

Ted Blaesing is Superintendent of the Year

MASA has named Dr. Theodore S. (Ted) Blaesing, Superintendent for the White Bear Lake Area Schools, the 2001 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year.

As the Minnesota honoree, Dr. Blaesing is a candidate among other state winners for National Superintendent of the Year, to be announced at the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) convention, February 16 – 18, 2001 in Orlando.

Superintendent of the Year nominees are evaluated on how each candidate demonstrates:

- Leadership for learning—creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.
- Communication skills—strength in both personal and organizational communication.
- Professionalism—consistently upgrading his or her administrative knowledge and skills, providing professional development and opportunities for other members of the education team, and motivating others.
- Community involvement—active participation in local community activities and understanding of regional, national and international issues.

Dr. Blaesing was selected for this honor by a panel of representatives

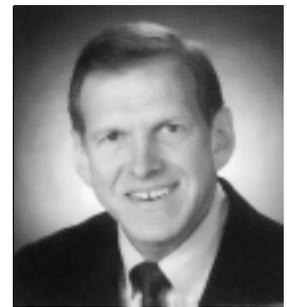
from eight Minnesota education organizations.

Dr. Blaesing has been superintendent for the White Bear Lake Area Schools since 1993. With an enrollment of 9,500 students, the district serves its “second-ring suburban” community with nine elementary schools, two middle schools, two high school campuses, an area learning center, and an early childhood center. The district encompasses eight municipalities with a diverse and growing population.

Dr. Blaesing is especially noted for his ability to communicate effectively with all members of the community, building strong connections with the school district. With his leadership, the district has established a number of important initiatives to improve the districts’ communications efforts, such as conducting community-wide surveys about how people feel about their schools, hosting information booths at community events, and enhancing a comprehensive district web site.

In his role of key communicator for the school district, Dr. Blaesing has been particularly effective in advising the community about the financial needs of the district. In their letter of support for his Superintendent of the Year

nomination, the members of the White Bear Lake Board of Education praised Dr. Blaesing’s fiscal management.



Ted Blaesing

“Much like a chief financial officer of a large corporation,” the Board states, “a school superintendent must oversee a multi-million dollar budget. However, in the case of public education, that task is coupled with having to report that budget to all of its shareholders (i.e. taxpayers) and in turn have its revenue influenced by community opinion. Upon his arrival to the White Bear Lake Area Schools, Dr. Blaesing inherited a budget deficit of 5.5 million dollars, and a twice-failed operating levy referendum. As a result of his prudent fiscal management, our district now maintains a positive fund balance and has in turn regained the trust of **Superintendent of the Year ...**
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So, Who Wants to be a Billionaire?

by Greg Vandal
MASA President and
Superintendent,
Sauk Rapids-Rice Schools



Greg Vandal

Recently, I took part in an interesting exercise in high tech opinion polling. On behalf of MASA, I was invited to participate in Governor Ventura's State-Local Budget Forum. About 300 officials from around Minnesota were in attendance;

at least a couple other superintendents were in the room that day. We had been strategically drawn from different segments of local government and business. I sat at a table with a city

administrator from St. Cloud, a school board member from Cold Spring, and the mayor of Detroit Lakes. Also in the crowd were county officials and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce.

At the outset, we were all assigned devices akin to those used in the popular game show, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?". These infrared numeric keypads became our tools with which to "vote" throughout the afternoon. While I didn't see Regis Philbin that day, top ranking officials from the Ventura administration, including the Governor himself, were present to review critical state issues and to ask for input into the positions the Governor should take. Commissioner of Finance Pamela Wheelock, for example, described the state budgeting process and

asked for feedback on how to respond to the growing pressures on the Minnesota budget. Commissioner of Revenue Matt Smith reviewed the history of our system of taxation and offered possible changes. Commissioner of Public Safety Charlie Weaver discussed the current law enforcement communications network and advocated for enhancements.

Our own DCFL Commissioner Christine Jax was also present. Dr. Jax spent time describing the critical teacher shortage in Minnesota. She touted changes in the compensation model currently in place as a possible solution. The Commissioner argued that teacher pay is a big factor playing into the **Billionaire ...**

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Fruitcakes Make Great Holiday Gifts

by Charlie Kyte
MASA Executive Director



Charlie Kyte

Now that I've started this new job at MASA/MASE, I am looking for a way to say "Thank You" to our fine staff and to members of the Board of Directors. I've been searching my mind for several weeks and just the other day, an idea came to me. I would try to re-enact a

former attempt at holiday presents by once again baking fruitcakes to present as gifts to all these fine people.

We did this once before a number of years ago when working in Northfield. At that time, I came up with the bright idea that we should make holiday fruitcakes.

My wonderful wife Diane gave me one of those funny looks of hers. She suspected, once again, that I was going to be the idea man, and she was the one who was going to do all of the work.

Back then we decided we needed 14 fruitcakes. After digging out a recipe and multiplying it by the proper number of times, we set out to the local grocery store to buy the ingredients. I never realized how much junk went into making fruit cakes and what it all costs. The local grocer watched delightedly as Diane began loading the cart I was pushing around the store. At least we helped to make his holiday a happy one.

When we made fruitcakes the last time, our team included Diane, Cookie (our Brittany Spaniel), and me to do the preparation and baking. I actually helped with some of the slicing and mixing,

although I admit that Diane did most of the work. We realized at that time that we only had two baking pans that were the correct small size and the fruitcakes took about an hour each to bake. Thus, to prepare all of the fruitcakes involved a period of seven hours of baking. It was a good thing that we started early on a Saturday morning that weekend.

The fruitcakes, as they came out of the oven, were beautiful. We kept reloading the pans and putting another pair into the oven. Finally, the last two were done just as we had to leave to play cards at a friend's house. We put the two fruitcakes on cooling racks in the kitchen.

Later that evening when we came home, we realized there was something missing. Those last two

Fruitcake ...

Continued Page 17

Big-Time Changes Present Big-Time Challenges

by Mary Ann Nelson
MASA Superintendent
Component Group President and
Superintendent,
Fridley Schools

One leadership challenge seems sure in Minnesota—to brace ourselves for even more changes, along with differing opinions, uncertainty, and excitement. After years of working to implement reforms for improved learning in our schools, we're not sure what rules will change again, and what funding decisions will be made.

Standards appear to be still "in," but part of the *profile* may be "out." More *content* will apparently be built "in," but the term *packages* looks to be "out." The *BIG PLAN* is "in," but the jury is "out" on exactly what will this mean for school leaders. *Accountability* is "in" but the commitment to providing schools and leaders the

necessary tools is not clear. At the same time, experts predict a future crisis in leadership with too few candidates to fill upcoming vacancies for teacher, principal, superintendent roles. No one said it would be easy!

We all know that change is not smooth—strong opinions and misinformation are out there about public schools. Education was listed as a top priority in most candidates' campaigns—what a plus. With scarce resources and expanded expectations, the resulting job stress can lead to questioning ourselves and how we lead. Yet, in many ways, leadership in education has never been more stimulating and satisfying.

Recently a friend of mine cautioned, "remember what we truly love about our work." Do we take enough time to reflect about what is important to us and why we chose this work?

Can we name the things that you will never compromise on, when it comes to students? Staying connected to our leadership purpose and passion helps to keep us focused during these times of change.



Mary Ann Nelson

Keeping in touch with the myriad of external studies and reports about public schools helps us to stay on top of things, too. MASA is a great resource for that. The MASA superintendent component group reps will be meeting on December 15 to decide what our elected group will do to help state superintendents as leaders. Other component groups are also meeting. We're asking what your needs are and what is "doable" for us this year. Please send us your priority ideas.

Big Time ...
Continued Page 19

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Knutson Flynn

Active As Champions for Children



Shari Prest

by Shari Prest
Ark Associates

Education is an increasingly competitive marketplace. Twenty-five percent of students are currently enrolled in non-traditional, charter, home, and

private schools although there is no significant evidence that students learn better or more there. Nationally, if you remove the competition of home schools and private schools, and the whole issue of vouchers, we are experiencing an all time high of fifteen percent of students who are taking advantage of options from within the public system. Those numbers don't even account for students who are making choices within their home district. Among families making more than fifty thousand dollars a year, seventy-two percent have opted for some kind of choice, including selecting a residence in the area of public school they want their child(ren) to attend. According to the *American School Board Journal*, February 2000, "The idea of options in public education is taking hold." Charles Glenn, a professor of educational policy at Boston University reported in 1998 that "choice is not a dim future prospect, to be debated pro and con. It's already here, and massively."

Public relations skills and activities have evolved as an essential part of the educators' job despite the fact that fewer than fifteen percent of educational leaders indicate they have received any formal training to prepare them for that role. For this reason

the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association have teamed together to form the public relations initiative, *Champions for Children*. *Champions for Children* works in two primary focus areas.

The first is internal educational leader public relations development. The main tool for this purpose is the distribution of the Educational Leader Promotional Portfolio to all members. Fourteen issues of the portfolio have been provided to you as part of your organizational mailings. These materials will be most effective if they are indexed and included in a promotional portfolio notebook so that you can access specific topics easily when need or opportunity arises. *Watch for the Educational Leadership Promotional Portfolio in your organization's mailings. The impact of these materials is dependent upon your use of them.*

The second primary focus area is outreach. In order to influence public perceptions and political behaviors on your behalf, *Champions for Children* does 4 to 6 topical mailings a year to approximately 1200 opinion leaders across the state, 1 to 3 mailings a year to a select group of legislators who have significant influence over the policies and funding of public education, and contacts as needed to the media representatives who develop the stories about educational issues and leadership.

Shari Prest of Ark Associates has been engaged as the public relations representative of *Champions for Children* for over two years. She welcomes your suggestions about public relations topics you would like to see addressed as well as the format that will make the information most useful to you. She can be reached by telephone at (952) 890-2851, by fax at (952) 707-1214, or through electronic mail at sprest@arkssoc.com. •

Statewide Site Council Institute Building Leadership Capacity in Site Councils

If you're on a site council, you can't miss this great training opportunity! Spend two days (March 2-3, 2001) with site council members from around Minnesota learning how to operate the most effective site council possible. At this first-ever Site Council Institute, you'll select from power-packed sessions on subjects like:

- Managing effective site councils**
- Making good decisions as a team**
- Working with diverse populations**
- Developing leadership skills**
- Improving communication**

For \$250/person (\$200 if you register by January 12), you'll get: keynote and closing speakers; the opportunity to select from 30 breakout sessions; five meals; and all materials. To receive a registration flyer, contact Mo Chang at the Saint Paul Schools: 651-767-8311 or mo.chang@spps.org.

Leading from the fishbowl!



Thank You Fall Conference Sponsors !

A special thank you to our friends in business who sponsored portions of the 2000 MASA Fall Conference. Your participation means MASA is able to offer a higher quality conference and participants' professional development is enhanced. You make a difference for Minnesota education!

- **Armstrong, Torseth, Skold & Rydeen Architects/Engineers**
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**KKE
Architects
New**

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**Jefferson
Center**

As MASA's legal counsel, Doug discusses matters of personal concern to you as an administrator.

What the Recent EEOC Actions Regarding Age-Based Benefits May Mean to You



by Neal Buethe
MASA Legal
Counsel,
Briggs and
Morgan

Over the last several months, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has

initiated charges against several Minnesota school districts concerning benefit packages that it alleges violate the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) because they are age-based and, according to the EEOC, discriminatory. The types of provisions under scrutiny typically involve a declining age-based scale in early retirement incentive programs and other perseverance plans. In addition to these charges, the EEOC has sent out a

broad-ranging request to other districts, a "compliance questionnaire," demanding information on all recent early retirement packages. Some districts are settling claims, others are still investigating and determining what they will do and others are litigating against the EEOC through a suit filed by the MSBA Insurance Trust.

What does this mean to a school administrator who has a sliding-scale severance benefit in his or her contract? How do you preserve your personal legal rights while serving a board that is settling, investigating or litigating an EEOC charge?

First, check to see whether your contract includes such a provision. If you have early retirement

incentive or severance payment benefits that are reduced, as you grow older, then you have an age-based benefit. If you have a provision by which district-paid health insurance premiums for retirees that are reduced for older employees, then you may also have what the EEOC considers and illegal age-based benefit. Such provisions can appear explicitly in your contract or through an incorporation provision (a "me-to" provision) that provides you benefits in the principals' or teachers' agreements.

Second, if you do have such a provision in your contract and you have some responsibility for the district's response to the EEOC, inform your board in writing.
EEOC ...

Continued Page 16

Make plans to attend...

The 2001 National Conference on Education[®]

AASA's 133rd Annual Conference and Exposition

February 16-18
Orange County Convention Center, Orlando

Do something important for your district and yourself—attend the 2001 National Conference on Education. AASA has mailed registration materials. Register online (www.aasa.org/nce), by fax (1-301-694-5124), or mail.

Join your colleagues for the Minnesota Breakfast, sponsored by National Computer Systems, Inc., Saturday, February 17, 7:00 - 8:30 am at the Peabody Hotel. (Note that the time is one half-hour earlier this year to accommodate the conference program.)

Breakfast reservation information is enclosed in this newsletter (or call MASA, 651/645-6272).

Important Reminder: A error in the AASA National Conference on Education brochure incorrectly indicates that Minnesota has a housing block at the Rosen Center Hotel and that members should contact MASA to be included in the block. MASA discontinued facilitating housing block arrangements a number of years ago. We encourage you to make your reservations early by:

- contacting the AASA Housing Bureau at 1-888-381-7166 or 1-415-979-2262 OR
- using the housing form in your conference brochure OR
- using online registration (www.aasa.org/nce). Tip: the housing bureau may have more rooms available than the online service.

MASA's "home base" is the Peabody Hotel, where we will host the Minnesota Breakfast on Saturday morning. As always, please feel free to call the MASA office with your questions (651-645-6272 or members@masa.org).

News from the capitol, brought to you by your lobbying team.

Education Groups – All Working to Serve the Children in Their Charge

by **Charlie Kyte**
MASA Executive Director

At the Fall MASA Conference at Madden's, members heard presentations from a number of different education groups in terms of each group's unique need to serve the children in their charge. Below are articles written by three of the presenters of the Fall Conference, identifying those needs.

Edina Superintendent Ken Dragseth represents the Association of Metropolitan School Districts. St. Paul Area Superintendent JoAnn Knuth represents the Urban School Districts. Superintendent Chris Richardson of Osseo represents Schools for Equity in Education.

While each group has unique needs for funding and legislation, each of the groups exist to find resources to fill the educational needs of children in their charge. Each of these organizations has a similar mission and has a need of similar results in order to be successful.

Association of Metropolitan School Districts

by Ken Dragseth, Superintendent,
Edina Public Schools

The Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) represents 26 school districts in the metropolitan area, including the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Its mission is to promote sound educational policies that enable metropolitan school districts to

help our students be successful. AMSD was founded in 1974 in response to the severe financial situations suburban school districts were experiencing as a result of rapidly declining enrollment. At that time, many districts lost up to one-half of their student population and were putting staff with 15+ years of experience on unrequested leave. Many districts had few teachers who had less than ten years' experience and this created a tremendous financial burden on districts. Since those early years, AMSD continues to seek to expand its services to more member districts and act as a unified voice for the metropolitan area.

Today, AMSD is growing and includes districts that are quite diverse. AMSD members feel strongly that we all have a stake in promoting and ensuring an

**Working to Serve ...
Continued Page 16**

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**North Central
Bus Sales**

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**KNR
Communications**

Welcome New Members!

Tom Ames
Superintendent
St. Charles Schools

Boyd Bradbury
Superintendent
Waubun-Ogema-
White Earth Schools

Howard Carlson
Superintendent
Delano Schools

Sherman Carlson
Superintendent
Proctor Schools

C. Todd Chessmore
Superintendent
Glenville-Emmons Schools

Ollen Church
Superintendent
Ada-Borup Schools

Martha Cussler
Director of Special Projects
Saint Paul Schools

Stuart Desjarlait
Superintendent
Red Lake Schools

David Johnson
Superintendent
LeSueur-Henderson Schools

Diane Kaiser
Director of Information Tech.
Chaska Schools

Shawn Kasianov
Community Ed. Director
St. Cloud Area Schools

Nancy Katzmarek
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Area Superintendent
Saint Paul Schools

Craig Kay
Superintendent
Dassel-Cokato Schools

Lynne Kovash
Assistant Superintendent
Moorhead Area Schools

George Ladd
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Superintendent
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Mora Schools

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Michael Martin
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Tom Mathews
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Blackduck Schools

Christopher Mills
Superintendent
Stephen-Argyle Schools

Bernie Novak
Superintendent
Ashby Schools

Caline Olson
Superintendent
Norman Schools

Linda Partridge
Superintendent
Foley Schools

Carl Remmers
Superintendent
Benson Schools

Thomas Rich
Superintendent
Buffalo Lake/Hector Schools

Loren Sauter
Superintendent
Wrenshall Schools

Jane Sigford
Executive Director of
Curriculum & Instruction
Wayzata Schools

David Thompson
Superintendent
Stewartville Schools

Neil Trottier
Principal
Pine Point Schools

Pete Ziegler
Executive Director
Minnesota River Valley Ed.
District

We're glad to have you with us!

MASA will Report to Members via Email and Web-based System

Beginning with the 2001 Minnesota Legislative Session, MASA will provide every member with a **weekly email update** on events related to education. This communication will also be published on the MASA web page (www.mnasa.org) for broader dissemination. This is one more effort by MASA to bring members useful and timely information.

Make sure your email address is correct! MASA has mailed data verification postcards to all members. Please review yours, make any changes, and return it to the MASA office—thank you.

MASA Awards Recognize Outstanding Leadership

Nominate a colleague or yourself! Your award information/nomination packet is enclosed with this newsletter. Your packet contains the materials necessary to nominate excellent leaders for the recognition they deserve!

Administrators of Excellence Award
Kay E. Jacobs Award
MASA Distinguished Service Award
Morris Bye Memorial Award

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 listed above).

MASA Recognizes Leadership and Service Congratulations Award Recipients!

MASA service pins and certificates were presented at the 2000 Fall Conference. We proudly recognize these MASA members for their years of leadership as administrators or superintendents.

25 Year Superintendent (Gold Pin with Ruby):

Phil Dyrud, Superintendent, Greenbrook/Middle River and Lancaster Schools
Dale Gilje, Superintendent, Wheaton Schools
Les Potas, Retired Superintendent, Benson Schools
Darrold Williams, Retired Superintendent, Willmar Schools

20 Year Superintendent (Gold Pin):

Walt Aanenson, Superintendent, East Grand Forks Schools
Dan Froemming, Retired Superintendent, Minnewaska Schools
Warren Rolek, Superintendent, St. Anthony-New Brighton Schools

15 year Superintendent Certificate:

Dan Hoke, Superintendent, South Washington County Schools

30 Year Administrator (Silver Pin with Sapphire):

John Lobben, Superintendent, Intermediate District 287
John Mattison, Superintendent, Wabasha-Kellogg Schools
David Peterson, Director of Finance & Operations, Chaska Schools
Jerry Williams, Director of Human Resources, Rochester Schools

25 Year Administrator (Silver Pin with Ruby):

Gretchen Grewe, Director of Secondary Education, Elk River Schools
Bob Lageson, Superintendent, Big Lake Schools
Michael Lovett, Assistant Superintendent, Minnetonka Schools
James Oraskovich, Superintendent, Pequot Lakes Schools
Richard Orcutt, Superintendent, Windom Area Schools
Dennis Rettke, Superintendent, Mahtomedi Schools
John Widvey, Superintendent, Worthington Schools

20 Year Administrator (Silver Pin):

Fred Nolan, Superintendent, Eden Valley-Watkins Schools
Roger Rueckert, Superintendent, Zumbrota-Mazeppa Schools
Keith Togstad, Superintendent, St. James Schools
John Tritabaugh, Superintendent, Albany Area Schools
Lee Warne, Executive Director, Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative

15 Year Administrator Certificate:

Gery Arndt, Superintendent, Jackson County Central Schools
David Behlow, Superintendent, Columbia Heights Schools
Janine Dahms-Walker, Executive Director, Benton-Stearns Education District
Stephen Twitchell, Superintendent, Lake Park-Audubon Schools
David U'Ren, Superintendent, Rushford-Peterson Schools

10 Year Administrator Certificate:

Steve Malone, Superintendent, GFW Schools
Wendy Shannon, Superintendent, Byron Schools
Kelly Smith, Superintendent, West Central Area Schools



A Model for Small Schools

by **Charlie Kyte**
MASA Executive Director

There is a wide range of enrollments in school districts in Minnesota. This same dynamic is present in many areas of the United States. With each size of school district there are advantages and disadvantages. The intimacy of small schools cannot be duplicated in large settings. The sophistication of curriculum presented in larger schools is difficult to duplicate in schools where there are only a small number of students.

leaders, and their communities, a set of difficult choices. Analyzing, discussing and acting on these choices will require significant courage on the part of leaders over the next several years.

One Choice – Consolidation:

One choice for rural areas is to enter into another round of school consolidation. As numbers of students drop off, and where funding remains tied to the number of students, small schools will have a difficult time surviving. There have already been two excruciating

rounds of consolidation in Minnesota and in many other areas of the country. The first occurred in the 1960's as the rural country schools were pulled into the consolidated independent school districts. The second round came during the 70's & 80's as many small towns consolidated with each other, combining the students into workable sizes. The result was that some communities no longer have schools.

Second Choice – “Program Funding”:

A second choice is to operate school districts which are very small in size **Small Schools ..**

Continued Page 11

For the most rural areas of our nation, this brings educational leaders, and their communities, a set of difficult choices.

There is a changing dynamic in many rural areas, which will result in many schools becoming smaller in size than they have been in the past. Because of a declining birth rate and a shift of economic opportunities, the populations in rural areas continue to age and the number of young people continues to diminish. This trend has been underway for some time and will now accelerate profoundly over the next 10 to 15 years.

Small towns require a spiritual “center.” In this context, the spirit is not associated with a higher power. Rather a centered community can come together through the public schools as the community concentrates on the development of activities for their youth. Would it not be better that a effective small school be provided in nearly every small town, than to have students bused large distances so that they can be assembled in larger numbers for group instruction?

For the most rural areas of our nation, this brings educational

Plan now to attend...



MASA/MASE Spring Conference

March 15 - 16, 2001
Radisson South Hotel,
Bloomington

Mark your calendar for this important conference! Join your colleagues and experience dynamic speakers and cutting-edge small group sessions that will teach, inspire, revitalize, and help prepare you to lead your schools in our new economic climate. Highlights include:

Alan Murray is Bureau Chief, Washington Bureau of *The Wallstreet Journal*, and author of *The Wealth of Choices: How the New Economy Puts Power in Your Hands and Money in Your Pockets*. Hear Mr. Murray's perspective on the international factors that affect Minnesota's economy.

Hazel Reinhardt, Consultant and former Minnesota State Demographer, will help us to understand the demographics and trends driving our marketplace and how they affect each of us.

The Spring Conference offers this and more!

Small Schools ... Continued from Page 10

by relying on “program” funding rather than a per pupil funding formula. These schools would still be organized in grade level and class size configurations, but with only a few students at each grade level. While this is an attractive local option, it may be a relatively inefficient financial option when viewed from the state level and by competing educational interests in the urban areas.

Third Choice – Reconfigure Schools:

A third choice involves a reconfiguration of schools as they exist today with an abandonment of the grade level and classroom model of organization. If schools were organized around a combination of a project approach to learning and individualized instruction, it would no longer be necessary to assemble students together in sufficient numbers to make up a traditional classroom of students who are of the same age. Utilizing virtual learning through technology, teachers as

facilitators and abandonment of a compartmentalized teaching force, this model could be effective at the local level in rural areas and effectively financially.

This third model wouldn’t quite bring us back to one-room country schools. However, very small country schools, well connected to the internet, taught by teachers who accept the role of working with children of multiple ages, may be a viable alternative to the first two choices articulated in this article.

This model may work better for children being schooled from early ages through adolescence. In some areas, larger regional secondary schools may be required to provide expertise in teaching advanced subjects. These regional centers may also enhance the economic development of a region. This begs some possible reorganization of the administrative units of schools with much of the day-to-day educational leadership at the lower levels left to be handled by teacher/administrators

in the small settings.

As thought is given to this new model of presenting education, possibly states should consider incentives for school districts and communities to encourage smaller school settings that provide for a more individual, technologically connected and project-based learning approach.

Reconfiguration may be a reasonable alternative as opposed to another round of excruciating consolidation of our small schools and the resulting loss of the spiritual centers of our communities. •



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St. Scholastica

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Kraus-Anderson

Don Ruble Receives Morris Bye Award

Dr. Donald C. Ruble, retired Superintendent for the Forest Lake Area Schools, received the Morris Bye Memorial Award at the 2000 MASA Fall Conference, "Leading from the Fishbowl: Children and the Politics of Change," October 1 - 3 in Brainerd, Minnesota.



Don Ruble

The Bye Award is presented annually to a superintendent with a minimum of twenty years of successful administrative

experience serving Minnesota public schools. The recipient must demonstrate strong educational leadership, a lifelong commitment to the development of all students, and foster innovations in education to enable students to develop personal skills and values such as perseverance, responsibility, and leadership.

Throughout his career, Dr. Ruble

has been able to successfully balance the constraints of a limited budget that responds to community and School Board expectations. He kept his focus on student welfare, teacher welfare, and program quality. Dr. Ruble is responsible for increasing community confidence in the schools by implementing improved accountability programs on school finance and student achievement.

Since Dr. Ruble joined the Forest Lake Area School District, the community has passed two Levy Referenda, a \$39.9 million bond issue, and a \$7 million Technology bond issue. Under Dr. Ruble's leadership, the district has improved class size ratios, support staffing, technology, extracurricular activities, and program offerings. The district has built a new junior high school, which opened last fall.

Upon becoming superintendent in 1993, Dr. Ruble initiated an Orchestra program, which has grown with the grade levels and now extends to high school

seniors. The string program is a popular elective with students and parents, and is a great enhancement to the district's music program.

Dr. Ruble holds bachelor's, master's and specialist degrees from Minnesota State University at Mankato, and an Educational Doctorate degree from the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley, Colorado.

At the time of his retirement in July, 2000, Dr. Ruble had served eighteen years as a Minnesota School Superintendent. Before becoming superintendent for the Forest Lake Area Schools, he served as a superintendent for Fairmont, Minnesota schools from 1982 to 1993.

The Morris Bye Memorial Award was created in 1988 by the family of Morris Bye to recognize the efforts and important work of superintendents throughout Minnesota. Bye was a former MASA member who served as Superintendent in the Anoka School District from 1943 to 1964.

•

Nominations Open for MASA Leadership Positions

Nominations are open until Friday, January 26, 2001, for the MASA offices of:

2001-2002 MASA President-Elect

The President-Elect serves one year, followed by one year as President and one year as Past President. In the year of presidency, a student from the President's district will receive a \$1,000 scholarship. All members located in "AA" districts are eligible. In addition, you must:

- be a MASA member, in the "active" category
- be a practicing administrator
- have five years of successful administrative experience in Minnesota
- be committed to MASA and its goals
- have time available to represent MASA for three years (2001-2004).

Accountabilities of this office include:

- Participates in MASA Executive Committee, Board, and Employee Relations Committee meetings.
- Assists the President in providing general leadership to the organization.
- Performs all duties of the President, in absence of the President.
- Participates on the Strategic Planning Team.
- Recommends appointment of Chair-Elect for all standing committees.

2001-2002 Presidents-Elect for the Superintendent, Central

Office Administrator, and Service Provider Instructor or Administrator Component Groups

(In accordance with the MASA Special Education Administrator Component Group bylaws, the President-Elect of Minnesota Administrators for Special Education [MASE] serves as the MASA Special Education Administrator Component Group President-Elect.)

The Component Group President-Elect serves one year, followed by one year as President.

Nominations Open ... Continued Page 14



Education administrators are invited to participate in a day at the capitol.

Mark your calendars ...

MASA is working with several other educational influence groups to highlight a number of core educational issues that need the attention of Minnesota's legislature.

MASA Day at the Capitol Thursday, February 1, 2001

7:30 am at the Kelly Inn

Presentations by Legislative Leaders

Lobbying Information by Association Leaders

10:30 – 2:30

**Small Group and Individual Interaction
with Legislators and Legislative Leaders**

Participating groups and associations include:

MASA – Minnesota Association of School Administrators

MREA – Minnesota Rural Education Association

AMSD – Association of Metropolitan School Districts

SEE – Schools for Equity in Education

RAMS – Range Association of Municipalities and Schools

MASE – Minnesota Administrators for Special Education

Mark your calendars for February 1 and plan to attend. More specific information will be mailed in late December.

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Ratwik

MN Administrators Plan Visit to Costa Rican Schools

The University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development, in cooperation with MASA, the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association, is planning a trip to Costa Rica, July 15 – 22, 2001. Participants



A scene from the Café Britt Coffee Production Tour

will visit Costa Rican schools and meet with school leaders.

MASA members interested in joining this tour are invited to contact MASA Executive Director Charlie Kyte by January 1, 2000. The MASA Foundation is offering five \$500 scholarships for participating MASA members. Scholarship recipients will be determined by a drawing in mid-January.

Continuing education units will be available.

The eight-day itinerary features:

Day 1: Arrival – overnight at the Hotel San Gildar

Day 2: San Jose - Morning visit to InBioParque, an educational and recreational center where visitors are exposed to samples of the biological diversity found in Costa Rica. Following will be a visit to Café Britt for lunch and a multi-media interactive presentation on the coffee industry.

Day 3: A city tour of San Jose, including the National Theater, the Gold Museum, and the National Museum. Later in the day, a visit with the Minister of Education, Lic. Guillermo Vargas Salazar, and a discussion on the status of education in Costa Rica.

Day 4: Visits to the local primary and secondary schools in San Jose.

Day 5: San Jose, two tours:

- SarapiquíS Neotropic Center – An established new model of ecotourism based on the belief that tourism should be educational and locally responsible.
- Organization of Tropical Studies (OTS) La Selva – OTS is a non-profit consortium that has grown to include more than 50 universities and research institutions from throughout the United States and Latin America.

Day 6: Depart San Jose for the Central Pacific Coast. En route, stop at Poas Volcano, continuing on to the village of Sarchi. In Sarchi, stop and visit a rural school.

Day 7: Enjoy a hike with your guide inside the Carara National Park, located at the geographical midpoint of the Pacific Coast. Carara has a transitional climate between the hot, dry northwest and the rainy region of southeast Costa Rica, and so contains flora and fauna from both regions. It is home to parrots, parakeets, toucan, trogons, three species of monkeys, and one of only three viable populations of Scarlet Macaws in Central America.

Day 8: Early-morning drive back to San Jose, where we will connect with our flight home.

Cost of the trip is \$2,200.00, which includes: airfare, travel insurance, seven nights accommodations and taxes, airport/hotel transfers, all land transportation within Costa Rica, breakfast daily and lunch as specified, entrances to national parks and museums as indicated, and services of a bilingual master naturalist guide. Not included: Airport departure tax (\$17.00 per person), meals not specified, gratuities for guide and driver, and personal items. •

Nominations Open ... Continued from Page 12

Four Superintendent Component Group Representatives to the MASA Board of Directors

Component Group Representatives to the MASA Board serve a three-year term. These Directors will replace the Component Group Board Representatives who are completing their terms in 2001.

The process:

Fill out the nomination form(s) and return them to MASA by mail or fax:

MASA
1884 Como Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone: 651-645-6272
Fax: 651-645-7518

Nomination forms are included in the same mailing as this newsletter.

We will send the MASA President-Elect nominees a Nomination Response/Position Application Form which they fill out and return to MASA.

The other nominees will be contacted to ascertain their interest in running for office, and if they agree, their names will be placed on the ballot.

Candidates will be presented to the membership at the spring

conference. In accordance with the MASA and Component Group bylaws, nominations will also be taken from the floor at that time.

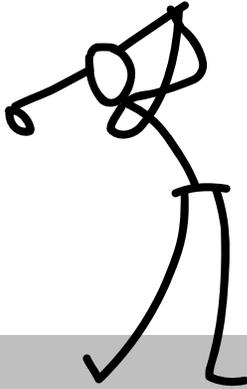
Nominations must be received by MASA by Friday, January 26, 2001 in order to process nomination responses.

Nominate a colleague or yourself! Officers have the opportunity to influence education in Minnesota and serve their fellow colleagues.

Thank you for supporting your Association. •

Thank You Golf Tournament Sponsors

The MASA Foundation Golf Tournament at Fall Conference was a great success, thanks to the following sponsors . . .



Million Dollar Hole-In-One Sponsor:

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Hole Sponsors:

Ace (\$ 500 - \$ 999)

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Bossardt Corporation

Education Minnesota ESI Financial Services

Rider, Bennett, Egan & Arundel PLLP

Birdie (\$200 - \$ 299)

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Wold Architects & Engineers

Par (\$ 100 - \$199)

Climate Makers, Inc.

The Horace Mann Companies

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Gifts for Events Winners:

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MASA Foundation

Siemens Building Technology

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Commercial Hardware

EEOC ... Continued from Page 6

Inform the district's attorney as well, who will then let you know whether your contract provision is of the type being investigated by the EEOC. The point is to disclose to your board and its counsel that any settlement or litigation for which you may have some responsibility as an administrator may affect your contract. Your board can then determine what role you should continue to play and you have notified your employer of a probable conflict of interest.

Third, determine whether you want to change your contract to eliminate all age-based aspects of your early retirement, severance, or health insurance benefits. In this regard, a superintendent's contract can be amended during its term so long as the amendment does not extend its term. Possible

amendments may result in a cap on the monetary value of the benefit or, perhaps, the conversion of the benefit to one based on years of service rather than age. If you are in a district that is changing its negotiated contracts in light of the EEOC's actions, make sure your contract follows suit.

Finally, if you have already retired and had your benefits reduced because of the age at which you retired, consider whether you want to inquire with the EEOC as to your rights. Perhaps your early retirement has already been reported to the EEOC by your previous district as part of its response to the compliance questionnaire, but don't assume so. Bear in mind that there are short statutes of limitation for

discrimination claims normally, the statute limitation is one year, but there may be certain "tolling" or "look-back" exceptions being observed by the EEOC. If you are interested in knowing whether the benefits you received are of the type being investigated by the EEOC, you should inquire of the EEOC without delay.

In short, this is a somewhat complicated development that can put an administrator in an awkward position. The best plan for now is to: a) determine whether your contract is affected, b) inform your board and the school district's attorney about your personal interest in the matter, and c) determine whether you want to change your contract or, if you have already retired, whether you want to pursue your rights. •

Working to Serve ... Continued from Page 7

excellent education for all of our students. This will require collaborative efforts with other educational organizations throughout the state and serious dialogue about common issues and concerns. We believe that each region of the state has legitimate and unique concerns, but it is only through a united effort of districts statewide that we will find the resources and program support to ensure communities that their children are getting a sound education.

Two key areas are at the forefront of our efforts at this time. AMSD districts continue to struggle with funding issues like other districts in the state. The perception that our districts are without financial difficulties is inaccurate and potentially divisive in our efforts to secure resources for our students. AMSD supports an adequate, equitable, and sustainable school funding system that provides flexibility for local school districts to meet student needs and account

or market conditions and actual cost differentials outside the control of districts. AMSD believes that tax effort must be a part of any discussion on funding equity.

AMSD also supports a statewide accountability system that leads to improved teaching and learning while accurately informing the public about student achievement. An effective system will recognize that factors beyond the control of the school affect student achievement and that improving student achievement is a shared responsibility among the state, school districts, schools, teachers, parents, students, and other community members.

AMSD, although advocating strongly for its members, realizes that we all must seek to understand and appreciate divergent views within the educational arena. Only through this building of common

ground and working together can we all succeed for our students.

Urban School Districts

by JoAnn Knuth, Area Superintendent, St. Paul Schools

In his remarkable account, *The Diving Bell and The Butterfly*, an inner journey of tragedy and triumph, Jean-Dominique Bauby asks the haunting question near the end of his life: "Does the cosmos contain keys for opening up my diving bell?" Here is a man trapped inside his head by "locked-in syndrome," the leftover of a massive stroke, this urbane, articulate editor of French *Elle*.

It is a question, universal in impact. Who has the keys to unlock talents, the intellect, and the hopes and dreams of our students? In education, it is our mission to find the keys for every **Working to Serve ... Continued Page 20**

Fruitcake ... Continued from Page 2

whole fruit cakes had disappeared. There was Cookie, the Brittany Spaniel, on the floor in the living room looking uncomfortable.

For the next three days, every time I looked at the dog I said, "Bad dog, you fruitcake eater you! Bad dog!" I was really upset with Cookie. Diane was really upset with me because I was never supposed to leave the dog in the house while we were gone. That meant that two out of three of us at the Kyte house were literally "in the dog house."

The other remaining fruitcakes were safely wrapped in saran-wrap and put away on the back of the kitchen counter. Early the next week, Diane was going to leave directly from work to go to St. Paul for a meeting. I was on my own for the evening. Diane specifically told me that morning as we were both about to leave for work, "Don't leave the dog in the house alone." I planned to follow her orders as I came home from work and let the dog in. Then, all

of a sudden I remembered I had to run up-town for an errand. Thinking nothing could go wrong, I left Cookie in the house – I was only going to be gone for 10 minutes.

I came home over an hour later. As I came into the house, I noticed a little piece of saran-wrap lying on the floor. Putting two and two together, I quickly dashed to the counter in the kitchen. Oh my gosh! There were only a few fruitcakes left. Again, there was Cookie lying on the floor in the living room. This time she looked really sick!

The first thought that went through my mind was that Diane was going to kill me. I quickly decided I had to take some action to stave off this crisis.

I figured the best way to handle the crisis was to get the fruitcakes out of the house. I got out some red ribbon tied it around each of the remaining fruitcakes and fit them all into my brief case for delivery.

I only had to squash them a little bit.

It was then I realized that I had to reduce the number of persons receiving fruitcakes for gifts. The next day I made my deliveries. Diane didn't know that I had made fewer deliveries than originally intended. Hopefully, another personal crisis in the life of Charlie Kyte had passed.

Three days later, we had guests at the house. We all gathered in the family room. Diane was the last one to sit down, choosing a spot on the end of the couch. She noticed a bump under her pillow and lifted it up. There was a fruitcake still wrapped. Here's when my life began to unravel. Cookie looked at me sheepishly.

After our guests left, with a little searching, we found another fruitcake behind the Christmas tree. Apparently Cookie could only eat a couple of fruitcakes at a time. On the night she was stealing fruitcakes, I had come home after she had been able to eat two. She had stolen the others and hid them for a future snack.

I made my confession to Diane. Thank
Fruitcake ...
Continued Page 18

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**MN Ag
Leadership
Council**

Billionaire ... Continued from Page 2

shortage; salary differentials must be compressed, she suggested, by replacing the standard salary matrix with a model designed around four position differentials: the provisional teacher, the career teacher, the lead teacher, and the master teacher. The Commissioner went so far as to propose that additional foundation aid might be targeted to those who adopt this new compensation standard.

As each Commissioner outlined his/her take on the facts and the solutions deemed by the Ventura administration as most appropriate, listeners were asked to offer responses. Commissioner Wheelock identified ten different programs currently funded by the state; she prompted the audience to select the areas which we considered to be the most underfunded. I merely had to touch the appropriate number on my keypad to have my "vote" registered. As quickly as on that game show, the computers tabulated all of the entries offered across the auditorium, and a projection screen revealed the results. The group expressed the belief that roads and highways, K-12 education, school facilities, and special education were the categories, from among those offered, which were the most in

need of additional resources.

On questions in which a single response was requested, the computer operators could break the information down into both regional and attendee data. Patterns did emerge. The Chamber members, it seemed, took a more strictly conservative approach to most things financial. They were reluctant to increase state spending on almost any initiative, and the group regularly was separated from the rest of the audience on issues of taxation and government services. It appeared that city and school officials were closely aligned on such concerns as changes in DWI laws and how to handle state mandates. The county group often mirrored city and school results. Not surprisingly, the Chamber was quite eager to have education adopt a merit compensation model; the cities and counties were more excited than the schools for such a change. Our local government friends, however, were less enthusiastic about the approach when the compensation model was offered for them...

Regional differences were apparent on some fundamental issues in Minnesota politics. The northwest and northeast regions

expressed far more openness to equity concerns and revenue sharing than their twin cities counterparts. Those familiar with the economic difficulties and the shifting populations occurring in some regions of the state but not in others might have expected the result.

All in all, I found the afternoon to be quite intriguing. I had to remind myself—and those at the table were quick to point out—that we were engaged in a political process. Too often, I wished for a "none of the above" category from which to choose. Instead, I had to make forced choices from ideas I sometimes couldn't embrace. It is always possible that the information generated will somehow be manipulated as a result, but I believe that the Ventura administration was genuinely seeking meaningful input into the development of their billion dollar budget proposal. In any event, all of the data gathered will be made available online at <http://www.finance.state.mn.us/001113agenda.html>.

Organizations such as our own must be vigilant as the Ventura administration continues to develop and reveal aspects of the Big Plan; there is much in store which will impact our schools and our children! •

Fruitcake ... Continued from Page 17

goodness she was in a holiday spirit and took this all with relatively good humor.

Cookie seems eager to participate in the fruitcake-making event once again this year. Diane is pretty skeptical. But I explained to her, that I had a new job and it was important that I provide a gift for the board members and for the members of our staff. So, in early December, we will have a fruitcake-baking weekend at our house. I hope that when the fruitcakes are presented to all of these fine people, that they won't

look to closely at the saran-wrap wrappings on the fruitcakes. We don't want them to see any tell-tale tooth marks in the saran-wrap or if they had been "gummed" just a little bit by our now aging Brittany Spaniel.

I'm sure that every member of the Board of Directors and every member of the staff, is now being tantalized in anticipation of the wonderful gift they are going to receive during the holiday season this year.

On behalf of Cookie, the Kyte's

Brittany Spaniel; and on behalf of Diane and I, we wish all of the members of MASA and MASE the best of holiday seasons. Also, if you have an opportunity to see Cookie, our faithful Brittany Spaniel, say to her, "Bad dog, you fruitcake eater you! Bad dog!" On the other hand, you might just want to give her a little pat on the head and think to yourself...see this dog here...she's probably smarter than the guy trying to lead MASA.

I hope you all have a great holiday season. •

Big-Time ... Continued from Page 3

Meanwhile, leaders continue to lead and try to learn more about leadership in complicated systems. One of the best books I've ever found is called *Results: The Key to Continuous School Improvement*. Author Mike Schmoker explains specific strategies for expanding vision to what is possible, creating immediate successes for teams, seeing the big picture instead of one or two events, helping others to see negative results as evidence of something that didn't work, making team decisions with learning data, and reversing the misunderstanding of business concepts and using what we can learn in schools. Just reading this book will help to fill your leadership ideas list.

Last year, the Governor's office established two study groups to recommend reform ideas for finance, governance, and system accountability. I chaired the one called Quality and Accountability. We used Schmoker's book as one of many resources about systemic reforms that work. We charted the need for alignment across

classrooms, schools, districts, CFL, Legislature, Governor, the whole system—while keeping the focus on students and parents at the center.

Study recommendations included: clarifying leadership roles and accountability, classroom/school/district alignment for learning results, continuous improvement plans, adequate funding, school report cards and incentives, longer work years, differentiated staffing, longer contract terms, full day kindergarten, alternative pay for performance, improved instructional resources to schools, requiring best practices in preparation programs, reduced school board turnover, protections for leaders, and other resource tools for schools. Our June report went to a state steering committee for more study.

Commissioner Jax and Lieutenant Governor Schunk and staff are reviewing the June recommendations of both study groups as work continues on the Governor's budget priorities. In the meantime, leaders in districts are

wise to improve internal systems alignment for achievement, standards for learning results, parental support, quality instruction, and shared leadership. Using Schmoker's advice, the best 3 leadership strategies focus clearly on goals, building teamwork, and using assessment data effectively for decisions.

Other resources are out there for schools—including other schools. Our study group recommended that the CFL become a clearinghouse for programs that work well across Minnesota so we can learn from each other. This fall, Fridley joined the Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation's "Partners for Quality" program. Fridley teams are learning about quality tools and goals setting to help us improve our school system focus on improving student achievement. Another school team approach led to a new guided reading program that has doubled learning achievement for some students. Parents are working with staff on new site learning results teams, to study student achievement and supports needed for success. Alone, we can easily feel overwhelmed, but teams of leaders can accomplish success.

Leadership is lots of work, but the rewards are fun. Few careers in life could be better than rolling up our sleeves to work together for kids and their success. Good luck! •

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Horace Mann

Working to Serve ... Continued from Page 16

one of our students, to open their minds to the realities of their minds to the realities of their potential. This is the awesome challenge of urban education, and, indeed, of suburban, small town, and rural education.

In meeting this challenge it is important to recognize some basic realities in urban education. First, the world has changed. In the past 10 years in Saint Paul our enrollment has increased by 24%. Students receiving special education services have increased by 37%. Students in poverty have increased by 106%, with 62% of Saint Paul's 45,000 students now eligible for free and reduced meals. Students with limited English proficiency have increased by 316% to 16,800 students, now more than a third of our population.

Secondly, the needs of the workplace have changed. We have new basic skills to master—technology. To find the keys to this 21st century basic skill we need the tools, high-quality educational software and hardware, access to the information highway of internet, and focused, effective professional training in the most effective ways to use technology to raise achievement.

And third is the reality that we in education cannot do it alone. Students are in school only 20% of their time. The rest of the day they are out in the community. We depend upon and need to partner with community and business partners. They provide much needed supplies- paper, pencils, school supplies, and other materials for children who don't have them. Our community partners tutor in after-school programs and intergenerational summer camps. Businesses provide books, both new and used.

We are undertaking a challenge

that this country has never before undertaken. We are attempting to educate all students to high standards, leaving no child behind. Saint Paul has identified eight keys to unlocking the potential of every child, to closing the achievement gap between children of poverty and children of affluence, between children of color and majority children. This is the true challenge of urban education, which must prepare every child to succeed in the information age.

In Saint Paul's *Blueprint 2000 White Paper* we identify eight critical priorities- eight keys to unlock our system's potential so we can increase the achievement of every child to meet rising expectations. And what are those keys?

1. Making Saint Paul a Standards-Driven District.

We are developing a district-wide curriculum tied to Minnesota High Standards, beginning with a focus on literacy. Last year Saint Paul students read more than 1,000,000 books. This year we are already over 113,000 books.

2. Making Site-based Governance Work for Every School.

Site councils govern all 72 Saint Paul schools. The McKnight Foundation has recognized Saint Paul's path-breaking approach with \$2.35 million grant to build schools' capacity in governance that will target increased student achievement.

3. Embracing Accountability.

Structures and processes are being put in place that encourage all personnel in our systems to accept responsibility for improving student achievement. A new promotion policy is being implemented which will end social promotion.

4. Supporting Great Teachers and Teaching.

The quality of teachers and their innovative and interactive instruction are the keys to improving student achievement. We have improved and accelerated hiring processes, established a new school-based professional development and teacher evaluation process in collaboration with the Saint Paul Federation of Teachers, and opened John A. Johnson Achievement Plus school which is a laboratory for best practices.

5. Investing in School Leadership.

A key initiative is the creation of our School Leadership Institute, which provides intensive professional leadership training for principals during a three-week summer institute with additional follow-up days throughout the year.

6. Linking School to Students' Futures.

All students participate in structured career education at key points in elementary and secondary schooling. Our goal is to ensure that all students graduate with post-high school educational and career goals.

7. Developing Small Learning Communities.

We are launching plans to create smaller learning communities within our large urban schools to provide environments that are nurturing and collaborative, in which students can form close, personal relationships with caring adults. This initiative is supported by a nearly \$8 million grant from the Bill Gates Foundation coordinated **Working to Serve ... Continued Page 21**

Working to Serve ... Continued from Page 20

by the center for School Change and the University of Minnesota.

8. Engaging Saint Paul in the Work of Reform.

The Blueprint process is bringing school and community leaders together to identify critical areas of concern and develop strategies that will help all Saint Paul students unlock their gifts.

With the strong support of our communities, both Minneapolis and Saint Paul passed their referenda. In Saint Paul we are targeting two key areas with \$22 million every year for five years; the areas of time and technology. We will give more time to our urban learners to reach high standards with expanded all-day kindergarten, before and after-school programs, and early childhood programs. We will further individualize learning environments and implement proven strategies for raising achievement.

We will use technology to enhance teacher and learning, bringing the information revolution into the classroom, linking students to the world of their future, and training teachers in the most effective ways to use technology to raise achievement.

Does the cosmos contain keys to unlock the diving bell? The answer must be yes, and we must find them for urban classrooms and schools where the achievement gap will be no more; where all students achieve at high levels.

Schools for Equity in Education
by Chris Richardson,
Superintendent, Osseo Schools

The goal of SEE organization is equality of opportunity for all of Minnesota's children. We believe

that all kids in the state should have equal opportunities to access program offerings taught by competent staff, as well as equal access to technology and facilities that support and promote learning. We believe that these equal opportunities are necessary because regardless of where they are educated, our children must have world-class skills if they are to be competitive in a world market.

To reach this goal, SEE believes that the following key components must be in place:

1. Adequacy- Does the school finance plan provide enough money? We must have a basic formula that will meet the needs of all students including those who require special education, ESL, and early childhood services. Further, we must have a formula that provides equitable salary and benefits for all employees and can respond to health insurance and other increases that may be well beyond a normal inflationary rate.

2. Equity- Is the school finance plan fair to all students and taxpayers? Without equitable funding, districts are unable to offer programs or compete for scarce teacher and staff resources. We believe that equity requires three things: equal treatment of equals, unequal treatment of unequals and equal opportunity for all. To address student and taxpayer equity, we must fully equalize all property tax-based revenue such as excess levy referendum and debt service. We can't have equity when a \$1,500 differential exists between the level of referendum spending currently in place. With a \$3,900 basic formula, this results in a 40% differential in district spending ability. Further, we believe that the ability of districts to pass levy or debt service referendums is

directly related to the additional burden placed on taxpayers for the unequalized portions of these referendums.

The other equity component that must be addressed is the need to provide additional funding for differences in geographical demographics due to elements such as scarcity and transportation costs as well as differences in student demographics due to elements such as diversity, poverty, and mobility.

3. Sustainability- Can we count on the needed funding being available from year to year? We believe that having a revenue stream that is stable, predictable and timely will create confidence and trust necessary to support quality educational programs. Without continuity and stability, it is difficult to support long range planning that enhances efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability.

4. Accountability- Can the school finance plan support world-class learning for all Minnesota's students for the 21st century?

We believe that every school district must provide accountability to the state, students and parents for enhanced student achievement through expanded program offerings, reduced class sizes, access to technology and the availability of high-quality professional staff. If the school finance plan successfully addresses the first three components, districts will be in a position to accept joint responsibility with students, parents, and community for accountability for the performance of all students. •

Superintendent of the Year ... Continued from Page 1

our community . . . We are very proud of the progress and current fiscal health of our district. Because of Dr. Blaesing's strong leadership and dedication to sound decision-making, we are able to present to the community a viable financial plan that ensures our children's educational future."

Having appropriate financial resources is essential for successful schools, but having educational resources is of paramount importance. Dr. Blaesing is foremost a dedicated educator. During his tenure, White Bear Lake has been recognized for its high quality programs aimed at improving student learning. These have included an integrated health curriculum for all students, a nationally honored service-learning program, cross-disciplinary use of technology, and a parent-based literacy program which was recognized by the International Reading Association and the Harvard School of Education.

John Davis, President of Macalester College and former Superintendent of the Minneapolis Schools, and Lloyd Neilsen, University of Minnesota Senior Fellow and former Superintendent of the Roseville Schools, added their endorsement to Dr. Blaesing's nomination for this award:

"It has been the privilege of both of us to live in the White Bear Lake Area School District while Dr. Theodore S. Blaesing has served as the Superintendent of Schools. (His) focus on student learning has become the vision of both the staff and a major segment of community residents. Participation in the math reform program, *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space* is an example of Dr. Blaesing's leadership for learning. Another is the effort to better utilize community resources, including volunteers, more effectively and the broad involvement of students in community service activities.

The selection of the White Bear Lake Area School District as one of the three districts nationally to participate in the project *Opening School House Doors* illustrates Dr. Blaesing's leadership both in extending community involvement with schools and the opportunity for student learning through significant service to the community."

A significant aspect of Dr. Blaesing's commitment to excellence in education is the value he places on professional development for teachers, other educational leaders, and other district staff. He inspires their continued learning and development by his own example. He is actively involved in a number of professional associations, and participated in the 1998 Fulbright Seminar in Germany for US Superintendents.

Jochen Hoffmann, Ph.D., Chief of the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program, observes that, "Dr. Blaesing quickly emerged as a natural leader among his Fulbright peers. Together with his colleagues, he left a strong, positive impression in Germany about education and educational leadership in the United States. We at the Department of State believe that our bonds with the educational leaders across the US have been deepened and enriched through the leadership and work of Dr. Blaesing."

Dr. Blaesing's commitment to all members of the community is the hallmark of his practice of educational leadership. He comments on the importance of education to our wider community: "The future of democracy itself depends on keeping public schools strong and supporting their environment," Dr. Blaesing states. "Our nation, buffeted by the winds of competing individual and sub-group special interests, needs the stabilizing rudder of strong public schools. Despite what some critics of our schools might desire, the

vast majority of America's children will be educated in our public schools. Living in a democracy requires hard work and an investment in time and energy to become informed citizens on those matters that are crucial to the future of the country."

He further comments on the profession of educational leadership: "The finest choice of careers that one could make is clearly choosing to be an educator. The pressures and responsibilities of being a public servant have never been greater. However, we choose to serve because we believe and are committed to the value of our nation's most prize resource, its public schools."

Dr. Blaesing holds a doctoral degree from the University of Iowa, and master's and bachelor's degrees from the University of Northern Iowa. Before becoming Superintendent for the White Bear Lake Area Schools, he was Superintendent of Schools in Beloit, Wisconsin; Associate Superintendent of Management Services for the Davenport (Iowa) Community School District; Assistant to the Director of the Institute for School Executives at the University of Iowa, and Secondary School Principal for the Olin Consolidated Schools.

Springsted Incorporated, public finance advisors, is sponsor of the Minnesota Superintendent of the Year program. ServiceMASTER and AASA are co-sponsors of the National Superintendent of the Year award program. •

A community celebration will be held in honor of Dr. Blaesing on Thursday, February 8, 2001, 4-6 pm in the White Bear Lake area (location to be announced). Please call Jody Reber at 651/407-7562 if you would like to attend.

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Calendar 2000 - 2001

December 25, 26 and January 1
Winter Holidays

January 3
Legislative Session Begins

January 11-12
MSBA Convention
Minneapolis
Convention Center

February 1
MASA Day at the Capitol

February 15
AASA Delegate Assembly
Orlando

February 16 - 18
AASA National Convention
Orlando

March 9
MASA/MSBA Joint Executive Committee Meeting
Time and Location TBA

March 14
Board Meetings
Radisson South Hotel,
Bloomington

- Executive Committee
9 - 10:45 am

- Board of Directors
11 am - 4 pm

March 15 - 16
MASA/MASE Spring Conference
Bloomington

April 13
Spring Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

May 28
Memorial Day Holiday
MASA Offices Closed

June 14 - 15
(Tentative)
Board Meetings
Madden's on Gull Lake,
Brainerd, MN

- Executive Committee
June 14
9:30 - 11:30 am

- New Officer and Board Orientation
June 14
1 - 1:45 pm

- Board of Directors
June 14
2 - 5:30 pm
June 15
9 am - 12 noon

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Vaaler

1/8 Page
3 1/4" x 2 1/4"

Boarman

1/8 Page
3 1/4" x 2 1/4"

Sure Stop