may cost a little time in the short term but have the potential to save a lot in the long term. As staff, parents, community members, policy makers and politicians gain confidence and their trust in your leadership grows, support will increase and micromanagement will decrease. Just ten minutes a day—every day—dedicated to communicating about these issues through a quick phone call or e-mail, an addition to a newsletter or a visit with a legislator or a member of the press, will change and improve your future and the future of the school communities you serve. •

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## Assistant Commissioner ... Continued from Page 2

do their best, and assuring academic progress for all students.”

Nelson assumes her new duties in July. Before coming to Fridley in 1994, she was assistant superintendent for instruction at St. Louis Park (1985 – 94), assistant and acting high school principal in Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan (1979 – 85) and a high school

English teacher, department chair and speech director in Farmington (1969 – 76). She earned both a Ph.D. in educational administration and a bachelor’s in English education from the University of Minnesota along with a master’s degree from Mankato State University. A native Minnesotan, Nelson was raised in Eveleth. •

# NEWS FROM *the field*

## Online Learning—Challenges and Opportunities

by Charlie Kyte,  
MASA Executive Director

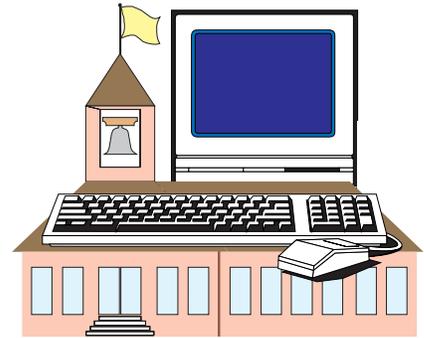
The Minnesota Legislature passed legislation that will govern online learning for the foreseeable future in Minnesota. Online learning will provide another choice for students in a state which is known for providing a large range of public education choices already. The online learning law can be viewed both as a threat and as an opportunity for Minnesota's school districts.

The threat revolves around students, on very short notice, diverting from participation in traditional courses within their schools and opting instead for online learning provided by either their own school district or another school district. Students have to give only a 30-day notice to their schools and their school district does

not have the right to limit their access to online courses.

Online learning is also an opportunity. In many of our rural school districts it is becoming more and more difficult to find licensed teachers to provide specialized courses of academic instruction. Further, it's hard to bring enough students together to study specialized courses and thus make it financially feasible for them to be provided by a school district. Online learning will allow school districts to have students remain part-time in their traditional school setting and participate part-time in an online environment.

The online learning law does provide some challenges. While it requires that all courses be taught by licensed Minnesota teachers, it is still unclear how exactly the teachers will interact



with the students in geographically remote locations. There will be concerns about students doing their own work. Methods need to be devised to monitor student testing and to check to be sure that students in fact are doing their own assignments.

It is quite possible that the law leaves too little money to the enrolling  
**Online Learning ...**  
**Continued Page 13**



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## The Results are In—Congratulations to Elected Leaders!

Congratulations to the following candidates who have been elected to MASA leadership positions:

**President-Elect:** Ric Dressen, Alexandria

**Board Members:**

Region 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Ray Farwell,  
Montgomery-Lonsdale  
Region 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Jerry Ness,  
West Central Schools  
Region 6 \_\_\_\_\_ Bruce Novak, Isle  
Region 7 \_\_\_\_\_ Lloyd Styrwoll, Grand Rapids  
Region 9 \_\_\_\_\_ Gary Prest, Bloomington  
Region 9 \_\_\_\_\_ Chris Richardson, Osseo  
Urban Districts \_\_\_\_\_ Joann Knuth, St. Paul  
Special Ed., Greater MN \_\_ Nancy Johnson, Fergus Falls  
Retiree Representative \_\_ Don Draayer, Minnetonka

*MASA appreciates these leaders for their commitment to MASA and Minnesota education and offers them congratulations as they begin their terms of service.*

**2003-04 Committee Chairs:**

*Legislative Committee*

Mary Ann Straley, Princeton

*Executive Development Committee*

Rick Clark, Buffalo Lake-Hector

*Member Services Committee*

Kathleen Macy, Stillwater

*Nominating Committee*

Kay Worner, Sartell-St. Stephens

**AASA Committee Appointments**

*Principal's & Aspiring Superintendents Advisory*

Eric Bartleson, Winona

*Principal's & Aspiring Superintendents Advisory*

Mike Kremer, Hopkins

*National Conference Planning*

Dave Thompson, Stewartville

*Women Administrators Advisory*

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## Online Learning ... Continued from Page 11

school district to carry on the remaining portions of its duties to the student. Only 12% of the money remains behind for a school district to support its counselors, nurses, extra-curricular programs, facilities, transportation and other needs. 88% of the money goes to the school district that is providing the online courses.

There will be quite a number of providers of online learning in the state. Service cooperatives have been experimenting with online for some time and will no doubt make it available to schools and their students. MASA is helping a number of school districts to think through how a high quality online system might work. Such a system would require highly skilled teachers both in the providing

school district and serving as mentors/guides to students in their remote locations. A system would need to be curriculum content rich and at the same time allow teachers to manipulate the curriculum to adjust for the individual learning styles for students and the teaching style of the teacher.

Students utilizing computers in school should not have too much of a problem accessing appropriate band-width and computer quality. However students trying to engage in online learning from home with dial-up phone accounts most likely will experience significant problems.

The online learning law sets aside approximately 1 million dollars per year for students in home school

and private school settings to access public school online courses. Students within public school can access courses with the revenue shared between the enrolling and the providing school districts.

Expect confusion for the first year or so as Minnesota comes up to speed with online learning. Other states have had considerable experience with this new medium and students across the country have found a fair degree of success in online learning settings. There is some evidence that students who have a hard time adjusting to the discipline and regiment of traditional public school courses may in fact thrive the best in an individualized online guided learning setting.

We will all be hearing much more about online learning and its threats and opportunities as we move into the future. •

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## A Seminar On the “High School Senior Year”

by **Charlie Kyte**,  
**MASA Executive Director**

Once again this year, the MnSCU College System, MASA and MASSP are teaming up to host a summer seminar. This year’s seminar will be an in-depth discussion regarding the senior year of high school. We’ll discuss the effectiveness and the importance of the senior year and possible strategies to help change the structure of the senior year and to create better opportunities for students, especially during the second half of their senior year experience.

This year’s seminar will be held on August 7th at Normandale Community College on the south side of the Twin Cities. We will invite 30-35 high school principals and like numbers of college administrators, school superintendents, curriculum leaders and counselors.

MASA will make a special effort to invite members who have recently had experience as principals leading

high schools. The unique perspective of these individuals will help us to think about what changes could be made to increase both the effectiveness of the experience of our students as they are transitioning from high school to higher education and to best utilize the scarcest

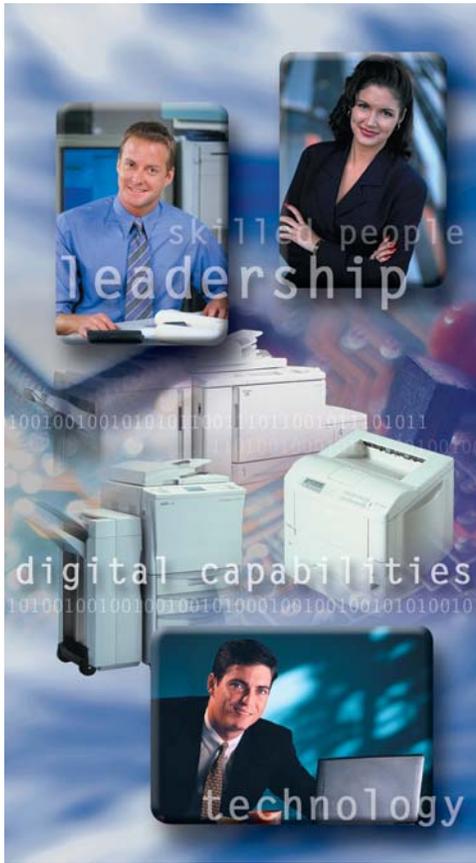
resources of money and staff that are allocated to Minnesota’s public education systems.

If you as a MASA member are interested in participating in the Summer Seminar on August 7th, please email MASA ([members@mnasa.org](mailto:members@mnasa.org)) and indicate your interest. •

### 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](mailto:members@mnasa.org).

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## Religion ... Continued from Page 4

evidence of prior incidents of violence or harassment of homosexual students that could be attributed to the students wearing the “anti-gay” T-shirts, they cannot be either disciplined in relation to a dress code violation or prohibited from wearing them.

### *Islamic Prayer Group*

A group of Muslim students would like to leave the school premises during Ramadan at lunch time to pray at a nearby temple. (During Ramadan, members of the Islamic faith fast between sun-up and sun down.) The school has a closed lunch period. In other words, students are not allowed to leave the school premises during lunch. Can you allow this group to exit the school, in violation of the closed campus policy, in order to exercise what they believe to be their freedom of religion?

The District should weigh the importance of maintaining the closed lunch policy against the student’s freedom of religion rights. Generally, as long as students’ participation in their religion does not substantially disrupt or interfere with the rights of other students, does not violate school rules and there is no establishment clause violation schools should attempt to accommodate students’ religious practices. However, accommodations that provide an undue burden on the school may not be required. Is there an alternative that is less contradictory to the closed lunch policy such as a prayer service on the school premises? This situation is, of course, complicated by the fact that the nature of the students’ religious observance is to fast, underlying their desire not to participate in lunch. One possibility would be to provide an alternative place on campus for the students to gather and have silent prayer, but not require them to attend lunch. The Supreme Court has made it clear that “nothing in the Constitution as interpreted by this Court prohibits any public school student from voluntarily praying at any time before, during or after the schoolday.” Accordingly, it would be permissible for the students to voluntarily pray during lunch or any other time.<sup>4</sup>

### *Basketball Team Prayer*

The captain of the school basketball team is a devout Christian. He has established a practice of leading a religious prayer before each game and occasionally during time-outs. A couple of players have complained about this practice. Can the school district prohibit the student-led prayer? The United States Supreme Court has specifically prohibited student-initiated and led prayers in this context. In 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the school district policy permitting invocations prior to the first ball games was impermissibly coercive.<sup>5</sup>

School districts will continue to be faced with complicated questions arising out of the requirement to not promote religion on one hand and the obligation to not interfere with individuals right to practice religion. Review of policies and procedures and training and resources for staff and personnel are important considerations for the 2003-04 school year. •

### **Footnotes:**

<sup>1</sup>The “Lemon Test” arose out of a 1971 opinion Lemon v. Kurtzman, 403 US 602 (1971), involving state aid to religious schools.

<sup>2</sup>The Supreme Court has created two additional tests for evaluating potential Establishment Clause violations: “the coercion test” and “the endorsement test.” In Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S. 577 (1992) the Supreme Court invalidated a school district’s policy permitting school principals to invite clergy to give invocations and benedictions in the form of “non-sectarian” prayers at graduation. The test requires an analysis as to whether or not the school-sponsored activity has a coercive effect by determining that unconstitutional coercion occurs when: “ (1) the government directs; (2) a formal religious exercise; (3) in such a way as to oblige the participation of objectors.” The “endorsement test” combines the “effects” and “entanglement” prongs of the Lemon test and asks whether a “reasonable observer” would ask whether or not the state action constitutes impermissible endorsement of religion.

<sup>3</sup>See Good News Club v. Milford Central School, 533 U.S. 98 (2001) (Community – use policy prohibiting religious groups from using school buildings after hours was unconstitutional.)

<sup>4</sup>For more information on this topic see Secretary of Education, Rod Paige’s February 7, 2003 guidance letter on student’s right to pray in public schools. [http://www.ed.gov/initiatives/religionandschools/letter\\_030207.html](http://www.ed.gov/initiatives/religionandschools/letter_030207.html).

<sup>5</sup>See Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe, 530 U.S. 290 (2000).



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# MASA to Host Summer Leadership Conference

by **Charlie Kyte,**  
MASA Executive Director

The MASA Summer Leadership Workshop will be held at the Radisson South Hotel in Bloomington on Wednesday, August 13th. It will be followed by the MSBA Summer Seminar for School Board Members on August 14th & 15th. This will be the second year that MASA has hosted the summer workshop, which formerly had been hosted by the State Department of Education.

This conference is a solid “nuts ‘n bolts” conference in which critical information regarding new rules and financial arrangements for public schools are shared with school leaders. Further, the workshop creates a networking opportunity for MASA members during which ideas are shared, plans for the future are discussed, and personal connections are renewed.

We will start the day with a keynote presentation in which we will hear Congressman Jim Ramstad share his

observations of No Child Left Behind. Then our participants will have a full menu of breakout sessions to round out the day.

This year MASA is also teaming up with MSBA to create a short mini-conference session in the early evening of August 13th. This session will be on superintendent evaluations. It will cover both the evaluation process and the newly emerging legal interpretations of what must be revealed to the public. The session presenters include Neal Buehe, who represents MASA members on legal contract issues; an attorney who represents school boards and Bob Lowe of MSBA.

Mark your calendars now for August 13th. Plan to attend the MASA Summer Leadership Workshop and also consider signing up for the mini-conference on the evening of the 13th. •

## ***Are You Moving?***

Now is the time of year when many of our members are on the move! Help us keep track of you (and therefore keep your MASA benefits and services coming to you!). Just give Jeanna a call (651/645-6272), fax her a note (651/645-7518), or email her at [members@mnasa.org](mailto:members@mnasa.org) and she will update your records. Also, if you have new colleagues in your area who are not MASA members, let us know and we will send membership information to them. •

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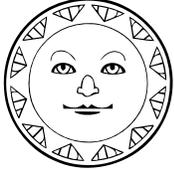


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## MASA Summer Leadership Workshop

Wednesday, August 13, 2003  
Radisson South Hotel, Bloomington

Summer is here and it's a great time to take time to network with your colleagues and brush up on your leadership skills. Make plans to attend the MASA Summer Leadership Workshop! We will begin the day with a general session where we will hear Congressman Jim Ramstad share his observations of the positive and negative aspects of No Child Left Behind. Then our participants will have a full menu of breakout sessions to round out the day.

### Special Sessions of Particular Interest to New and Newer Superintendents:

Each breakout session block includes a session especially for new and newer superintendents. The special sessions are highlighted on the program schedule at right.

### Registration Fee:

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MASA retiree members may register at a reduced cost of \$38, which is the cost of food and beverages.

### Getting There

The Radisson South Hotel is located on the Northwest quadrant of I-494 and Highway 100 in Bloomington. From I-494, take Highway 100 North, exit at Industrial Boulevard/77th Street and go west two blocks. The address is: 7800 Normandale Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55439, and the phone number is 952/835-7800. More information on the Radisson is available at [www.radisson.com/minneapolismn\\_south](http://www.radisson.com/minneapolismn_south). For information about the Bloomington Area, visit their website at [www.bloomingtonmn.org](http://www.bloomingtonmn.org).

### Registration Form -MASA Summer Workshop

Registration Deadline: August 6, 2003

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (with Area Code): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am an MASA retiree and so will remit only \$38 for food and beverages.

### **Return this form with your payment to:**

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Ph: 651/645-6272 • Fx: 651/645-7518 • [members@mnasa.org](mailto:members@mnasa.org)

### **Program**

8 - 9 am \_\_\_\_\_ **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

9 - 9:50 am \_\_\_\_\_ **Keynote Speaker**  
**Congressman Jim Ramstad**

10 - 11 am \_\_\_\_\_ **Breakout Session 1**

- **School Funding in the New Biennium (for large and suburban districts)**
- **Working with the Media to Share your Message**
- **Online Learning—The New Law**
- **New/Newer Superintendents: Intro to the Superintendency**

11:10 am - 12:10 pm **Breakout Session 2**

- **School Funding in the New Biennium (for smaller districts)**
- **Working with the Media to Share your Message (Repeat)**
- **The New Department of Education—Design and Leadership**
- **New/Newer Superintendents: Start with a Solid Foundation: Communication Strategies for New and Newer Leaders**

12:10 - 1:30 pm \_ **Lunch**

1:30 - 2:30 pm \_ **Breakout Session 3**

- **NCLB and MN Accountability**
- **Professional Licensure Issues—Variances, Waivers, and NCLB Highly Qualified Teachers and Paraprofessionals**
- **Planning and Strategies, Levies and Referenda**
- **Thriving or Critically Ill? Assessing the Effectiveness of Your Communication Programs**
- **New/Newer Superintendents: Funding and Finance**

2:45 - 3:45 pm \_ **Breakout Session 4**

- **NCLB and MN Accountability (Repeat)**
- **Projecting Your District's Year-end Financial Status on a Monthly Basis, and Reporting it to Your Board**
- **The New IDEA**
- **Helping Your Employees Prepare Financially for the Future**
- **New/Newer Superintendents: Working with Your School Board**

**Attending the MSBA Summer Seminar?  
Come a day early and take advantage of  
these great learning opportunities.**

**Workshop information is also available on  
the MASA web site: [www.mnasa.org](http://www.mnasa.org).**

Cancellations made before or on August 6 will be charged a \$20 cancellation fee. No refunds for cancellations made after August 6, 2003. **No-shows will be billed.**

**Thank you—see you at the workshop!**

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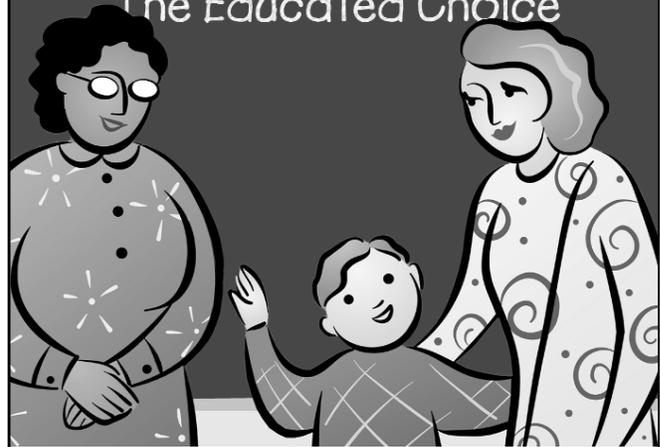
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For most school districts, the annual subscription cost is less than the cost of advertising just one position in the newspaper. And the jobsite postings and applications are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Rates are determined according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

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# 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 in the fall of 2003.

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. •

*I would like to help!*

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

I will pledge:

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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!*

## Foundation Golf Tourney Heads for Duluth's Enger Park

Come kick off the MASA Fall Conference by golfing beautiful Enger Park Golf Course! The golf tournament supports the work of the MASA Foundation (a 501(c)(3) organization), providing leadership development for Minnesota's school leaders and supporting the field of school administration.

The 18-hole, 4-person team event will be held on Sunday, September 28—shot-gun tee off at 12:30. There will be fun and prizes, and all are invited to play. Your conference registration packet will contain more detailed information and registration materials, so watch your mail in early August. Join the fun and support your Foundation!

# Calendar . . .

**August 7**  
**Seminar on the High School Senior Year**  
 Normandale  
 Community College

**August 13**  
**Summer Leadership Conference**  
 Radisson South,  
 Bloomington

**August 13 (pm)**  
**Superintendent Evaluations**  
 Radisson South,  
 Bloomington

**August 14 - 15**  
**MSBA Summer Seminar**  
 Radisson South, Bloomington

**August 15**  
**Fall Newsletter Submissions Due**

**September 1**  
**Labor Day Holiday**  
 MASA Offices Closed

**September 27 - 28**  
**Board Meetings**  
 Inn on Lake Superior,  
 Duluth, MN  
 • Executive Committee  
 September 27: 12:30 - 2:15 pm  
 • Board of Directors  
 September 27: 2:30 - 5 pm  
 September 28: 9 - 11 am

**September 28 - 30**  
**MASA Fall Conference**  
 Duluth Entertainment  
 Convention Center

**November 4**  
**Election Day**

**November 14**  
**Winter Newsletter Submissions Due**

**November 27 - 28**  
**Thanksgiving Holiday**  
 MASA Offices Closed

**December 3**  
**Board Meetings**  
 MASA Office  
 • Executive Committee  
 9 - 10:45 am  
 • Board of Directors  
 11 am - 4 pm

**December 24 - 25**  
**December 31 - January 1**  
**Winter Holidays**  
 MASA Offices Closed

**February 4**  
**Board Meetings**  
 MASA Office  
 • Executive Committee  
 9 - 10:45 am  
 • Board of Directors  
 11 am - 4 pm

**February 13**  
**Spring Newsletter Submissions Due**

**February 19 - 22**  
**AASA National Conference on Education**  
 San Francisco

**March 31**  
**Board Meetings**  
 Radisson South, Bloomington  
 • Executive Committee  
 9 - 10:45 am  
 • Board of Directors  
 11 am - 4 pm

**April 1 - 2**  
**MASA/MASE Spring Conference**  
 Radisson South, Bloomington

**April 9**  
**Spring Holiday**  
 MASA Offices Closed

**May 14**  
**Summer Newsletter Submissions Due**

**May 31**  
**Memorial Day Holiday**  
 MASA Offices Closed

## Superintendents On the Move

by **Jenna Quinn**  
**Associate for Office and Data Management**

So far this year, there are 54 Minnesota Superintendents who are either new Superintendents or new to their districts. See the list below and welcome your new colleagues in your regions.

Adrian \_\_\_\_\_ Roger Graff  
 Balaton \_\_\_\_\_ Vern McKee  
 Barnesville \_\_\_\_\_ Keith Klein  
 Becker \_\_\_\_\_ Steven Dooley  
 Blue Earth \_\_\_\_\_ Dale Brandsoy  
 Browns Valley \_\_\_\_\_ Dale Gilje  
 Buffalo Lake/  
 Hector \_\_\_\_\_ Rick Clark  
 Caledonia \_\_\_\_\_ Jim Tool  
 Canby \_\_\_\_\_ Loren Hacker  
 Cass Lake/  
 Bena \_\_\_\_\_ Todd Chessmore  
 Chatfield \_\_\_\_\_ Phil Minkinen  
 Cook County \_\_\_\_\_ Charles Futterer  
 Dassel/Cokato \_\_\_\_\_ Don Hainlen  
 Deer River \_\_\_\_\_ Mark Adams  
 Elgin/Millville \_\_\_\_\_ Gordon Gurienk  
 Esko \_\_\_\_\_ Curt Tryggestad  
 Fridley \_\_\_\_\_ Mark Robertson  
 Glencoe/  
 Silver Lake \_\_\_\_\_ Roger Worner  
 Glenville/  
 Emmons \_\_\_\_\_ David Olson  
 Hastings \_\_\_\_\_ Tim Collins  
 Herman/  
 Norcross \_\_\_\_\_ Steven Wymore  
 Janesville/  
 Waldorf \_\_\_\_\_ Tami Sens  
 Jordan \_\_\_\_\_ Larry Kauzlarich

Lake Park/  
 Audubon \_\_\_\_\_ Dale Hogie  
 Lake Superior \_\_\_\_\_ Shelly Johnson  
 MACCRAY \_\_\_\_\_ Gary Shaw, Interim  
 Maple Lake \_\_\_\_\_ Mark Redemske  
 Nevis \_\_\_\_\_ Doug DeWitt  
 New London/  
 Spicer \_\_\_\_\_ Paul Carlson  
 New York Mills \_\_\_\_\_ Todd Cameron  
 Nicollet \_\_\_\_\_ Greg Allen  
 Norwood \_\_\_\_\_ John Hornung  
 Ogilvie \_\_\_\_\_ Tom Rich  
 Okle/Plummer \_\_\_\_\_ James Guetter  
 Park Rapids \_\_\_\_\_ Glenn Chiodo  
 Pelican Rapids \_\_\_\_\_ Kent Baldry  
 Perham/Dent \_\_\_\_\_ Tamara Uselman  
 Pipestone \_\_\_\_\_ Jim Lentz  
 Renville  
 County West \_\_\_\_\_ Doug Conboy  
 Rosemount/  
 Apple Valley \_\_\_\_\_ John Currie  
 Rushford/  
 Peterson \_\_\_\_\_ Jeff Miller  
 Sebeka \_\_\_\_\_ William Reusch  
 Sleepy Eye \_\_\_\_\_ Arla Dockter  
 South St Paul \_\_\_\_\_ Dana Babbitt  
 St Francis \_\_\_\_\_ Ed Saxton  
 St Michael/  
 Albertville \_\_\_\_\_ Marcia Zielger  
 St Peter \_\_\_\_\_ Jeff Olson  
 Tracy \_\_\_\_\_ David Marlette  
 United South  
 Central \_\_\_\_\_ Robert Stuerman  
 Wabasso \_\_\_\_\_ Ted Suss  
 Willow River \_\_\_\_\_ Philip Ledermann  
 Windom/Fulda \_\_\_\_\_ Doug Froke  
 Worthington \_\_\_\_\_ John Langaard  
 Yellow  
 Medicine \_\_\_\_\_ Dwayne Strand

