



MASSP Executives Meet Governor Tim Pawlenty

Bruce Locklear and Coleman McDonough, MASSP's Principals of the Year, were honored by Governor Pawlenty and Commissioner Seagren, at a ceremony held in the Governor's Reception room at the Capitol. Both the Governor and Commissioner complimented the educa-

tional leadership of our state's principals represented by Bruce and Coley. This recognition ceremony also included Superintendent of the Year, Patty Phillips, North St. Paul and Teacher of the Year Amber Damm, Clara Barton Open School, Minneapolis. Ω



Pictured above are: Dr. Bruce W. Locklear and Dawn Locklear with Governor Tim Pawlenty.



Pictured above are: Coleman McDonough, Jamie McDonough, children Peyton, Jalen and Quin, with Governor Tim Pawlenty

Strategic Action Teams Focus on Direction

Thirty-four members of the Strategic Action Teams joined the MASSP Board of Directors and Executive Committee on March 23 and 24 at Arrowwood Resort. Under the direction of Dr. Bruce Miles the team members worked together using Chainsaw planning (a quick alternative to traditional strategic planning), reviewed in detail the Vision 2010, Mission, Values, Vision and Strategic Direction. During the process members identified the positive and less than positive aspect of MASSP's actions and efforts over the past five years. All made suggestions for

edits to the Vision and Strategic Direction of the organization. Team members identified new strategic directions and goals aligned with these new strategic directions. They created specific work plans for the new goals and reviewed the next steps for each area. I did not feel we were "spinning our wheels at all during our time" observed Kevin Enerson from LeSueur.

Participants shared in the first day evaluations that they really like the speed and intensity of the Chainsaw process, it

was very focused dialogue about the direction of MASSP. Short bursts of activities, and things got accomplished. "We were very focused", one member stated, "It doesn't matter if you are in a large or small district, we all have the same concerns, and need the same information."

"Once again, MASSP is looking forward to the future," was an evaluative conclusion. Ω

See photos from this meeting on page 7

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Thinking About...

by Joann Knuth
Executive Director

I write this column following an announcement from the Department of Education that Minnesota is not among the first round finalists in the Race to the Top competition. The descriptive word — competition — is the choice of Secretary Duncan in a letter to our nation’s governors announcing the winners, which include: Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Governor Pawlenty’s office responded with a statement that essentially points the finger of blame at Education Minnesota without specifically naming them. “It’s hard to race to the top with an anchor tied to your leg. For years the teachers’ union has fought against any meaningful education reforms.” Brian McClung, the Governor’s Deputy Chief of Staff, goes on to say, “. . .while some reforms have been enacted, such as the state’s Q-comp program in 2005, many have been defeated at the legislature at the insistence of the teachers’ union.”

I do not know if Education Minnesota’s failure to support Minnesota’s RTTT application was the determinant in our loss of this first race; scores and reviewer comments will be sent to Minnesota at the conclusion of Phase I. I do know that the increasingly competitive environment in which we are forced to work is exhausting.

We cannot fund public education by competitive grants. Districts need the stability of adequate and predictable funding to best utilize the time and talents of its staffs.

President Obama’s 2011 budget proposes consolidation of 38 education programs into 10. The Department’s shift to competitive grants to encourage innovation is concerning. It might actually hurt innovation because of the uncertainty of funding. What about small schools? Who writes the grant? How many districts do not have the capacity to compete? The budget includes \$1.35 billion, extending RTTT. The take-away from this budget is that education is poised to do well in a budgetary environment in which the President has proposed a three-year freeze for other programs. In the midst of our serious concern, we need to acknowledge the support of education.

I was involved, on behalf of MASSP, as were about 40 other stakeholders, in preparation of the RTTT grant application. In addition to the considerable time of MDE staff and the consulting firm McKinsey and Associates who received \$250,000 of Gates’ money, stakeholders representing communities across our state spent cumulatively about 1,300 hours advising, reflecting, crafting this document which is about 1,000 pages. That is equal to 32.5 weeks of work. Factor that time

over 41 states, assuming every state committed a requisite amount of effort, and we are talking about 1,332.5 weeks, equaling 25.6 years of people hours. 2

The total pages for all grants: 22,369 pages. Someone who reads 40 pages an hour could get through that volumes of verbiage in about 560 hours, fourteen 40-hour weeks more, according to Rick Hess, *Education Week*. No one has yet received a penny.

There will be more reviews, another round, more numbers crunched, points assigned, scores calculated and winners declared. Somehow the absurdity of this reminds me of Gulliver’s observations of Parliament in his travels.

Grants are important. We all know that. I wonder what would happen to educational productivity and student learning if all those grant writing, reviewing and evaluating hours could be reconfigured to teacher and principal time in schools. And the millions of dollars spent on consultants’ preparation and writing time be sent to schools sans grants.

Certainly we appreciate the unprecedented money being infused into schools. President Obama is advocating \$900 million in grants to schools to lower the dropout rate with the requirement that schools adopt one of four reform plans, each calling for removing the principal. MASSP strongly opposes such action, which should come out of local decision-making. This is a coercive approach to school reform.

In his fiscal 2011 budget request is a \$950 million Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund directed at supporting competitive grants for innovative programs to incent and compensate teachers to take on challenging assignments. Another \$405 million is included to grantees developing alternative “pathways” into teaching. Plus, three programs would focus on improving teacher instruction in core content areas, totaling just over \$1 billion. All together the purposed 2011 budget would add \$530.5 million in federal teacher spending — all competitive grant money.

Further, the Obama administration is purposing to tie Title I funding for school to states’ adoption of college and career ready standards. The standards are a good thing. We can only pray that every school board across the nation adopt the standards or that this proposal shifts from stick to carrot. Instead of linking Title I funds to states’ adoption, an incentive pool of funds should be created to entice states to adopt high standards, providing them with *additional* funding. Gerald Tirozzi rightfully stated, in a recent press release, that we must shift our discussion from coercion to cooperation for the benefit of our nation’s students. I will second that observation for Minnesota.

Our education associations and leaders must come together around a set of core beliefs and values about public education. This requires setting aside ideologies, reexamining past sacrosanct practices and policies in light of 21st century global challenges, developing a collective “we” approach, engaging in civil discourse and the political frame of negotiation and compromise. The art of informed dialogue, free of ideological blinders and professional protectionism is desperately needed, especially in these economically challenging times. Ω



Legislative and Legal Updates

by Roger Aronson, MASSP Attorney and Lobbyist

President Obama easily generated cheers when he promised to reform NCLB. His campaign blog promised: "We will reform No Child Left Behind so that we are supporting schools that need improvement, rather than punishing them." The current federal proposal isn't generating many positive reactions. And if you're a principal it is pretty clear that punishment is still an active part of federal education policy. NASSP characterized the U.S. Department of Education's proposed changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as "**misguided strategy**". The New York Times reports that teacher unions (NEA 3.2 million members and AFT 1.3 million members) oppose the administration's proposal for rewriting NCLB. In opposing the proposal the teacher unions argued the changes would continue an "overemphasis on standardized tests, impose federal mandates on issues traditionally handled in collective bargaining, and probably lead to mass-firings in low-performing schools."

A Blueprint for Reform, Reauthorization of ESEA

The President's unveiling of the proposal comes in a document called the "A Blueprint for Reform, Reauthorization of ESEA". (It can be found at the elementary and secondary section of the U.S. Department of Education's web site: <http://www.ed.gov/>) The 40 page document is worth your time to review. The President states that his goal is to have a great principal in every school. (Principals are mentioned over 60 times in the document.) The stated overall goal of the proposal is "to graduate every student ready for college and a career". A short list of provisions include:

1. The proposal will "support the expansion of high performing public schools".
2. Require that states upgrade standards or adopt common standards with other states.
3. Standards have to insure that students do not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level.
4. Encourage and support alternative licenses for teachers and principals.
5. Districts and schools must publish report cards every two years.
6. The states and federal government will identify the lowest performing schools (the bottom 5%). These schools will be labeled as "turnaround" and subject to the four turnaround interventions.

The four "turnaround" interventions are:

- I. **Transformation Model:** Replace the principal, strengthen staffing, implement a research based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement new governance and flexibility.
- II. **Turnaround Model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the school staff, implement a research based instructional program, provide extended learning time, and implement a new governance structure.
- III. **Restart Model:** Convert or close and reopen the school under the management of an effective charter operator, charter management organization or education management organization.
- IV. **School Closure Model:** Close the school and enroll students who attended it in other higher performing schools in the district.

These "models" were a key part of the Race to the Top Grants. They are also incorporated into the current Turnaround Schools Grants, a \$36 million grant that Minnesota recently qualified for. The "interventions" are connected to Minnesota's receipt of federal stimulus money.

The administration's "blueprint" scraps the 2014 deadline the No Child Left Behind established for proficiency in reading and math. Instead, the new goal is that we lead the world in college completion by 2020.

Since the summary of the proposal is over 40 pages long it cannot be detailed here in this newsletter. One conclusion is inescapable. The federal control and regulation of education is expanding at an unprecedented rate. The federal proposal states that "reforming our schools" is a shared responsibility. The campaign promise was to reform No Child Left Behind. The policy appears to go far beyond the repair of a "flawed law". Indeed, in his statement, the President says that the proposal is an outline for a "new federal role in education".

The reality is that we have a new group of school reformers that are a long way from Minnesota. Ω



President's Report

by Don Johnson
MASSP President

MCA Testing. I don't know how closely you've been monitoring the progress your senior class (if you are a high school principal) in their passing of the MCA Reading and Math Tests. A few days ago I received a listing from our Assessment Coordinator at the district office, indicating the names of those seniors who, in the case of the Reading Test, have not passed as well as the names of those seniors who either have not passed the math test or have not taken it three times. You'll probably agree with me that the days of the Basic Standards Tests were much simpler. Determining who is eligible to take the test from month to month, finding a proctor and getting the students to show up seems to be taking far more time and energy than any of us had imagined. But then, maybe I was limited in my imagination!

Last week the Minneapolis *Star and Tribune* called me, asking how my seniors were progressing toward graduation in light of the MCA Tests. At the time, I estimated that 9% of my seniors had yet to pass the MCA Reading Test. Yesterday I was informed that the list I was looking at was only those seniors "eligible" to take the test

in March. I found I had forgotten those who had tested in February and may not have passed. So my list may be a bit longer than I had feared! Again the question dogs me, "Are we doing all that we can to get these kids prepared for testing - and for life?"

All of us are realizing that "raising the bar" for our high school graduates is great in theory. Who doesn't want a better-educated work force? But raising the bar without providing the funds needed to scaffold the support necessary to get our students over that bar only creates animosity - animosity between the students and school as well as between their parents and school. Sometimes it seems that our legislators are watching this from afar, not quite understanding their vital role in this situation. I sense that role will become clearer this May and June when large numbers of high school seniors fail to graduate within a State that in the past has done many things well educationally.

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Where are we going and how are we going to get there? This month, representatives from each of the divisions within MASSP will be gather-

ing together to begin to create a new strategic plan for the organization. You may not have realized that the previous strategic plan runs out at the end of this school year - hence the title, *Vision 2010*. Led by Dr. Bruce Miles, these representatives will be discussing where we are as an organization, where we need to go and equally important, how we are going to get there?

Strategic planning is not something that sirs the juices in most of us. Most of us when told by our Superintendent that we are going to be involved in strategic planning in the weeks ahead, think of extending already long days into evenings and lengthy discussions over which words to use in each sentence. It can be tedious! On the other hand, a quality conversation about what "could be" for our organization can be a very interesting one.

We are presently living at a time when education is changing and is about to change even more. Seeing and understanding the future and our roles as principals in it is something worth thinking and talking about. Research tells us that Principals are the difference between effective and ineffective schools. Understanding and supporting that role is what MASSP is all about! Ω

2010 MASSP Summer Workshop

June 15 - 18, 2010
Breezy Point Resort
Breezy Point, Minnesota

We Look Forward to Seeing You There!

Looking for a Change of Pace and a New Challenge? ⁵ Consider Looking Overseas!

By Craig Paul, PhD., Wayzata High School Principal (retired), AIS Egypt Director



Craig Paul

When I retired from my dream job of 15 years as principal of Wayzata High School in 2008, I knew I wanted to continue working in a different capacity within education. The question was: "What options were there?" That thought took a new twist when, two days after my retirement party, I received a call from owner Walid Abushakra wanting to know if I would look at a position as Director of the American International School in Egypt. After interviewing in Washington DC and sealing the deal with a handshake (Roger Aronson advises you never do that in the US), we left in August for Cairo, Egypt and the most fantastic two years of our married lives.

I knew nothing of working and living abroad. To be honest, I did not know for sure if Egypt was in Africa or the Middle East, Muslim or Christian and/or even safe. Naive at best but we know those answers now. I knew little of schools abroad other than the DOD system and Embassy schools. There is a large market out there for credentialed educators from North America. "American" schools with American diplomas, curriculum and instruction are in place and/or emerging all over the world. You have

value beyond the U.S. borders.

Myriad questions arise to answer when seeking foreign positions and yet my wife and I asked few and took the opportunity. There are public vs private choices, and government sponsored vs private vs company sponsored schools. There are a variety of students served and niches served vary from expat children or local children to company or government children. Pay varies from subsistence (Peace Corps type settings) to very comfortable and high salaried (Aramco Compound living in the Middle East oil regions). School Boards range from very private to open deliberations. Taxes are most often paid or waived, depending on the diplomatic agreements between countries and the length of stay.

You will learn patience, new skills, and adaptability. This Director's position stretched my talents and creativity. You will meet the most fascinating staff members you could ever imagine. Someone on staff has already been where you want to go. Others want to go with you. Travel becomes part of the experience. Your appreciation and understanding of the world increase dramatically. There are kids and staff in need of your talents around the world.

Where do you begin? Google "overseas teaching" as a starting point. You will discover placement organizations such as Search Associates, De-

partment of Defense, ISS, TIEonline, and QIS that post your resumé's. The recruitment fees are paid by the employing school. Attend the UNIowa Overseas Teaching job fair next February. Teaching couples are often welcome and some schools will allow non-certified spouses to sub or actually teach in some cases if the demand necessitates it. Some administrators return to the classroom for these opportunities.

You can ask the questions we did not: Why do we want to do this? Can I go from public to private education? Can I be a minority guest in a foreign country? Can we survive mentally and financially in this setting? We took the plunge on faith, knowing I still wanted to contribute. We did not analyze who, what, why, where and how basics but we have loved our choices and thrived in our experiences. We have made a great marriage stronger, traveled in ten countries, met fantastic peoples, grown personally and continued to educate children. For us as a couple, this experience has been wonderful. Do you have a yearning to go beyond your comfort zone? The world wants those willing. Ω

PS: Egypt is physically in Africa but Egyptians see themselves as Arab. Egypt is 90% Muslim. Cairo, at 21 million people, is safer, except for pollution and traffic, than any major city in the USA.

NASSP's Unleash the Extraordinary 2010

Close to seventy Minnesota principals attended the NASSP convention in Phoenix, Arizona. Attendees heard from Executive Director Gerry Tirozzi, NASSP President Steven Pauphal, and dynamic general session speakers Pedro Noguera, Ben Carson and Bob Marzano.

A special thanks to Taylor Publishing and Scientific Learning for

sponsoring our Minnesota reception on Saturday night. Bill Derden from North Community High School in Minneapolis won a free registration to next year's NASSP convention in San Francisco courtesy of Taylor Publishing. John Schmidt, Lake Middle School in Woodbury, won a video flip camera presented by PLATO Learning. The following won items from Scientific Learning - Coley Mc-

Donough, a library of five educational leadership books and Mary Mackbee and Jeff Pawlicki DVDs on The New Science of Learning.

Mark your calendars now for February 25 -28, 2011 to join the Minnesota delegation in San Francisco, California. Ω



From the Field

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

I have had the opportunity to visit nearly 75 schools since the start of the school year. It is too bad that I can't somehow miraculously share with each of you the many wonderful things that I see going on in the schools. I wish that when I was a principal that I would have had the chance and time to see what all of you do. Great things are going in all schools regardless of size or location. I see this forum as a place for us to share our successes and maybe I need to take the lead. I always am faced with this ethical dilemma: I know that we all love to share our successes with each other but sometimes I feel that some of you who have worked many years and allocated countless resources to develop a program and are somehow unfairly expected to turn over the entire developed project. I have been guilty of connecting some of you to other principals through site visits or sharing of materials even though I know that all of you are very busy. I am very interested to get feedback from you. I see an opportunity for our membership to share with each other but I am curious to see if you all see it that way. I would like to provide to you some samples of what I have seen thus far.

I walked into Hopkins High School on a busy day and Willie Jett, the Principal, went out of his way to welcome me and offer me a cup of coffee. By the way, I was early for my appointment, and he was very busy. Mark Sharenbroich once told me that only one out of ten principals ever offers him coffee or goes out of their way to welcome him. He also said that it is a nice touch to walk your guests to the door. Mark is all about relationships. Thanks Willie!

Watertown High School has a huge framed welcoming plaque in the front entrance of their high school front office. It is laid out like a Thank You card to parents. It says something

like "Thank you parents for entrusting your children to our care..we promise to love your kids and provide them a great education." It really has to make parents feel good about their school.

Scot Kerbaugh from Annandale High School invited me to join his learning community meetings one day, and I listened as they talked about their commitment to literacy. Mike Schmoker in *Results Now* tells us that there are three essential ingredients in a quality school: critical reading, critical writing, and critical discussion. In Annandale they have developed critical discussion rubrics that allow them to assess discussion skills. Their entire discussion for nearly three hours was only focused on this topic. I left there very impressed with how Scot was able to focus his teachers on student learning.

I have referred many school leaders to contact Terry Wolfson at Hopkins West Junior High when they ask me about literacy. Terry has spent many years developing what I feel is a very powerful and effective school wide literacy initiative. She is not afraid to look at the test scores of her lowest achievers. She and her staff have put in place so many initiatives that they are impossible for me to list. They are presenting at this year's NASSP Convention. I have visited her school many times and the culture of literacy is truly amazing.

Randy Smasal of the Anoka-Hennepin District has been a great resource to many in a few different areas. He has done extended research on all of the ways to schedule a school. The information that he has gathered is so very helpful to those who are looking at scheduling options. He also has done some great work in the area of developing Learning Communities. They are now in

the process of developing dash- 6
boards of data so that principals
can more easily access student and
staff data. Randy and Nancy DuBois
have been great resources for many
area principals.

Sarah Johnson, Assistant Principal at Chisago Lakes High School, has developed some very helpful strategies that can be used to successfully implement the RTI program at the high school level. I hear from secondary principals that RTI presents unique challenges at the middle and high school level.

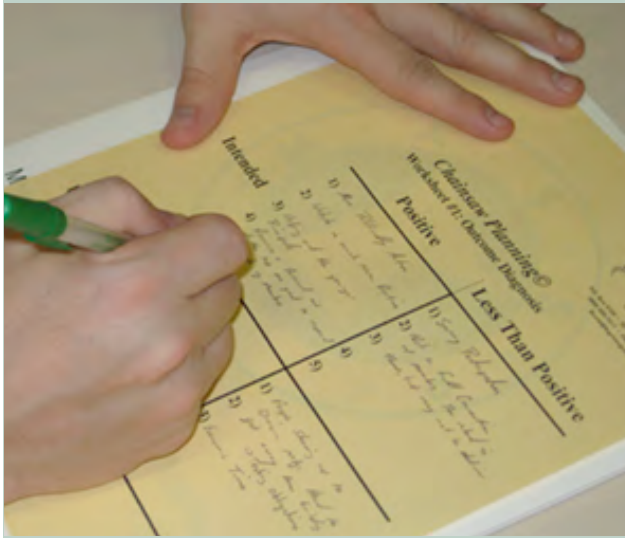
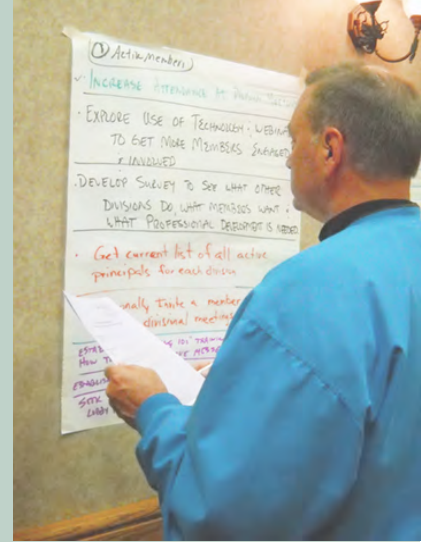
Obviously I could go on and talk about many other great things that are going on in our schools across the state. I am asking that you send me your stories about effective programs and ideas that you have implemented in your schools. Feel free to share your opinions about things you have seen or read about this past year. We at SCSU have invited some of these principals to offer 1 credit courses this summer for not only our students but also practicing principals who need more information about literacy, scheduling, professional learning communities and RTI at the secondary level. Feel free to contact me for more information. Tom Hoffman, a principal in the White Bear Lake School District, is writing a very helpful and fascinating dissertation on school shootings. He is actually interviewing school shooters in order to help school leaders understand the dynamics of why school shootings occur.

I look forward to hearing from you. Ω

March is
Middle Level
Education
Month!

Strategic Action Teams Focus on Direction ⁷

Thirty-four members of the Strategic Action Teams joined the Executive Committee and Board of Directors on March 23 and 24 at Arrowwood Resort. Under the direction of Dr. Bruce Miles the team members worked together using Chainsaw planning, a quick alternative to traditional strategic planning.





Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals



Calendar of Events — 2009 - 2010

Jun 15-18, 10.....Summer WorkshopBeezy Point, MN

Jun 21-22, 10.....Board/Exec Committee Meet.....Breezy Point, MN

Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static "snapshots." It is a set of general principles — distilled over the course of the twentieth century, spanning fields as diverse as the physical and social sciences, engineering, and management.... During the last thirty years, these tools have been applied to understand a wide range of corporate, urban, regional, economic, political, ecological, and even psychological systems. And systems thinking is a sensibility — for the subtle interconnectedness that gives living systems their unique character.

PETER SENGE

MASSP Officers

President	Donald Johnson	Owatoma Senior High School	Owatoma, MN
President-Elect	Peter Olson	Princeton High School	Princeton, MN
Secretary	James Smekrovich	Grand Rapids Senior High School	Grand Rapids, MN
Coordinator	Mary Pat Cumming	FAIR School Downtown	Minneapolis, MN
Past-President	John Hamann	Underwood High School	Underwood, MN

MASSP Board of Directors

Capitol Division	John Bezek	Tartan Senior High School	Oakdale, MN
Capitol Division	Coleman J. McDonough	Hazel Park Middle School Academy	St. Paul, MN
Central Division	Mike Carr	Sartell - St. Stephen High School	Sartell, MN
Central Division	Alan D. Niemann	Foley Senior High School	Foley, MN
Hennepin Division	Dianne Thomas	Osseo Junior High School	Osseo, MN
Hennepin Division	W. Bruce Locklear	Edina High School	Edina, MN
Northeast Division	Michael L. Finco	Hibbing High School	Hibbing, MN
Northern Division	Todd L. Brist	Crookston High School	Crookston, MN
Southeast Division	Greg Berge	Lincoln High School	Lake City, MN
Southwest Division	Don Yrjo	Redwood Valley High School	Redwood Falls, MN
Western Division	Mary P. Merchant	Bertha - Hewitt High School	Bertha, MN
Retired Rep.	Nicholas J. Miller		Buffalo, MN

MASSP Division Presidents

Capitol Division	Karen Wollak	Tartan Senior High School	Oakdale, MN
Central Division	Mike Carr	Sartell - St. Stephen High School	Sartell, MN
Hennepin Division	Jeff Ridlehoover	Wayzata High School	Plymouth, MN
Northeast Division	Greg Hexum	Esko High School	Esko, MN
Northern Division	Nancy Newcomb	Climax-Shelly High School	East Grand Forks, MN
Southeast Division	Patrick Walsh	Kenyon-Wanamingo High School	Kenyon, MN
Southwest Division	Jeff Bertrang	GFW High School	Winthrop, MN
Western Division	Jeff Drake	Battle Lake High School	Battle Lake, MN

Minnesota State High School League Representatives

Dean Ogg	Staples-Motley Schools	"A" Representative	Motley, MN
Luanne Wagner	St. Francis High School	"AA" Representative	St. Francis, MN

2010 MASC State Convention "Survivor Northwoods: Leadership by Nature"

The 2010 MASC State Convention "Survivor Northwoods: Leadership by Nature" is April 10 - 12th at Grand Rapids High School. Working with the MASC Executive Committee, the Grand Rapids High School Student Council has been working on putting together a great conference for us! We are pleased to have Bob Tryanski and Keith Hawkins as our convention keynote speakers. New this year, will be a workshop with Minnesota State University - Mankato's Adventure Education Program. Students will be networking, participating in round table idea share, community service share of "supporting our survivors", electing new officers and debating hot topics. We are very excited about the full schedule of convention events. Ω

MAHS State Convention - "iListen, iServe and iLead"

MAHS State Convention - iListen, iServe and iLead will be hosted in the Grand Room at the TIES Building on Saturday, April 24, 2010. The workshop is scheduled from 9 a.m. until 3:30 pm. The MAHS Executive Committee has put together a fun program for all in attendance. Minneapolis National Honor Society Chapters will be helping to host the convention. Grant Baldwin will be our leadership consultant for the day. More information about Grant can be found at <http://www.grantbaldwin.com>. We are very excited to have Grant here in Minnesota! We will be electing our new officers, sharing ideas in a directed roundtable share session, networking, learning from Grant and presenting awards and scholarships. Ω