

Great Start Cohort – Presenter Biographies
December 9, 20212
Minneapolis Marriott NW, Brooklyn Park
Arbor Lakes Room
Time: 9 am - 4 pm

Session Facilitators

Lori Volz

Director
Baker Tilly
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Lori Volz is a Director for Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors, LLC. Lori has thirty-seven years of experience in school finance in Minnesota; is a Registered School Business Administrator through ASBO International as well as a licensed School Superintendent. Lori has a Master of Science degree through Minnesota State University Mankato in Educational Leadership and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration through Minnesota State University Mankato. Lori was a recipient of a Pinnacle Award through ASBO International as well as a MASBO School Business Official of the Year.

Ryan Feters

Director
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Ryan Feters is a director and municipal advisor with Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors, LLC. Ryan has served as a municipal advisor for K-12 schools, libraries, and other municipalities for more than 14 years. His experience includes: Tax-exempt and taxable municipal bond structuring and issuance, school budgeting, and capital planning. He is a member of the National Association of Municipal Advisors (NAMA). He holds a master's degree in Public Affairs from Indiana University and a bachelor's degree from Wabash College (Crawfordsville, Indiana). Ryan is a registered Municipal Advisor with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Presenters

Joe Gothard

Superintendent
Saint Paul Public Schools
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Dr. Joe Gothard has been superintendent of Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) since July 1, 2017. He is the educational leader of the school district, which serves approximately 36,000 Pre-K-12 students and employs over 5,500 staff. SPPS is the second-largest and most diverse school district in Minnesota, with students who speak more than 125 languages and 70% who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Gothard launched the *SPPS Achieves* strategic plan in December 2018 to set aspirational and attainable goals for student achievement, guide decision-making, and focus the district's efforts on long-term student outcomes. In 2020-21, he led the district's response to the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring decisions met the needs of students and families, prioritized community well-being, championed equity, and were fiscally sustainable. While superintendent at ISD 191, Gothard led the district's successful Vision One91 referendum campaign to redesign the district to make students real-world ready.

Previous Experience:

- Superintendent of Schools, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191, Burnsville, Minn.
- Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools, Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison, Wis.
- High School Principal, Robert M. La Follette High School, Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison, Wis.
- Middle School Principal, Akira R. Toki Middle School, Madison Metropolitan School District, Madison, Wis.

Gothard believes in the power of public education to foster relationships, build community, and inspire students to achieve beyond their highest expectations. In 2021, he was named to a two-year term on the Executive Committee of the Council of Great City Schools, which comprises leaders from the 77 largest urban public school districts in the United States. He is also a member of the Association of Metropolitan School Districts, co-chair of the Generation Next Executive Committee, sits on the Board of Directors for Genesys Works Twin Cities, and is President Elect of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators.

Gothard received his bachelor's, master's, and doctorate in education from Edgewood College in Madison, Wis., and sits on the college's Board of Trustees. He lives in St. Paul with his wife, Mary. They have three grown children.

Communication is important to Dr. Gothard. You can reach him at joe.gothard@spps.org or 651-767-8152 or connect with him on LinkedIn.

Nichole Rens

Director of Secondary Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
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Dr. Nichole Rens is the Director of Secondary Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment for the Anoka-Hennepin School District. Prior to Anoka-Hennepin, she was the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for St. Francis Schools for from 2015-2022. Dr. Rens served as the Principal of Lakeview Elementary School in the Robbinsdale Area School District from 2008-2015. Before her employment in the Robbinsdale Area Schools District, Dr. Rens worked for Brooklyn Center Schools first as an English teacher at Brooklyn Center High School and then as a curriculum coordinator for Earle Brown Elementary.

While at Brooklyn Center Schools and Robbinsdale Area Schools, Dr. Rens led the implementation of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme at the elementary schools. She also traveled internationally as a trainer for the International Baccalaureate Programme and has provided workshops on magnet school programs.

Dr. Rens is an adjunct instructor for the University of St. Thomas as well as a member of the MASA Board of Directors.

Dr. Rens earned her B.A. in English from the College of St. Benedict, MN. She then earned her M.A., Ed.S, and EdD from the University of St. Thomas, MN.

Deb Henton, Ed.D.

Executive Director
Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA)
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Dr. Deb Henton was appointed Executive Director of MASA on July 1, 2020. She served as President of the association in 2018-19 and worked with the Board of Directors and the Executive Director to advance an initiative to increase the number of female superintendents. As Executive Director, she has continued to advance this effort and to focus inclusion and equity.

Dr. Henton has served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, executive director, chief of staff, and for thirteen years a school superintendent. She was appointed to two terms on the state Board of School Administrators by Governor Dayton and recently

chaired the board before becoming Executive Director of MASA.

Dr. Henton received her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota in 1999. She holds a master's degree in Educational Administration and a master's degree in Education, both from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. Dr. Henton's bachelor's degree in Broad Field Social Studies and History is from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Valerie Dosland

Government Affairs Director

Ewald Consulting

MASA Lobbyist

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Valerie Dosland is the Director of Government Affairs at Ewald Consulting, where she provides government relations and lobbying services to clients in the areas of early childhood and K-12 education. Valerie assists her clients in policy development, lobbying and monitoring of legislative activities as well as grassroots development and engagement. Prior to joining Ewald Consulting in 2005, she worked for nine years at the Minnesota House of Representatives as a research consultant specializing in the areas of early childhood and K-12 education. Valerie is a graduate of the University of Minnesota with a B.A., an alumnus of the U of M's Humphrey Policy Fellows program, and a former board member of the YMCA Youth in Government Program.