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## Jim Brandenburg, Internationally Renowned Photographer, Key-Noting Workshop

Each of us, on a daily basis, meets challenges as we attempt to provide a rich school program and safe environment that ensures success for each of our students.

The challenge before us is unprecedented. The expectation is to educate all children to be prepared for post-secondary education or to be career ready. Doing so requires leaders to see each child as a unique individual, develop his/her strengths and unleash talents. This situation is reflected in this year's theme "2010: Leadership Odyssey".

The 2010 MASSP Summer Workshop has been designed to increase your leadership capacity. The conference will again be held at Breezy Point Resort on June 15 - 18, 2010. It is our hope that you will join us to learn, laugh and refresh your spirit.

The General Session speakers and concurrent session topics represent a broad spectrum of issues suggested by the Division Presidents to provide you with opportuni-

ties to increase leadership skills, be encouraged to network with colleagues, be assisted with solutions to particular problems, and be informed about the latest educational innovations.

**Jim Brandenburg** was at the top of his game as one of the world's foremost nature photographers, yet something important was missing. Exhausted from decades of globe-trotting assignments for *National Geographic*, his passion for his work was gone. Desperate for renewal, he hit upon an idea: for 90-days he would hold himself to the strict discipline of taking only one picture—a single click of the shutter—each day. His odyssey revived his spirit and launched his career to a new level. And the story of his experience has touched millions—as a *National Geographic* cover



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In some ways it is the most important life skill and value we teach our children. The collective rules and practices of civility are what bind us together as human beings. Without civility people rail rather than listen; fight rather than seek consensus; construct walls rather than find common ground.

At its core civility is the act of showing regard for others. The word for it in today's jargon is respect – and maybe this should be the 5th R. Increasingly I see a need for it, even in the professional context of my job. We certainly see a lack of civility in the media, in politics, and on the internet.

When I became the principal of Highland Park Senior High School in 1992 I put in place a school rule, with the support of staff and parents, that there would be no vulgar or obscene language used at school before, during or after hours. The consequence for inappropriate language was dismissal, being sent home from school. The student could return as soon as a parent brought him/her back, even if it were 10 minutes later.

Language matters and when students or adults use inappropriate words they create a negative environment for others and show a lack of regard. This rule worked. Use of language at Highland was probably no better or worse than other high schools; however, after "The Rule" climate improved, people became more conscious of language, including teachers, and were more courteous of one another.

Also disturbing to me is the increasingly frequent behavior of individuals in meetings to email, text, even play computer games, while listening to a presenter or involved in a discussion. The excuse is "I'm multi-tasking." "I'm still listening." And there are the dinners interrupted by cell phone rings and extended conversations at the table.

We are raising a plugged-in generation who thinks the text or cell phone call is more important than connecting with the in-person conversation (excluding emergencies, or course). Technology may be creating more isolation even though it is bringing together millions on social networks such as Facebook. The art of conversation, of civil discourse, is a beautiful thing that enriches lives and creates bonds of understanding and friendship. I found this truism about civilized dining. Once people break bread together, enjoying food and conversation, they are much less likely to be enemies later.

Since mandated testing provides us data on students' learning in the 3 R's, the core subjects, and collectively we embrace the issue of accountability, why not add another test on civility. Maybe such a civility test could include both multiple choice and constructed answer questions. And there would be the inevitable cut-score. Schools could fail to make AYP because students lacked civility, along with literacy and numeracy knowledge. Whole tutoring programs could be implemented around appropriate language, behavior, use of technology, and the art of civil discourse. Which skills will lead to greater opportunity for success?

Our students must be proficient in academic skills. They also must be proficient in human skills that will shape how they relate to one another and the world to which they are intimately connected by technology. Ω



For centuries in American public education we have been teaching the "3 R's": reading, writing and 'rithmetic. In the 1990's with NASSP's publication of *Breaking Ranks* the "R's" transitioned to Rigor, Relevance and Relationships. In our era of accountability, NCLB, SIG, RTTT we have added Results as the goal.

We have been forced to focus on tests, prepare for tests, practice tests, take tests, analyze test data in formative and summative form. There are those who decry teaching to tests (my thought here is that if tests are important why would we do anything other than teach to tests?)

In all of this test focus I believe we are losing our humanity and the souls of teachers and students who long for the magic of that "ah-ha" moment when a new learning, revelation or insight bursts into the brain and heart, and life changes just a bit. Learning should be the food that feeds the soul, the inner being of our students, so they come back to us day after day excited in anticipation of discovery of the world and themselves.

I recall extended philosophical conversations in college around the purpose of education – purely for the fulfillment of learning, as its own versus the pragmatic purpose – to get a job. Those conversations were important then. Perhaps they are even more important now. Educating our students is so much more than preparing them to be proficient on the MCA II tests. Yes, we need to teach students how to read, write, speak, calculate, hypothesize. We also need artists, musicians, linguists to help us understand, interpret and describe our world to one another. We need carpenters, technicians, computer gurus to construct buildings and systems that support and connect society. All these critical functions require the 3 R's and 4 R's capability, along with 21st century literacy that, in addition to strong academic skills, includes thinking, reasoning, teamwork skills and proficiency in technology.

Our students live in a global, digital world and spend hours in front of screens every week, averaging 57 hours according to one recent study. Students communicate by texting up to 100, 200 times a day. Parents text their children, even within their homes. The anonymity of the internet provides opportunity for bullying and sexting that would not occur face to face. We are witnessing tragic results in teen suicides.

Adults, even highly educated teachers and principals, fail to appreciate the power and permanence of communication on the internet. Some have lost jobs because of thoughtless use or abuse of the web. Multiple studies are showing that playing violent video games increases violent thoughts and aggressive behavior in children and leads to decreased empathy. Dr. David Walsh's research tells us that 25% of children under 2 years of age have a television in their bedrooms, which impacts brain development.



# Legislative and Legal Updates

by Roger Aronson, MASSP Attorney and Lobbyist

One of the key questions discussed at the legislative session this year is **teacher and principal evaluation**. Recent federal legislation coupled with state initiatives has explored modifications in the evaluation practices with regard to teachers and principals.

Current law in Minnesota requires that probationary teachers be evaluated three times per year during the probationary period. The statute does not specify what that evaluation looks like. The form of the evaluation is to be developed by local districts.

Minnesota law does not require any annual evaluation of tenured teachers or principals. As a result of the recent federal grant initiatives, legislators have been looking at the question of evaluation. The Senate and the Department have taken an unacceptable approach with the one through five ranking system. The House has been circulating an alternative that needs to be reviewed. (Given the state of the current legislative status, it is doubtful that anything will be passed this year, but the discussion has to begin now.)

## For teacher evaluations, here are the basic elements of the discussion:

1. The teacher evaluation process must be based on professional teaching standards and include formative and summative assessments;
2. Teachers not meeting standards of effective practice must be given sufficient support to improve;
3. The process must include a qualified and trained site mentorship team to evaluate teachers;
4. The process must include in-class observations by both licensed mentor teachers and school administrators;
5. Provide peer coaching or have teachers participate in professional learning communities;
6. Require that teachers develop portfolios demonstrating evidence of reflection and professional growth together with the teachers' own performance assessments based on student work samples, student and family surveys, and videotapes of their work, among other activities;
7. Demonstrate teachers' content knowledge and teaching skills;

8. Use longitudinal data on student academic growth, student attendance, student engagement and connection, and other outcome measures.

## For principal evaluations here are the basic elements of the discussion:

1. The principal evaluation process must be designed to support and improve instructional leadership, organizational management, and be linked to professional development;
2. The evaluation must include formative and summative evaluations;
3. The evaluation must be consistent with the principals' job description, district long-term plans and goals, and principals' own professional multiyear growth plans and goals;
4. Include on-the-job observations, team assessments and evaluations, and verbal and written feedback on performance;
5. Use longitudinal data on student academic growth as an evaluation component.

The proposals would be developed through the meet and confer process. Districts that have a "Q comp" developed evaluation process would be exempt.

What's right with this? What's wrong with this? Your input is absolutely essential. This will be one of the most important ongoing education discussions taking place. Obviously, the number of evaluations required here is huge. The ultimate goal is a connection to student achievement. It is highly probable that some mandate in this area is forthcoming. Principal input is absolutely essential. Let us know your thoughts. **Ω**

## UPDATE . . .

As of May 12 the House K-12 Omnibus Education Bill would require that every teacher and principal in Minnesota have an evaluation completed during the 2011-2012 school year. The evaluation process would be developed through "meet and confer" within rather stringent parameters established by the statute.



## President's Report

by Don Johnson  
MASSP President

It's never a telephone call a principal wants to receive; a call at home in the evening or on a weekend, telling him (or her) that one of his students has been killed in an automobile accident. And yet it seems to be an event that is taking place way too often these days. In spite of the new law limiting the number of passengers allowed in a teenager's car and well-enforced curfews, we have had a rash of fatal automobile crashes involving high school students as of late - some of them involving drinking and driving.

This was exactly our point of concern when our SHOC (Students Helping Others Choose) Group organized and produced a recent "Mock Car Crash" at our high school, which took place a week before our Prom, aimed directly at our 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The fact that high school-aged students feel a certain sense of invincibility when it comes to drinking and driving at high speeds only reinforces our need and responsibility to emphasize to them the importance of making good decisions. But this too

only goes so far. Students from Cambridge-Isanti High School reported they had just recently had a program at their school emphasizing the importance of safe driving as well as not mixing drinking and driving, just a few days prior to a fatal crash involving several of their students. Too often such programs, in the minds of some students, are for those "other kids". The accident, which resulted in the death of five of their classmates, indicates that in this instance those "other students" were themselves.

This string of recent tragedies seemed even more personal this past Saturday night. As I was leaving the location of our prom at about 12:30 AM, after a rather enjoyable evening, I was passed by two police patrol cars with sirens on and lights flashing, driving at a high rate of speed. I knew we had a few hundred students out in their cars at that point in time, either heading home from prom or more likely, heading to the post-prom party at our junior high school. I'll confess that my brain went to worst outcome mode at that moment: Owatonna

prom-goers trapped in the wreckage of an automobile surrounded by emergency personnel. Eventually, I was able to find out later that their mission did not involve any of our high school students - thankfully!

As in most things, our high school is highly dependent upon the families of our students to be giving the same message we are sharing with them:

- Driving is a privilege
- Driving is a big responsibility
- Drinking alcohol is not to be tolerated
- Drinking and driving can and will in time, result in tragedy

As principals, we are often called upon to be the conscience of our schools and our communities. We carry the heavy responsibility of determining what is right and wrong, both at school and sometimes even outside of school. We are also often called upon to provide leadership and direction to our students and their families in determining what actions to take or not take that will lead to their safety and peace of mind. That message is still worth giving! Ω

## Preparing Students, Teachers and Schools For the 21st Century

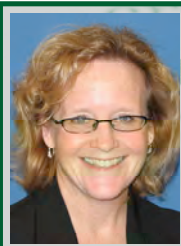
*With Dr. Bill Daggett*

**Wednesday, November 10, 2010**

**Earle Browne Heritage Center • Brooklyn Center, MN**  
Sponsored by Hennepin, Central & Southeast Divisions



*More information coming this Fall!*



## Coordinator's Report

by Mary Pat Cumming  
MASSP Coordinator

### Keep the Pressure On!

An unusual early spring has my grass greening up already. In fact, it is already dry and in need of water. Not just a one-time soaking, but a constant trickle, a daily sprinkle, and some fertilizer to keep it fresh, green and most importantly growing all season. So, I purchased a hand held sprinkler with various spray capabilities and an on off switch, and I'm looking forward to a great lawn this summer!

So why am I talking about watering my grass in the State Coordinator's post? While watering the lawn last weekend, I was thinking about this post and it hit me! I found a striking correlation between taking care of the grass in my lawn and 'grass roots' efforts of principals' to make change in educational policy at the legislative level.

My point can be illustrated using the topic of principal advocacy at the state and federal level when an educational issue arises. As principals, we recognize:

- The need for advocacy on topic, and know we need to act (my grass is dry and I need to do something).
- That advocacy requires action through contact with a representative or organization (constant water and fertilizer)
- The ability of turning the pressure on and off as necessary to get the desired result (a constant trickle or gushing hose)

The hottest topic in Washington right now is the reauthorization of ESEA including school leadership, national standards, high school and

middle school reform, graduation rates and multiple measures of student performance. NASSP, MASSP and our students need our help in getting OUR messages out so the legislative system can work to provide us with additional assistance and a measured debate on the topics.

As NASSP members, we have two advocacy areas at our fingertips (literally!) to assist us. Both can be found on the NASSP website under the "Legislative Advocacy" tab on the left of the home page. These two advocacy tools will provide information on the most current topics and issues as well as an avenue for principals to connect directly with their representatives through email and webforms.

- *Principals Legislative Action Center*
- *NASSP Federal Grassroots Network*

Let's not let our 'grass' get too dry this spring or summer - let's keep the pressure on our local, state and federal representatives! Ω



## Student Leadership News

By Ann Postlewaite  
Director of Student Leadership

Congratulations to Detroit Lakes High School and Detroit Lakes Middle School for being named NASC National Gold Councils of Excellence. The NASC National Council of Excellence Award provides national recognition for middle school student councils that consistently provide quality leadership activities and service to their schools and communities, and introduce young students to leadership roles. This award provides broader recognition for the most notable efforts of NASC member schools. The National Gold Council

of Excellence is awarded to student councils that demonstrate the highest levels of leadership and activities.

Sartell High School was also named as a NASC National Council of Excellence. For either award, student councils must also submit a letter of recommendation from their principals and summaries of council projects. To demonstrate that a school's student council is strong from year to year, the award documentation dates run from January 1, to December 31, 2010.

For more information on the NASC Council of Excellence please visit the NASC website at [www.nasc.us](http://www.nasc.us). Next year's applications are due February 15, 2011.

Detroit Lakes High School and Middle School and Sartell High School student councils, MASSP is proud of your accomplishments! Ω

**SUMMER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

**THE ART OF LEADERSHIP**

**JULY 20-22, 2010**  
**GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE**

*Great Leadership Training for ALL School Leaders!*

# Summer Workshop 2010 — “Leadership Odyssey”

## . . .continued from front page

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story, best-selling book, and an Emmy-nominated PBS documentary called *Chased by the Light*. Through breathtaking images, Jim shares this story, and its impact on his life and work since that pivotal season of renewal. He also introduces *Courage & Light®*, a new professional development program inspired by his “90-day project” that features an intimate filmed dialog between Brandenburg and highly acclaimed writer and educator Parker J. Palmer.

A native of Luverne, Minnesota, Jim now lives and works at the edge of the BWCA near Ely. Widely regarded as one of the world’s greatest wolf photographers, Brandenburg worked on contract for National Geographic magazine for more than 20 years.

**Dr. Monte Selby’s** distinctive work spans over two decades, impacting educators from North America, South America, Europe and Asia. He is widely popular for his practical, humorous, and engaging presentations, but is perhaps best known for his music. As a critically acclaimed songwriter and recording artist, he shares comical and insightful music for his audiences. His musical endeavors have been featured on network television, radio, websites, original stage productions and videos.



Monte’s contributions as an author

and co-author include numerous articles and a leadership column for Middle Ground magazine. His books connect music and practical educational strategies that are cultivated from an award-winning career as a teacher, principal, and professor. His most recent CD for educators, *In the Teacher’s Lounge*, is his fifth album.

Through the efforts of our esteemed attorney, we will feature a **Panel of Legislators** at the Wednesday morning General Session. MASSP is fortunate to have a number of educators who are also serving in the Minnesota Legislature. These influential individuals spend part of their years serving in our schools and the rest of the year at the Legislature. The panel will share their views and experiences in the legislature as well as give MASSP members tips to assist in communicating with members of the Legislature in order to have our voices heard. Members have always enjoyed hearing from legislators, and this special group has intimate knowledge of topics that concern all educators.

**John Millea** is a former staff writer at the *Star Tribune* newspaper. He is currently working at the Minnesota State High School League providing human interest stories and blogging from the site of tournaments.



John will share his perspective on

schools, students and the value of extracurricular activities in his journey from the “outside” to a school based position.

No MASSP gathering is complete without a final word from our esteemed attorney, **Roger Aronson**. The current economic situation and recent revelations on the state of Minnesota’s budget, what might we expect from this legislative session? Wading through the legislative session can be a daunting and rigorous task. Roger spends many hours at the Capitol cajoling, persuading, listening and protecting the interests of principals and schools. Find out what happened during the session, how those decisions will affect our schools, and hear Roger’s “take” on issues. Roger always offers members practical, solid information with editorial asides that offer participants an enjoyable learning experience.

MASSP is fortunate to have Roger and his expertise at the legislature lobbying on principal and student concerns. Don’t miss Roger’s session – it is always a highlight of the workshop.

Please plan to join your colleagues at the 2010 MASSP Summer Conference on June 15 – 18, 2010 at Breezy Point Resort. The 2010: Leadership Odyssey offers an outstanding program. **Ω**

*True leadership lies in guiding others to success. In ensuring that everyone is performing at their best, doing the work they are pledged to do and doing it well.*

— Bill Owens



# From the Field

By Nicholas J. Miller  
Associate Professor  
Educational Administration  
St. Cloud State University

## You Have the Chance to Make a First Impression-Once

We teach a class in our educational administration curriculum entitled School-Community Relations, and I am often surprised that many see it as course that is less essential than courses such as law, finance, curriculum and personnel. In my experiences I have found more principals get into trouble because they fail to realize the importance of building strong relationships in and out of the school. In this article I want to discuss the importance of purposefully building these relationships and some things that I have learned throughout the years. By the way I arrived at this title for this article after a conversation with Lloyd Styrwoll, former superintendent at Grand Rapids, who talked with me about the importance of the first impression. At a time when money is tight and the public perception of public education is sometimes tenuous, school leaders need to recognize the importance of building strong relationships.

You will have the chance to make the first impression in a variety of ways. What impression do you and your school make the first time someone enters your building. The first communication that someone receives from you sends a very clear message. Your public presentations will always have first time attendees. How do you present yourself and your school in the community? It is obvious that the impressions that you make are far ranging and extremely important. I would like to share a few ideas that I have developed over the years. I would love to hear some of yours also. The following list addresses some of the areas that I feel are easy to do and yet very important.

Do a building audit. Check your signage, condition of the building, and overall appearance. Would you

feel welcome if you were visiting for the first time. You could even ask a friend outside of education to walk into your building and share some impressions. I visit many schools and I get a feel in the first ten seconds.

When you are downtown during the day make a habit to call your building. How are you treated? Do you feel welcomed? William Purkey, an educational author from many years ago, talked about creating the "inviting atmosphere".

Schedule regular meetings with your office staff to talk about how we treat visitors to our building. Ask sales people and others how they were treated when they came into your front office. I always had a summer luncheon with the custodians and office staff to discuss their role in helping create a caring atmosphere. It was also a great way to recognize their importance and thank them for their contributions to students. I also had a breakfast meeting with the food service personnel to discuss how happy students learn better.

Make a rule that no bad news travels through the lines of the school radios. There are many people within listening distance and bad news does not need to be shared over the radios.

If you are hosting a group of visitors for a meeting have a custodian do a quick check of the front area prior to the meeting. It is best to make sure that there is no litter or other surprises. You and your school will be judged by that first impression.

Show appreciation to your front office staff. One day I was at a non-school government building and there were 25 people in line and two of the three secretaries grabbed their coffee and cigarettes for their outside break. The other secretary was on the

phone with her sister. Needless to say I and all the others were upset. On the way back to school I stopped and bought each of our secretaries flowers and personally thanked them for their warm and caring behavior to our visitors and students.

Remember that the most important people in your school are your students. If they are treated well on the bus, in the office and in the lunchroom they learn more and make your job so much easier.

Audit your student handbook and check for the tone of your language. Is the message you send one of care and concern or is the tone punitive.

Prepare for public meetings, especially those for parents. Are all the doors unlocked? Have you put out signage so that parents are welcomed and know where to go? Have you prepared a program that is worth their time? Many parent orientations are boring and uninformative. I have always felt that these meetings need to contain a message that we are committed to doing whatever we can to provide each and every student a quality experience in a caring and safe atmosphere. The information can be in the handout. Parents want to know that we care.

Pay very close attention to the tone and content of your welcome back letters. You have the opportunity each year to set the tone with your students, parents, and staff. This is a very important opportunity for you to address all the important issues and topics that you feel are important.

Of course there are many more strategies that we could discuss, but I hope that you may find a new idea or two. I look forward to hearing from you. In your role as the principal you are in total control of how others perceive your school. You can be very purposeful as you approach public relations or you can just let it play out and hope it all works out. Principals who leave it to chance often have short careers. **Ω**

Nick Miller can be contacted via email at: [njmiller@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:njmiller@stcloudstate.edu)



## Calendar of Events — 2009 - 2010

Jun 15-18, 10.....	Summer Workshop .....	Beezy Point, MN
Jun 21-22, 10.....	Board/Exec Committee Meet.....	Breezy Point, MN



### Strategic Action Days

Don Johnson (President), John Hamann (Past President), and Jim Smokrovich (Secretary) are all hard at work representing MASSP.

### MASSP Officers

President .....	Donald Johnson .....	Owatoma Senior High School .....	Owatoma, MN
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Northeast Division.....	Greg Hexum .....	Esko High School .....	Esko, MN
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Dean Ogg .....	Staples-Motley Schools .....	"A" Representative.....	Motley, MN
Luanne Wagner.....	St. Francis High School .....	"AA" Representative.....	St. Francis, MN

## Brenda Steve Honored as MASC Administrator of the Year

The Minnesota Association of Student Councils presented Sartell High School Principal Brenda Steve the award of MASC Administrator of the year during the MASC State Convention in Grand Rapids.

Sartell student council president Tyler Page stated, "The involvement that Mrs. Steve puts forth into our school, and the passion she runs the school with are the key components as to why we have such a great school. She is very open-minded and helps us achieve our ideas and goals that we come up with as a Student Council. She backs us up in every way possible and also invests her own time in thinking about how to help improve everything."

Others in their letters stated that, "Mrs. Steve has stated many times that student council is the heart of the school and believes that they create a positive climate. She is a catalyst of that kind of positivity. She is always open to

new ideas and not afraid to guide students when they get a bit off track. Mrs. Steve has always visibly valued and practiced her connection to kids."



than she would like. However, even with this is the case, students and staff walk away respecting and appreciating her because she truly listens and takes the time to ask questions, talk about the advantages and disadvantages, and explain her stance.

A Sartell teacher states, "Mrs. Steve has sought out, listened to and/or implemented ideas brought to her by staff and students. Whatever the idea, her door and mind are always open for suggestions. Just like all administrators, however, she is not able to say yes all the time. Mrs. Steve is no different; she must tell teachers and students no probably more

CONGRATULATIONS to Brenda Steve! Ω