

## Governor Dayton and Education Commissioner Cassellius Honor Principals at the Capitol

Jeff Sherber, Monticello Middle School Principal, and Efe Agbamu, Park High School Principal were honored by Governor Mark Dayton at the Capitol on March 17th, recognizing the MASSP Principals of the Year, along with the honorees from MESPA, MASA and Education Minnesota.

Commissioner Brenda Cassellius introduced the principals, recognizing their leadership and thanking them for their service to their schools and the state.

In addition to Jeff Sherber and Efe Agbamu were: Scott Staska, Superintendent of the Year; Ryan Vernosh, Teacher of the Year; and Carolyn Ruhnow and Jennifer Mitchell, both Milken Educators. Also in attendance were MASSP Executive Director Joann Knuth and Roger Aronson, MASSP Legal and Legislative Counsel. Congratulations to all of the honorees!  $\Omega$



Pictured above are (L to R) Jeff Sherber, Ryan Vernosh, Commissioner Brenda Cassellius and Efe Agbamu. (Photo by Rich Currier, St. Paul Public Schools)



Pictured above are (L to R) Efe Agbamu, Governor Mark Dayton and Jeff Sherber.

## Assistant Principal of the Year David Lawrence

David Lawrence, MASSP Assistant Principal of the Year, believes that collaborative leadership is essential for student achievement. As an assistant principal serving Moorhead High School, David implemented professional learning communities five years ago, and has utilized PLC's to define essential elements for each class.



David Lawrence

All PLC teams are somewhere along the continuum of definition of elements, common pacing, common assessments, analysis of assessment results, and modification of instruction to improve student learning. The PLC's have shifted the culture from teachers working in isolation to teachers collaborating on improving student learning. According to David this collaboration has been a significant part of the school's 10 point increase in MCA scores in reading.

The primary focus of PLC teams this year is to have teams demonstrate student growth and learning by administering common assessments and analyzing results. Teams submit reports to the principals regarding the test data with the goal of being clear about what students are to learn. PLC teams share exemplary summary reports with

David Lawrence

...continued on page 9

### On the Inside

Director's Column.....2

Legislative and Legal Updates ..... 3  
EdLeaders Network.....4  
President's & Coordinator's Reports.....5  
"The Principal's Perspective" .....6

"From the Field" .....7  
Olweus Bullying Program.....8  
Student Activities.....9  
Calendar/Officers .....10



## Thinking About...

by Joann Knuth  
Executive Director

Response to the Summit on Bullying, held March 7th in partnership with Hazelden, MESPA and a number of state agencies was unexpected and a bit overwhelming. Even transitioning to the larger venue of a hotel ballroom, we had to turn away nearly 200 participants.

We had extensive coverage from television stations, newspapers, and radio. In fact, Minnesota Public Radio is doing an in-depth report on the state of bullying in Minnesota and our schools.

What are we to make of all of this interest and focus? The fact is, bullying has been around a long time. And many of us may have been bullied as children: on the playground, being pushed and shoved by the big, mean kid; or in the cafeteria being ignored or isolated by the "in" group of high school princesses; or stigmatized by devastating rumors spread over phone lines; or hurt by comments about "throwing like a girl" or "air ball."

Painful memories of these hurtful experiences stay with us for years and may shape the way we see ourselves as adults, with positive self-confidence, or not. A definition of bullying, as developed by *Olweus*, a program adopted by Hazelden is:

"Bullying is when someone repeatedly and on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending himself or herself."

We aren't talking about friendly teasing here, but intentional behavior meant to inflict pain and exercise control over another over time.

Bullying by a few in school effects everyone in school. It is important to address it in a holistic way. Schools are doing that and are seeking ways to address the new and even more pervasive impacts of bullying via technology, cyberbullying, texting and sexting. Teens now spend an average of 54 hours each week on screen-time, email, texting, and social networks. Cyberbullying is creating a whole new group of victims who experience the anonymity and disinhibition that come with technology.

Why has this seeming epidemic of bullying been taken to new pervasive and intrusive levels? It is an involved question with many layers of complexity. Two responses come to mind: empathy and civility – or lack of them. Both are at the heart of successful schools and societies. I believe both empathy and civility are in decline in understanding and practice.

Schools and their students reflect their community, both the one in which they reside and the larger world community. Today the smaller melts into the larger as we are globally connected. What students see and hear weekly during the 54 hours of screen time, the violence of video games, the hurtful, threatening language of cyberbullying, the sexual aggressiveness of sexting, impact their abilities to be empathetic, to feel another's situation, feelings or motives or to be civil, to respond with politeness and civility.

I am beginning to believe along with Diane Ravitch, historian and journalist, that we are "living in a moment of national insanity", a time lacking in empathy and civility. The big monied reformers of public education are throwing their venom at schools and teachers with the goal of getting rid of all the bad ones (and they believe there are many), demeaning the institution of public education with the goal of improvement so we can entice the best and brightest of our college graduates to enter the profession of public education, which they vilify. One blogger, in response to Ravitch's comment responded, "the only conclusion that makes sense is that these calls for education reform are not about education but about corporate and political agendas".

In a word, I believe public education is being bullied. "Teachers are overpaid!" "They have rich, undeserved benefits." "They only work parttime." Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker had to break the unions to balance the state budget. What is the connection? Wisconsin teachers had made all the monetary concessions. Now there is legislation in Ohio, Indiana, Idaho, and even Minnesota, to limit or eliminate bargaining rights for teachers and other public servants. Clearly, this is an organized political agenda to break the unions of public servants and limit their rights.

In a democracy government is "we, the people" and its functions are carried out by employees who serve the public.

Public servants teach our children, plow our roads, keep our streets safe, save our homes from fire and floods, ensure our water and food are safe, guard the civil rights of citizens.

Good government costs money; it is efficient, effective and responsive. The price of bad government or no government is even higher. The Star of the North has been a shining example of good government whose public education system, quality of life, pristine environment, sparkling waters, health care, and work ethic are admired and envied throughout our country.

Public service should be valued, honored, compensated appropriately and held accountable. Not demeaned, vilified and stripped of rights.

What we are doing to demean government and its public servants must stop. Ω



# Legislative and Legal Updates

by Roger Aronson, MASSP Attorney and Lobbyist

Significant discussion is taking place regarding teacher and principal evaluation. Much of the discussion at the capitol has addressed what an evaluation system should look like. To be more specific, the question is what role should the state take in regulating or mandating a teacher evaluation system. The discussion has not focused on any review of current evaluations systems. In fact, few traditional methods of evaluation have even been mentioned during the discussion. Instead, the legislative discussion on teacher evaluation has basically focused on linking test scores to public labeling and continued employment.

Through the course of the hearings, several teachers testified about their prior evaluations by principals. This testimony did not cast principals or their evaluations in a particularly favorable light. As the discussion progressed, some teachers described effective coaching, and peer evaluation. Overall though, the discussion did not accurately identify any current accepted purpose or form of evaluation. Some recognition of Q comp plans took place, but not much discussion beyond that.

Why is the discussion so disjointed? Certainly, the legislative hearing process does not lend itself to the development of a research based evaluation system. The process is political, dominated by interest groups and characterized by short presentations to large committees. In the end, if a bill gets a hearing, it has a high probability of passing in some form. Generally, legislative news travels slowly, (much quicker with the internet) so powerful represented interests tend to prevail in the short term. The process is, overall, a good one. However, when it comes to developing technical education policy, it has significant limitations.

As the legislative involvement in education becomes more pervasive, less and less is left to local control. Fundamentally, local control is outweighed by federal and state control of education. This is not a partisan occurrence. Democrats and republicans alike have legislated local control into a narrow, limited concept. To be fair, legislators have been forced into this role as a result of many different factors and interest groups. Regardless, it cannot be denied that both the federal and state governments play a dominant role in every public school. In addition, the public expects legislatures to reform schools. The House of Representatives renamed its Education Committee the "Committee on Education Reform". It is common practice for individuals concerned about education issues to seek legislative remedies and legislative bodies are willing to accommodate them. So it should come as no surprise that teacher evaluation has become a legislative issue.

The history of teacher evaluation is interesting. Seven years ago, one study outlined the issue as follows:

*"Teacher evaluation is a common, often mandatory prac-*

*tice in schools. The traditional programs and practices of teacher evaluation, however, are based on limited or competing conceptions of teaching, and are often characterized by inaccuracy, lack of support and insufficient training. Traditional teacher evaluation practices tend to preserve the loose coupling between administration and instructional practices, consequently limiting the ability of principals to foster improvements in teaching and learning. Rather than being used as tools for instructional leadership, traditional evaluation programs are often seen as perfunctory and treated by both teachers and principals as an administrative burden. Teacher assessment has frequently been used to weed out the poorest performing teachers rather than to hold all teachers accountable or to improve the performance of all teachers. Because of these traditional limits on scope and efficacy, teacher evaluation has had a limited impact on teacher performance and learning." \**

This description of evaluation is undoubtedly more applicable to a prior time. Years ago, a major purpose of evaluation was "to weed out the poorest performers". Most evaluations were simply a positive description of performance. Critical comments were rarely contained in evaluations. Teachers would be both disturbed or threatened by any comment that was perceived as negative. Modern evaluation, as reported by principals, is much more. Teacher evaluation has moved toward "holding all teachers accountable and improving performance". Teachers understand this and seek consistency and fairness. The challenge is to convince policy makers that evaluation should be "locally controlled" rather than "state mandated" and that test scores should play a minor role in high stakes employment decisions. We need to raise the confidence of policymakers that principals can effectively use evaluation to improve outcomes in the classroom.

The question of resources cannot be ignored in this debate. Do we currently have a sufficient number of principals to implement quality, frequent, meaningful evaluations of teachers?

The implementation of any evaluation program requires answering basic numbers question—how many principals are necessary. In business, estimates vary regarding the ideal number of employees that can be effectively supervised by one "manager". This number is referred to in one journal as "span of control". One report describes the ratio as follows: *"An ideal span of control in an organization, according to modern organizational experts is approximately 15 to 20 subordinates per supervisor or manager. However, some experts with a more traditional focus believe that 5-6 subordinates per supervisor or manager is ideal."*

Aronson. . .continued on page 9

MASSP is offering an exciting new service being brought to you by the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals in partnership with eleven other principal association affiliates in ten states. On March 1, 2011, these groups launched the Ed Leaders Network (ELN). Grounded in the belief that educational leaders impact student performance, the ELN has been developed to provide you with quality, on-demand professional development webinars to enhance your leadership growth. A dynamic professional networking community has also been created to allow you to interact with your peers and leadership experts from across the country.

ELN allows you to:

### **Work Within Your Busy Day —**

ELN webinars are designed to be approximately 15-30 minutes in length. This allows for easy viewing over your morning coffee, while you open your mail and during lunch.

### **Promote Learning —**

ELN webinars not only allow you to pass on what you have learned, but you are also encouraged to watch these high quality webinars with members of your staff during “lunch and learn” sessions, faculty meetings and in-service days.

### **Collaborate —**

The ELN community has been designed to provide you access to your peers and leadership experts from around the country. You are invited to take part in a discussion group, blog your thoughts on educational leadership and upload resources into the ELN Library that will benefit your colleagues.

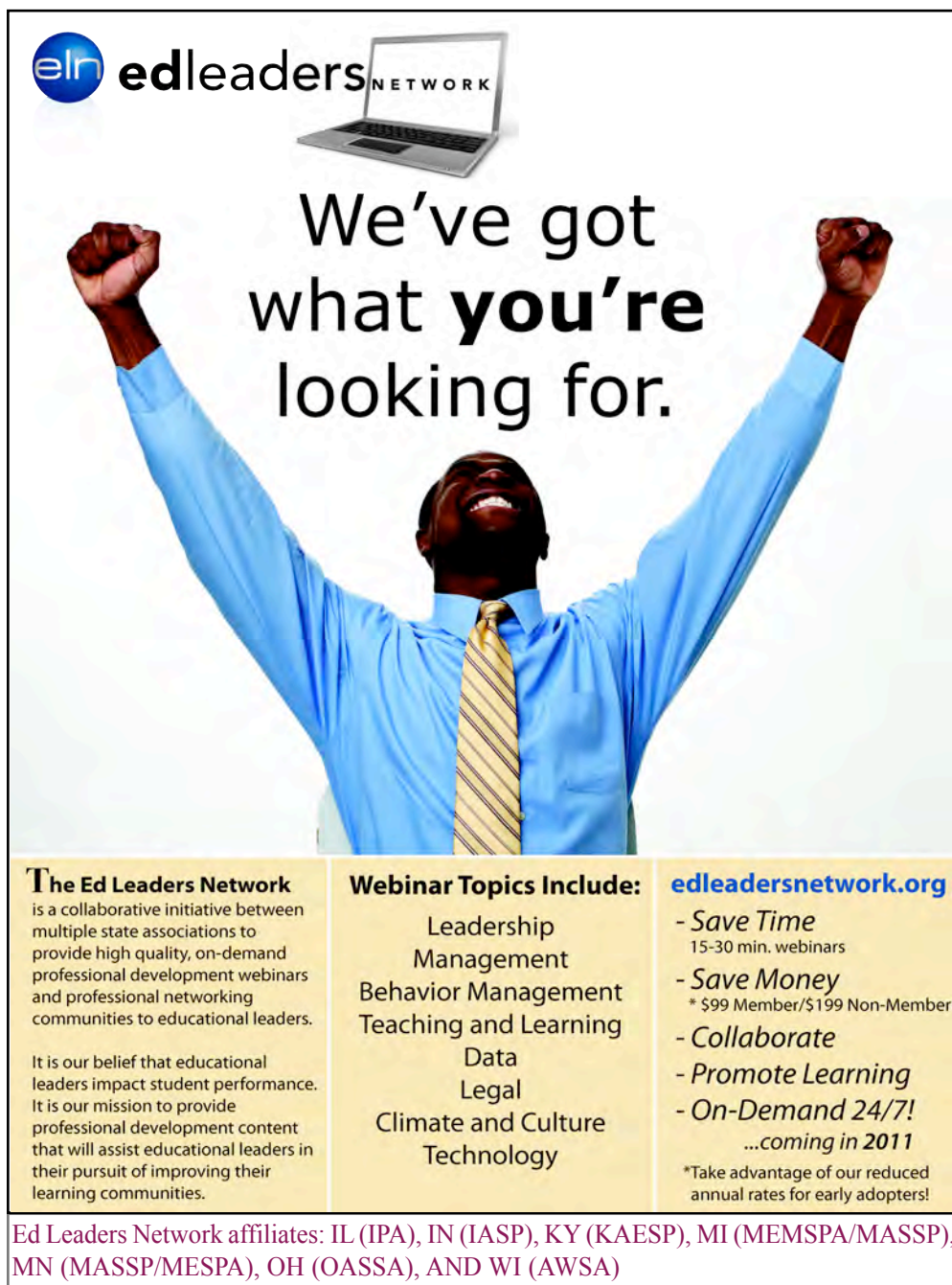
### **Be Cost Effective —**

Take advantage of this great introductory rate for an annual subscription. (\$99 for State Affiliate Members/\$199 for State Affiliate Non-Members).

**and**

### **Work On-Demand 24/7 —**

Always just a click away.



**edleaders NETWORK**

**We've got what you're looking for.**

<p><b>The Ed Leaders Network</b> is a collaborative initiative between multiple state associations to provide high quality, on-demand professional development webinars and professional networking communities to educational leaders.</p> <p>It is our belief that educational leaders impact student performance. It is our mission to provide professional development content that will assist educational leaders in their pursuit of improving their learning communities.</p>	<p><b>Webinar Topics Include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Leadership Management</li><li>Behavior Management</li><li>Teaching and Learning</li><li>Data</li><li>Legal</li><li>Climate and Culture</li><li>Technology</li></ul>	<p><b>edleadersnetwork.org</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Save Time</b> 15-30 min. webinars</li><li>- <b>Save Money</b> * \$99 Member/\$199 Non-Member</li><li>- <b>Collaborate</b></li><li>- <b>Promote Learning</b></li><li>- <b>On-Demand 24/7!</b> ...coming in 2011</li></ul> <p>*Take advantage of our reduced annual rates for early adopters!</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Ed Leaders Network affiliates: IL (IPA), IN (IASP), KY (KAESP), MI (MEMSPA/MASSP), MN (MASSP/MESPA), OH (OASSA), AND WI (AWSA)

The ELN's mission is to provide you the professional development content and capacity building professional network you need to do what is best for your students and learning community.

Please contact me anytime at [pattia@mail.massp.org](mailto:pattia@mail.massp.org) or 651-999-7336 if you have questions about the Ed Leaders Network. Launch of the ELN occurred March 1. A subscription form is available at <http://www.massp.org>. Ω



## President's Report

by Pete Olson  
MASSP President

Will spring ever come to Minnesota? I'm sure that by the time you read this, the weather will have warmed, the snow will be gone and thoughts of getting out on the lakes and working on the yard will be on your mind. But as of today, winter is still in full swing.

Education is in many ways like the weather. Both invite lots of discussion regarding what is about to happen, lots of change that is hard to predict at times and many aspects that remain out of our control.

Last month a group of Minnesota Principals met at the state capital for a day dedicated to meeting with our elected officials. During this time we had the opportunity to testify in a sub-committee hearing about current changes and the challenges we face in public education. We discussed the impact of MCA testing, shared how changes in the

economy have had an impact on our schools and students, and answered questions from members of the committee. This was a rare opportunity to speak as experienced educators to a committee of policymakers, but we can *all* have a positive impact on the direction Minnesota legislation takes. I urge each of you to contact your representatives and talk with them about the issues that impact education and learning. We have some interesting legislation currently being discussed at the state level, which will have an impact on how you operate in your local school district. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with proposed legislation and invite your legislators into your school to build relationships for the future.

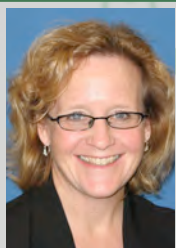
We are fortunate to have Joann Knuth and Roger Aronson as leaders in the MASSP organization. Joann and Roger are recognized and respected at the State Capitol as

educational leaders with a history of excellence and a passion and vision for the future of Minnesota schools. They continue to work tirelessly to support the work principals do every day.

I had the opportunity to attend the NASSP Convention last month in San Francisco. It was a great conference with excellent break out sessions and some world-class speakers.

One of the speakers that had an impact on me was Carlos Garcia, Superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District. Dr. Garcia spoke with passion and frankness about the importance of teachers and administrators addressing inequity in schools and improving education for all students, and the impact we can have on the future of our country. Based on the standing ovation at the end of his speech, it would seem his comments connected with many of the Principals in attendance.

You probably don't hear this enough, so I would like to say "Thank You". Thank you for all you do for your students, which has a positive impact on your community, your state and this wonderful country. Take care and have a safe and positive rest of the school year. Ω



## Coordinators's Report

by Mary Pat Cumming  
MASSP Coordinator

### Join the NASSP Federal Grassroots Network Today!

The NASSP National Conference in San Francisco was energizing and engaging!

As your Minnesota State Coordinator, I served with other State Coordinators across the nation in the selection of our new President Elect, Denise Greene-Wilkenson, from Alaska. She is a talented and experienced principal with extensive connections to members of congress including Senator Lisa Murkowski (R) who recently won re-election through an Alaskan grassroots write-in campaign. It was a perfect example of the power and impact of how effective a 'grassroots' movement can be when concerned people band together for a cause.

It is with this in mind that we, as principals need to join the NASSP Federal Grassroots Network. Mary Kingston, NASSP Government Relations Manager (kingstonm@nassp.org), has recently taken on the task of coordinating grassroots efforts on issues that effect principals and educational programs for students. I encourage you to logon to the NASSP website and sign up for the network. You'll receive Action Alerts, weekly updates from the legislature and language you can use in speaking with your state and federal representatives.

As found on the NASSP website, by joining, you will have the opportunity to educate members of Congress on how the policies they create in Washington affect schools in their states and districts.

As a Network member you promise to:

- Foster relationships with your members of Congress and meet with each member at least once a year
- Share experiences and strategies with other Network members in quarterly Web conferences or conference calls.

NASSP will support you in this work by providing you:

- Regular updates on federal policy
- Strategies and "talking points" for meeting with your elected officials
- Easy access to the Network to share ideas and strategies.

Use the following link to sign up: <http://www.nassp.org/Legislative-Advocacy/NASSP-Federal-Grassroots-Network>. Ω

*Mary Pat Cumming can be reached at [marypat\\_cumming@wmep.k12.mn.us](mailto:marypat_cumming@wmep.k12.mn.us)*

# The Principal's Perspective

By Valerie Ong, Education Fellow



Valerie Ong

We constantly hear that our schools are “failing” because student success is quantified by test scores, courtesy of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates. Educators are increasingly blamed for school “failure.” Principals, in particular, are being held largely responsible for not providing good leadership.

“Principals need to be held accountable, but held by reason and data,” says Joann Knuth, executive director for the Minnesota Association of Secondary

School Principals. Knuth believes that principals should be evaluated on a variety of factors, not only test scores.

A handful of distinguished Minnesota principals describe the challenges they face in establishing successful schools. NCLB is included, but principals reveal other factors.

Principals support high math and reading standards as long as test scores are not the only measurement of student and school success. Still, until another measurement system emerges in Minnesota, principals acknowledge it’s their job to prepare students for academic success on high-stakes tests.

Added to NCLB, funding cuts are squeezing resources. Monticello Middle School Principal Jeff Scherberber notes how schools are being asked to do “more with less.”

“This year there is money, next year this is none,” says Efe Agbamu, principal at Park High in the South Washington County district. “One year I am releasing teachers, the next year, I am hiring teachers.” Such unstable funding mechanisms are a huge challenge.

Principals also have to find and maintain a balance between various individuals, what Esko High School Principal Gregory Hexum refers to as “people work.” Hexum believes that “successful principals are continuously balancing the interests of all parties for whom they work, while maintaining a focus on the common denominator—student success—that brings all of those parties together.” But it’s difficult keeping a happy balance when the various individuals he works for hold opposing perspectives and expectations.

Some principals also shared the challenges of working with a variety of students facing personal difficulties at home. For Redwood Valley High School Principal Don Yrjo, this takes place in the form of changing demographics that bring cultural

and language barriers. Yrjo works to ensure that his students’ families are on the same page, but that can be hard when parents are unavailable or unable to participate.

The challenge for Poplar Bridge Elementary Principal Gail Swor comes when students have inconsistent attendance. This presents difficulties for her teachers to build on previous learning. While Swor strives to provide the best education to her students, her capabilities are limited when her students are not present at school. Given the current economic climate, Swor also works with students who are constantly moving from school to school. This often negatively affects their learning and can be a tough for her teachers to fill learning gaps.

As you can see, principals cannot create a successful school by relying solely on their own abilities. While their leadership skills are essential, phenomenal teachers, staff and supportive parents are key assets. “Any school with just one leader is bound to be less effective than it could be. Good principals are striving to cultivate shared leadership amongst staff,” says Hexum.

Effective principals build shared leadership through close knit administrative teams, collaboration, and shared accountability and achievements, not through directives and mandates.

For example, Yrjo rewards teachers in leadership by calling attention to good work to inspire others. Some principals determine best practices through data collection and find ways to share it with staff in an effort to provide useful training tools and professional development.

Principals have numerous roles and a wide variety of resources to manage. Hexum summarizes this well, saying principals “deal with too many variables in children and their families to compare and evaluate students, teachers, schools, states, and countries with one another based on standardized tests. Doing so is a shameful oversimplification.”

These principal narratives represent dedicated Minnesota educators committed to everyone in their buildings, with students at the forefront. Principal leadership must not be measured in student achievement based exclusively on test scores. We need to switch gears from unconstructive criticism to useful conversations on how we can support our principals and their mission to give every teacher the best tools available, and every student the best education possible.  $\Omega$

*Originally published March 03, 2011 on the website <http://www.mn2020.org>. Republished here with permission.*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**Summer Conference 2011 — “Principle Essentials for Principals”  
June 14 - 17, 2011 — Breezy Point Resort**



## From the Field

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

Jim Collins in *Good to Great* focuses on 3 or 4 major themes. Everyone has read the book and frankly it is considered old news. Something caught my attention recently that I had missed earlier. Did you notice that he says that we need to get the right people on the bus and then in the right seats first and then we figure out where to drive the bus. I have always taught our students that successful leaders establish a clear vision for the organization in the early stages. It strikes me that Collins is saying that the most important thing that we can do is hire the right people first and then worry about where we are heading. I think that he is making a very subtle yet powerful point. Keeping that in mind, I would like to spend some time talking about hiring the right people.

We are very busy in the spring of the year and that is when we do a majority of our hiring. In many cases we have a tendency to rush the process and ultimately jeopardize the quality of the entire hiring procedure.

I have had the opportunity to spend time with Matt Schoen, principal at Delano High School, and he has made hiring a high priority in his school. As a part of the hiring procedure all final candidates must teach a lesson with a classroom of students and the hiring committee.

I tried to do this on a few occasions such as when we hired our instrumental director but mostly we skipped this step. I now think that Matt has the right idea. Although it is time consuming and cumbersome, teaching a lesson has to be the most important part of the interview.

Matt gathers feedback from the students and takes their suggestions seriously. How often have we hired candidates with great interview skills and then found that they lack the skills to deliver a lesson effectively. If we truly feel that it is essential to get the right people on the bus then we must require them to teach a lesson. I know that this will require a commitment of more time but the outcome surely will be more favorable.

I encourage you to re think what you have done in the past and dedicate the time to make a better decision for students.

Annie Doughty, the Human Resources Director in the Wayzata District, has developed a hiring manual that is very helpful. I would like to share a few ideas that she has proposed that we consider when hiring and I will include some suggestions that I present to my students in my Personnel Administration classes. I know that many of you have developed your own hiring system which ranges from very formal to informal. I suggest that you do what feels comfortable but I also want to make you aware that if you are challenged in court, you will have to be able to defend your process. Hiring season is upon us and I invite you to look at these suggestions think about what you are currently doing. This suggestion list is more about legal requirements than about ease and convenience.

- Clearly post the requirements and qualifications for the position that you are opening.
- Screen all of the applications using a rubric that was developed before the screening process.
- Develop questions that help you identify the desired qualifications for the position. Ask all of the questions of each candidate. It is preferred that the same person ask the same questions of all of the candidates.
- Make sure to avoid questions that are illegal.
- Take time to train your interviewing committee. Establish the format for asking the questions.
- Make an effort to set the stage for a great impression for the candidate.
- Consider having each candidate teach a sample lesson to students.
- Understand what the law says about Veteran's Preference.

7  
• Predetermine what to look for when asking questions. In other words what do you think would be the ideal answer.

• Make sure that your committee members clearly understand how the final decision will be made and by whom. This should be discussed in the committee training session.

• Consider having the questions available to the candidate during the interview.

• Establish time limits for the interview and have a time keeper who can inform the candidate of the status of the interview timeline half way through. The committee member may say "We have 30 minutes remaining and you have answered 6 of the 20 questions"

• At the end of the interview provide the candidate the timelines and if there will be additional interviews.

• Have large name place cards so that the candidate can answer questions directly.

• Contact at least 3 reference checks and ask specific questions. Use the same reference check form for each candidate.

• Make sure to check the Minnesota State Education Department License Website to verify the candidate's licensure status.

• Make sure that your interview committee members understand the importance of confidentiality during the entire process.

• Check to clarify with Human Resources the salary limits and benefits that you will be allowed to offer the candidate.

• Remember that only the School Board is authorized to hire staff. You merely recommend someone to them.

• Collect and keep all of the paperwork and interview sheets for the time required by law. It is easy to get careless when you are interviewing and so much is going on in your school in the spring. You may need this documentation if a candidate contests your decision. Ω

*Contact Nick Miller by emailing him at [njmiller@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:njmiller@stcloudstate.edu).*

# Introducing the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

“The power of the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* lies in staff and students using common language to address bullying situations. A message is carried out to students saying bullying will not be tolerated here.”

— A school counselor

## What is the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*?

One of the best ways to address bullying prevention in schools is to implement an evidence-based bullying prevention program. Evidence-based means the program has gone through rigorous evaluations effectively demonstrating that the program results in positive outcomes.

The *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP)* is the most researched and best-known bullying prevention program available today. With over thirty-five years of research and successful implementation all over the world, *OBPP* is a whole-school program that has been proven to prevent or reduce bullying throughout a school setting.

*OBPP* is used at the school, classroom, and individual levels and includes methods to reach out to parents and the community for involvement and support. School administrators, teachers, and other staff are primarily responsible for introducing and implementing the program. These efforts are designed to improve peer relations and make the school a safer and more positive place for students to learn and develop.

## What are the Goals of OBPP?

OBPP has three main goals. They are to reduce existing bullying problems among students, prevent the development of new bullying problems, and to achieve better peer relations at school.

To achieve these goals, OBPP includes four anti-bullying rules for the entire school community to follow:

- We will not bully others.
- We will try to help students who are bullied.
- We will try to include students who are left out.

- If we know that someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

When posted around the schools and memorized by the students, these rules, along with the rest of the program, are effective in reducing and preventing bullying.


## What are the Effects of OBPP?

Research has shown how successful implementation of the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* can reduce school bullying. Results have included:

- Fifty percent or more reductions in student reports of being bullied and bullying others. Peer and teacher ratings of bullying problems have shown similar results.
- Significant reductions in student reports of general antisocial behavior such as school bullying, vandalism, school violence, fighting, theft, and truancy.
- Significant improvements in the classroom social climate as reflected in students’ reports of improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, and more positive attitudes toward schoolwork and school.
- Greater support for students who are bullied, and stronger, more effective interventions for students who bully.

When implementing *OBPP* with fidelity, this award-winning program will effectively reduce and prevent bullying in your school. For more information about bullying or a Bully Prevention Program contact MASSP.

*“As staff we can do a lot of things that will make a difference, but we are kidding ourselves if we think we’re going to build positive student belonging without addressing our school’s peer culture and how kids treat one another. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has helped to make positive student belonging a real possibility.”*

— A school principal 

## Secondary Academic Showcase — “Programs Producing Results”

Many secondary schools have been implementing programs that are producing outstanding educational results. Now is the time to make plans to join with educators from other high schools and middle schools to explore these programs. Visit our website for more details.

**Thursday, April 14, 2011 — 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**  
**TIES Building - St. Paul**  
**1667 Snelling Avenue North, St. Paul, MN 55108**

# Making Connections with Students, Staff and Parents

By Ann Postlewaite, Director of Student Leadership

In the past month I have had the great opportunity to present workshops and attend three conferences where presenters have shared ideas on way to make connections with members of their school communities.

**Connecting with students:** Several principals shared their ideas about getting input and the feelings of students about school in the following ways.


**Lunch with the Principal:** Once a month the principal has lunch with random students – usually 2 – a boy and a girl. They are invited to the Principal Office for either pizza or subs. During lunch they talk about what is great at school, and what changes they would make if they were in charge. The principal asks what their friends think about life at their school.

**Lunch Bunch with the Principal:**

Each month, every department or club, sport and activity selects a student to eat with the Principal. The fifteen to twenty students join the administrative team for lunch and discuss the good, the bad and the ugly at school. The students are encouraged to talk freely as long as it is respectful. They may not talk about staff members, but are discussing life in the middle school or high school. The time is spent eating and talking about things that they like about the school, things they would change if they were in charge, things that would make students feel safer or more connected. Students get to see the administration in a different light.

**Staff Athletic Jersey Day:** The day before a big game the players choose a teacher who they would want to wear their jersey on game day and to the game. The players go to the


teacher's room and give them their "away" jersey to wear. The teacher wears it the day of the game and receives special spirit cheer items for their families.

**Parent Lunch Brunch:** Staff members are asked to nominate parents who have shown a true commitment to their program by contributing in the classroom, on booster clubs or at any activity or event. Nominated parents are sent invitations for lunch. On the day of the Parent Volunteer Lunch Brunch, teachers, coaches, advisors and parents meet for lunch. Each teacher, coach or advisor then takes a turn introducing their parent volunteers and giving a brief statement why they were chosen. Each parent is given a certificate and a picture is taken with the teacher, coach or advisor and displayed at school and on the website. 

## Aronson. . .continued from page 3

Obviously, these numbers have little relationship to the number of employees supervised by a principal. Principals supervise large numbers of teachers and other staff all the while performing a wide range of essential educational duties. This

is something that must be taken into account as we increase responsibilities in the area of state mandated evaluation.

Without question, this is an interesting time to be a school principal. 

*\*Implementing Teacher Evaluation Systems: How Principals make Sense of Complex Artifacts to Shape Local Instructional Practice, Halverson, Kelley & Kimball University of Wisconsin-Madison (2004).*

## David Lawrence. . .continued from front page

David's leadership. Moorhead High School PLC teams truly are focused on both student and teacher learning.


Dave believes that developing relationships with students, particularly at-risk students, is at the heart of this success. To quote him: "When you think about truly making a difference in a student's life, I don't think that is possible without forming some kind of relationship with that student. I continue to be amazed at the amount of students we have that exist in such difficult situations. We have students that walk across the street from the local homeless shelter, and we have students that live

in million dollar homes and, literally, everything in between."

The favorite part of being an assistant principal for David Lawrence is working and visiting with students. He believes the relationships staff develops with students enhance the building climate and, again, improve student learning.

Russ Henegar, one of Dave's colleagues says, "Working with the most needy students is a real strength for Dave; you can see it in the hallways as he talks to them. His relational skills are second to none, and it shows as students come back

year after year to check in with Mr. Lawrence."

David Lawrence, MASSP Assistant Principal of the Year, loves his job. Gene Boyle, Moorhead High School principal, calls him a "committed educational leader who constantly is looking to improve the lives of students and staff." According to Mr. Boyle, he has "made me a better principal, our teachers more focused instructors, and, most importantly, our students better prepared for post-secondary life." 



## Calendar of Events — 2010 - 2011

March 28, 2011	Executive Committee Meeting	Radisson Roseville
March 29, 2011	Board of Directors Meeting	TIES, St. Paul, MN
June 14, 2011	Board of Directors Meeting	Breezy Point Resort, Breezy Point, MN
June 14-17, 2011	Summer Conference	Breezy Point Resort, Breezy Point, MN

**Minnesota Association of Student Councils**  
**“Jammin’ to Leadership”**  
**April 9-11, 2011 — Walker High School**  
**Alvin Law and Monte Selby - Speakers**

## MASSP Vote for Secretary Candidates

Jeanne Swanson	Karen Wollak
- Waseca High School	- Harmony Learning Center
- Southeast Division	- Capitol Division

**Watch for emails with a link to voting!**  
**Voting will close on April 1, 2011 at midnight.**

## MASSP Officers

President	Peter Olson	Princeton High School	Princeton, MN
President-Elect	James Smokrovich	Grand Rapids Senior High School	Grand Rapids, MN
Secretary	Jeffrey Drake	Battle Lake High School	Battle Lake, MN
Coordinator	Mary Pat Cumming	FAIR School Downtown	Minneapolis, MN
Past-President	Donald Johnson	Owatonna Senior High School	Owatonna, MN

## MASSP Board of Directors

Capitol Division	John Bezek	Tartan Senior High School	Oakdale, MN
Capitol Division	Karen Wollak	Tartan Senior High School	Oakdale, 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	Jeff Ridlehoover	Wayzata High School	Plymouth, MN
Northeast Division	Michael L. Finco	Hibbing High School	Hibbing, MN
Northern Division	Helen Kennedy	Bagley Junior/Senior High School	Bagley, MN
Southeast Division	Greg Berge	Lincoln High School	Lake City, MN
Southwest Division	Don Yrjo	Redwood Valley High School	Redwood Falls, MN
Western Division	Nels Onstad	West Central Area Secondary School	Barrett, MN
Retired Rep.	Nicholas J. Miller		Buffalo, MN

## MASSP Division Presidents

Capitol Division	Elizabeth Block	Cottage Grove Middle School	Cottage Grove, MN
Central Division	Erich Martens	Sauk Rapids-Rice High School	Sauk Rapids, MN
Hennepin Division	Debra L. Brooks-Golden	Anderson United Community School	Minneapolis, MN
Northeast Division	Laverne M. Hakly	Virginia Secondary School	Virginia, MN
Northern Division	Anthony D. Greene	Franklin Middle School	Theif River Falls, MN
Southeast Division	Marsha Langseth	Southwest Middle School	Albert Lea, MN
Southwest Division	Wade Mathers	Redwood Valley Middle School	Redwood Falls, MN
Western Division	Nels Onstad	West Central Area Secondary School	Barrett, MN

## Minnesota State High School League Representatives

John Hamann	Underwood High School	“A” Representative	Underwood, MN
Luanne Wagner	St. Francis High School	“AA” Representative	St. Francis, MN

# MASSP Members Present at NASSP Conference in San Francisco

MASSP members presented at the NASSP conference in San Francisco

The Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals’ membership was represented by three workshop presentations in San Francisco.

Jeffrey Erickson, Assistant Principal at Minnetonka High School presented *Tackling the Third Rail in Education: Grading*. The Minnetonka district changed assessment, attendance, academic honors, and grading and academic integrity policies – in one year! Jeff talked about the process and plan used by Minnetonka and taught others to imagine how to lead their school through similar changes, and provided partici-

pants with a copy of the plan ready to lead fundamental change in their own districts.

Alice Woog, member and educational consultant and Anna Maravelas, psychologist, spoke to 50 NASSP members on *Self – Defeating Habits of Otherwise Brilliant People*. The focus of the session was to address common and serious issues related to issues as the causes of workplace fragmentations, disengagement of workers, and the lack of productivity that results when conflict and disagreement are not addressed by organization leaders. The presentation offered realistic strategies for educational leaders to use in their schools with staff, students, parents and

other learning community stakeholders.

Ann Postlewaite, Director of Student Leadership and Communications, presented and led discussions on *Student Leadership: An Important Piece of a Successful School*. During the workshop the 48 participants discussed and shared the variety of ways that student leadership groups in schools are helping to support the campus goals. Principals shared how they were working to get different student leader groups involved in changing the school climate. A variety of student leadership training materials and resources were shared and ideas generated for getting other student leaders involved in the school community. Ω

*Leadership is understanding people and involving them to help you do a job. That takes all of the good characteristics, like integrity, dedication of purpose, selflessness, knowledge, skill, implacability, as well as determination not to accept failure. — Admiral Arleigh A. Burke*