What is the P.A.T.?

The job of leadership in public school systems is very complex and leaders might encounter difficult situations such as issues with personnel, parents, communities or school boards. MASA wants to provide our members with as much assistance as possible. Therefore, in addition to the MASA legal support services, we have created the Professional Assistance Team (P.A.T.).

The Professional Assistance Team is made up of five individuals who have a wealth of experience in operating schools. The P.A.T. will use their experience to help their colleagues when they need consultation and/or advice if they run into a difficult situation. Each member has promised to treat every contact with confidentiality. The only case in which information may be shared is in the event that a situation is complex enough that a member may require legal assistance, and will be directed to the MASA Executive Director.

MASA members are encouraged to contact any member of the P.A.T. directly for assistance or expertise!
Meet the 2020 - 2021 P.A.T. Members

Joe Gothard
Office: 651-767-8152
Cell: 651-587-2895
joe.gothard@spps.org

Joe begins his 27th year in education. He was a teacher, coach, assistant principal, middle school principal, high school principal and assistant superintendent in his hometown Madison (WI) Metropolitan School District prior to moving to Minnesota. Joe was named the superintendent of the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Schools in 2013 and served for four years. Joe is entering his fourth year as the superintendent of Saint Paul Public Schools.

Patty Phillips
Cell: 651-357-0996
pattyjphillips@gmail.com

Patty Phillips has experience as a Principal, Curriculum Director and Superintendent of the Virginia Minnesota Public Schools. Prior to her retirement, she served as Superintendent of the North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools in the Twin Cities area.

Jerry Nesland
Office: 218-894-2439
Cell: 218-640-0267
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Jerry Nesland has served many years as superintendent of schools, most notably at New York Mills School District. Since his retirement, Jerry has served various assignments at the Northwest Service Cooperative, Menahga and Mahnomen. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the Freshwater Education District.

Jeff Olson
Cell: 507-340-0628
Home: 507-934-9195
jolsontncp@gmail.com

Jeff Olson retired as Superintendent of Saint Peter Public Schools. He has more than 30 years of experience as a teacher, coach, curriculum director, principal and superintendent in public education. Jeff now serves as an education consultant.

Gary Prest
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Gary has spent more than 38 years in education including a variety of administration roles. He retired as superintendent of the Bloomington Public Schools. Gary currently serves at the University of Minnesota as the Director of the Administrative Licensure Program, Coordinator of the Education, Policy and Leadership Program and Co-director of the Urban Leadership Academy.

Examples of services the P.A.T. provides:
- Answers to questions regarding your role as a superintendent or central office leader
- Advice on how to handle specific situations involving the community, school board(s), employees, students, and operational situations
- Communication situations
The P.A.T. will always maintain confidentiality when working with our members.

As advocates of a world class education for Minnesota’s children, MASA’s members serve as the leading voice for public education, shape and influence the State and Federal education agenda, and empower leaders through high quality professional development, services and support.