

Developing leadership and unity within our membership to achieve the continuous improvement of public education.



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Fall Conference

Fall Conference 2005 earns high marks from members



All indicators point to the conclusion that Fall Conference 2005, *Leading for Learning, Learning for Life*, in Traverse City was a great success. The staff at MASA wants to thank all who helped to make it work the way it did. It is clear that a significant group of members believe that our conferences can be a major way to network, learn and grow. Key efforts from **Cindy Ruble** and her Conference Planning Committee, **Scott Dunsmore** and his Professional Leadership Committee, **Dale Kimball** and his Member Services Committee and **Rick Lane** and his Legislative Committee worked cooperatively and in a seamless manner to meet the needs of our members.

Evaluations were overwhelmingly positive with 87 percent of those

responding saying that this conference met expectations at agree to strongly agree status. Also, 98 percent of those responding with the same ranking said that attending the conference strengthened their professional networking and helped to improve job effectiveness. We also learned that over 80 percent of the respondents said that the Exhibit Show was valuable.

The many specific comments both formally and informally have us glowing for a few seconds, but also planning for our next ventures. The Conference

...continued on page 6

SAY HEY, LET'S TALK



By William Mayes,
MASA Executive Director

A week has gone by and we have had a chance to reflect on the 2005 Fall Conference and also the conference evaluations. Based on those evaluations, it is obvious that the Conference Committee hit a home run. Thank you for your great efforts, committee, and now it is on to Super Bowl town and the Midwinter Conference. Preparations are already underway, so I know the committee will be ready and Detroit will be in top shape as they prepare for Super Bowl Sunday. We have listened to you. You will be impressed with the changes in format—less MASA “business” and more solid information. Expect a great conference.

This last week we have had a number of new superintendents comment on the need to take care of the whole superintendent. I had shared how important it is to make sure you don't get so wrapped up with the problems of the day that you forget to take care of every facet of your life. Your family is most important. Your spouse, significant other, and children are all important parts of the equation as you become successful in your role as superintendent or front line administrator. All work and no social life will make you one dull person. Make sure you save time and energy for what really matters in life. Family and friends will be there long after work crises come and go. Make sure you nurture and take care of that most important part of the whole superintendent. Remember to bring home surprises—or have a dinner out for no apparent reason—just to

keep in touch with your best support group.

Speaking of energy, getting into an exercise routine will help to handle the stress build-up of the day. You will not be able to handle daily problems if you have not built in some exercise. Park your car at the far end of the lot, take a walk with the kids and dog, join the “Y” for a after-school or early-morning workout. The conditioning will boost your energy levels and your ability to handle the stress of the job more effectively. Plus, in a day when Americans increasingly struggle with obesity and diabetes, what a great way to set a good example to staff and students.

Taking care of the whole person is very important. Remember that if the President of the United States can find a time to exercise, the superintendent of Anytown, Michigan can, too. You owe it to yourself. Rainer Maria Rilke once said, “Don't worry about victory—Survival is the issue. We want you to survive. The victories for kids will come. Hang in there every day—and never, never, never give up.”



Your spouse, significant other, and children are all important parts of the equation as you become successful in your role as superintendent or front line administrator.

SPEAKING OF LEADING

“Countries that are more successful [in outperforming U.S. students] are going [to school] well over 200 days a year. European school days are shorter; they start in the morning and are at home for the lunch meal. Then the afternoon is used for more specialized things.”

Jay Newman, St. Joseph County ISD supt, in the Sturgis Journal Online, 9/9/05, regarding the growing trend for schools to lengthen the school day and operate fewer days per year.

“So much has been lost as result of not funding properly. It has unified us. I'm hoping the result is kids will benefit again. I think everyone is pretty much on the same page,” he added. “If you really, truly believe that kids come first and are the future, we need to fund it. We need to put our money where our mouth is.”

Kyle Griffith, Morenci Area Schools Supt, in the Adrian Daily Telegram 9/10/05, regarding the kickoff of the K-16 Petition Drive.

I could make a very strong case that the person who keeps the books has a direct bearing on the classroom. Every day. ... Let's start at the superintendent.... Superintendents oversee the whole operation. They make sure the buildings are safe, they make sure there are policies in place that protect students. They make sure that every facet runs smoothly.... If you can't equate some of that to helping the classroom, your reasoning is faulty.” We have superintendents who get up at 4 a.m. and start checking roads in the winter, who get stuck, who get on the phone and say, “I'm stuck. I'm on Shock Road. Get someone out here and, by the way, get someone to call the radio stations this morning, we're not having school today.”

William Mayes, MASA Executive Director, in MIRS, 9/20/05, responding to questions about a measure that would dictate that 65 cents on the dollar goes to classrooms.

ON THE MARK

By Mark Bielang
MASA President



I want to start out
by thanking our
Executive Director,

Bill Mayes, and the MASA staff for their work in making our fall conference a great success. As we all know from experiences in our own districts, planning for an event that brings together over 600 people requires a lot of planning, time and energy. We are blessed to have a conscientious and dedicated staff that stands ready to assist us on a daily basis and at times when we come together for personal and professional growth.

I also know that for Bill this was a special time with the fall conference being his first in his new position. Trust me when I tell you that Bill takes his new role seriously. He spent a great deal of time working with staff to make sure that all details were attended to, that his remarks were timely and thoughtful, and that participants would have a meaningful experience. I appreciate the fact that Bill is making a few changes at MASA while at the same time maintaining the programs and practices that have served us well.

Congratulations all on a job well done!

When I got home from the conference Friday evening I, as probably many of you did also, attended our varsity football game. My routine for home games is to arrive prior to the start of the game, touch base with high school administrators, and then slowly work my way toward the press box. We have a videotaping area on the roof of the press box...that's where I like to watch what's going on...at least on days when it's not raining too hard. I love the view from up there, not only of the playing field but also of the surrounding area. Things look different from that vantage point than they do when you're down on the ground along the fence. It was that observation that

took me back to what Meg Wheatley and Kent Roberts had been talking about during the past few days.

As district leaders we're expected to see things from a broader vantage point. We're expected to observe our districts as a whole rather than as merely the smaller segments that make up the system. We need to see how all the individual parts contribute to and interact with all the other parts. That's part of the reason why football coaches on the field get help from coaches up in the press box. They can see things from up there that can't be seen from the field...patterns, tendencies, opportunities, shortcomings, and other observations that allow them to make adjustments on the field in order to contribute to their team's success.

But just like coaches, we need to have a presence "down on the field." That's the place where relationships get built. That's what I heard Wheatley and Roberts talking about. In order for us to be effective we have to make the time to talk to others so that we can develop the relationships that are so important to our survival. So perhaps our challenge is an issue of balance. Of balancing the time we spend on the roof of the press box versus the time we need to spend on the ground. Spending the right amount of time engaged in the activities that help us gain perspective balanced with the need to develop relationships with our colleagues, our community, our staff, and our students will no doubt serve us well.

In Wheatley's own words: Relationships change us, reveal us, evoke more from us. We do not live in a world that encourages separateness. Only when we join with others do our gifts become visible, even to ourselves.

Striving to be on the mark...

Welcome to the new MASA *Leader!*

Welcome to the first issue of the new MASA *Leader!* We hope you enjoy the new look and the new format. Inside each issue, you'll find some features you've come to expect from MASA:

Messages from our Executive Director and President.

Updates from the Michigan Legislature and Department of Education.

Announcements from MASA about awards, committees, and events.

Information that school superintendents and first-line assistants can use in their day-to-day lives as leaders.

Calendar of MIEM and other professional learning opportunities.

You'll also find some new features we hope you'll use and enjoy:

News clips about members and their districts.

Winner's Circle—an ongoing column highlighting promising practices our members share.

Feature articles about hot topics in education today, such as Early Childhood, High School Reform, Technology, Teacher Quality, and more.

Links to research and resources that make you more effective and efficient in your work.

Photos of students engaged in learning, to remind us all about why we're here.

Send comments, student photos, articles, or Winner's Circle submissions to Linda Wacyk at lwacyk@gomasa.org or call 517-327-9268.



Legislation that keeps sexual predators from schools now law

Sex offenders can no longer work, live or loiter within 1,000 feet of a school, and background checks will be done on employees in schools and day care centers under an 18-bill package signed into law by Gov. Jennifer Granholm. (Public Acts 124, 125, 129, 129-131 and 136 of 2005 are education related acts)

The legislation was in response to a Detroit News special report in April that found that at least 35 Michigan school employees or those recently employed had been charged or convicted of sexual misconduct in a 15-month span. Then in May, The News reported that hundreds of convicted sex offenders live close to schools.

This legislation, aimed at keeping felons and dangerous individuals out of Michigan classrooms and day-care centers, accomplishes the following:

- Requires background checks on *all* paid school and day-care center employees
- Creates Student Safety Zones by allowing the courts to prohibit convicted sex offenders from living, working or loitering within 1,000 feet of a school
- Escrows a teacher's salary from the point of guilt until a decision is made about their employment of teaching certificate status
- Allows evidence of prior child molestation and sexual assault to be admissible in court regardless of whether

actual charges have been brought

- Revokes teaching certification for convicted sex offenders
- Requires all school employees to self-report any criminal charge to their school district and to the Department of Education.

This legislation would affect all current and prospective employees. The background check provisions would take effect no later than July 1, 2008.

Telecommunications legislation getting movement

The Michigan Telecommunications Act sunsets and subsequently is revised every five years. House Bill 5237 and Senate Bill 754 are the vehicle bills for these revisions. While much of this legislation does not directly affect the education community, there are a few subsections we should be concerned about. Specifically subsection 307, which ensures that educational institutions can build and operate their own fiber optic networks. In addition, the costs of building these networks can be partially mitigated by selling excess capacity. The loss of these rights would dramatically affect schools' abilities to operate networks in an increasingly dynamic and challenging telecommunications environment. Any rewrite, modification, or renewal of the Michigan Telecommunications Act should not repeal, extinguish, curtail, or prohibit education, retrospectively or prospectively, from engaging in sound local decision-making with respect to telecommunication infrastructure or service delivery, construction, ownership, or use.

Start school after Labor Day legislation signed into law

Legislation (PA 144 of 2005) that would require all Michigan schools begin after Labor Day was recently signed into law. The new law applies to public schools, public school academies and intermediate school districts. School districts that have bargaining agreements in effect that would conflict with the new requirement would not be subject to the later date until after the agreement expires. Local school districts will remain responsible for determining their local school calendar, including vacation days and length of the school day.

The loss of these rights would dramatically affect schools' abilities to operate networks in an increasingly dynamic and challenging telecommunications environment.

While the Senate version of the bill (SB 754) does not amend section 307, the House version (HB 5237) does.

Please contact your State House Representatives TODAY and urge them to maintain section 307.

K-16

Petitions, Petitions, Petitions!

If you have not turned yours in yet please do so now! Since printing, delivery and distribution challenges slowed the initiative for a time, the K-16 Coalition has extended their self-imposed deadline and is urging everyone to ramp up over the next 30 days to get all petitions in. You can return them to the MASA office or directly to Citizens for Education, P. O. Box 2573, East Lansing, MI 48826-2573. In order to show the Michigan Legislature that you are serious about education funding in the state of Michigan you need to take the first step: Fill out your petition and get others to as well! If you need additional petitions please contact the MASA office.

The K-16 Coalition has prepared new talking points and fast facts to help you discuss this issue with people in your district and in your community. Check them out, and watch for ongoing updates at www.michigank16.org.

Return petitions to:

Citizens for Education, P. O. Box 2573, East Lansing, MI 48826-2573

Presentation proposals now being accepted for Midwinter Conference

MASA is looking for clinic speakers to present material for Midwinter Conference. Proposal forms are available online at www.gomasa.org. Deadline is November 1, 2005.



Thinking of retirement in the next few years?

If you are considering retirement, don't miss this event.

Robert Thelen, President of Career and Workforce Development service and Certified Retirement Coach, will lead the pre-conference workshop titled, *Opening Doors to Your Future: A life and career-transition program*. Participants will get a historical perspective of work and retirement, do personal interactive work on how their own values fit into future life roles, defining one's own personal elements for success, discover how the Internet can be a tool for career and life transition, overview MPSERS and Social Security information, interact with a panel of retired superintendents, and begin to develop a plan that will be a guide toward upcoming goals and dreams.

Save the date, January 17, 2006, and join MASA in Detroit at the Renaissance Center, Marriott Hotel for this event.

Businesses!

Advertise in the MASA 2005-06 Member Directory

MASA is currently compiling information for our updated (2005-06) MASA membership directory. Now is your opportunity to advertise. Business Affiliates and Sponsors will automatically be listed in the business section of the directory. For an additional charge, you may place an ad informing MASA members of the valuable services your organization provides.



To reserve your space, please contact James Scofield at (517) 327-9259, Fax (517) 327-0771, or jscofield@gomasa.org. Deadline for materials is October 21, 2005.



Fall Conference

“The three Rs of education are rigor, relevance, and relationship. Relationship is arguably the most important of the three, but the least discussed, debated or developed.”

-Kent Roberts

...continued from cover story

New superintendents gather to learn and network

Planning Committee had a very productive meeting immediately following our Friday roundtable discussions and is working on details for our upcoming Mid-Winter Conference in Detroit. Mark your calendars for January 18-20, 2006 to meet us at the Detroit Renaissance Center, Marriott. A request for proposals is available at our website for clinic sessions and the committee is exploring potential motivational keynote speakers. It should be a SUPER Conference. Our theme will continue with a focus on the use of data as we continue our instructional thread. Also, the first cohort group of Courageous Journey will be launched at this conference.

In an effort to provide the great information shared at our Fall Conference, watch for instructions on how you can access presentations and/or resources shared through an archive at www.gomasa.org so those presentations you couldn't get to are available for you to explore electronically.

Once again, on behalf of our Executive Director, Executive Council and staff I want to share our sincere appreciation for making fall conference a great learning opportunity for us all!

Dan Pappas,
MASA Associate Executive Director

Members of one of the largest classes of new superintendents gathered for two days at the 2005 New Superintendents' Conference. This "pre-conference" to the Fall Conference focused on "nuts-and-bolts" issues that superintendents who are new to the profession will face in their first few years on job. Attendees heard presentations from speakers such as **Rod Green**, Superintendent of *East China* who spoke about negotiations; **Marsha Wells**, Superintendent of Grand Ledge Public Schools, who spoke about board relations and evaluations; **Dr. Meg Ropp**, director of CEPI, who described a "culture of quality data"; and **Don Bonato**, from *Thrun Law Firm* who spoke about working with your school attorneys.



New Superintendents who attended the event received the extensive *2005-06 Superintendent's Briefing Book*, a joint publication of AASA, MASA, and the Educational Research Service. The Briefing Book provides superintendents

and their staff with comprehensive, yet concise, overviews of the best thinking available on a wide range of top-priority K-12 education concerns. More importantly, it helps superintendents to make research-based, data-driven decisions with confidence, and identify programs and practices that will improve student achievement.

We still have a limited supply of Briefing Books available to members who did not attend the New Superintendent's Conference. Normally retailing for \$96.00, any MASA member can purchase the 2005-2006 Superintendent's Briefing Book for \$75.00 by contacting Linda Wacyk at 517-327-9268 or at

lwacyk@gomasa.org.

MASA also announced the launch of its new **Mentor Toolkit** which offers resources, links, and events that mentors can access when addressing questions or challenges new superintendents might face during their first months on the job. The kit includes tips for mentors,



New Superintendents' listserv

MASA recently sent a message to all new superintendents announcing the MASA Class of 2005 listserv. If you did *not* receive the message, contact James Scofield at jscofield@gomasa.org so we can add you

to the list. The listserv is a great way to ask questions, network with your peers, and contribute to an ongoing dialogue on effective leadership during your first year in this important job.



transition tools for new superintendents, and resources in all seven steps along the Courageous Journey, MASA's new voluntary certification program.

Here's a taste of what you'll find in the Mentor Toolkit:

- What do Mentors Do?
- Power Mentoring: How Successful Mentors and Protégés Get the Most Out of Their Relationships
- New Superintendent's Transition Toolbox
- A How-to Guide for School Leaders
- A Superintendent's Year: a month-by-month planning calendar
- Ways to Build and Grow Relationships With Your Community: A New Superintendent's Checklist
- And much, much more.

Anyone is welcome to use the Toolkit—even if you are not a new superintendent or a mentor. Check it out at www.gomasa.org. Click on Resources and look for the link to the Mentor Toolkit. We expect the Toolkit to be a dynamic document, growing and changing as we discover new needs and new tools. We invite your feedback. Tell us about the resources you couldn't live without as a superintendent so we can share them with others.

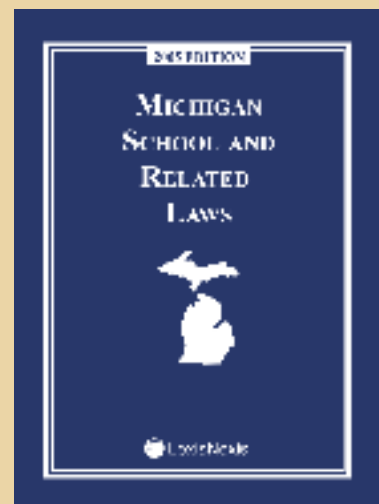
Interested in MASA's Mentor Program?

Regions have been busy pairing new superintendents to experienced mentors in their areas. If you are a new superintendent who would like a mentor, or an experienced veteran willing to invest in the life of one of your newest colleagues, contact Linda Wacyk at 517-327-9268 or lwacyk@gomasa.org.



School law book available at discount

New Superintendents who attended this year's New Superintendents' Pre-Conference received the **Michigan School and Related Laws 2005 edition, with CD-ROM**. This comprehensive compilation of education statutes



and regulations designed for education professionals and attorneys. The publication collects relevant Michigan statutes and regulations into one portable volume designed for quick reference. The included CD-Rom provides a fully annotated, searchable, printable, and downloadable version of the book, complete with case annotations, cross references and links. The CD-ROM also includes pertinent Federal statutes and regulations such as IDEA, FERPA and the No Child Left Behind Act.

Other MASA members can order the book from LexisNexis at a 20% discount. Visit www.gomasa.org/MembershipBenefit.htm to order (use discount code = "MASASL").



MASA members ready for the *Courageous Journey*TM

MASA rolled out its new Courageous Journey (CJ), a voluntary enhanced superintendent credential program, at the Fall Conference in Traverse City with overwhelming positive feedback.

The roll-out started with the New Superintendent's Conference where participants stressed their desire for good models and mentors, practical tools, and opportunities to share valuable lessons and workable solutions with other superintendents. Both Wednesday's and Thursday's keynote speakers (Kent Roberts and Margaret Wheatley) commented on the significance of the Courageous Journey program to support the increasingly complex and challenging job of leading our schools and school districts through the fundamental reforms and community engagement needed to achieve America's goals for public education.

Thursday's general session featured a brief introduction to the Courageous Journey concept. Interested members then had a chance to hear more details and experience a small sampling of CJ topics and issues at a packed break-out session. Participants pro-

vided input on what they would want most from the program and what they would find most meaningful and useful to them. The feedback was great and confirmed that superintendents are "looking to learn from each other" and "share the best strategies for tackling the big issues." The break-out session ended with over 35 people signing up for more information and the opportunity to participate in the first cohort to start the Courageous Journey at the MASA Winter Conference in January.



Conferees also stopped by the CJ exhibit to learn more and express their interest in future opportunities to hear

participants stressed their desire for good models and mentors, practical tools, and opportunities to share valuable lessons and workable solutions with other superintendents

more about the program. Finally, the Conference concluded on Friday with a "world café" conversation around the Courageous Journey's Seven Points of Learning for superintendents.

The conversation was rich, lively, and thoughtful. MASA staff is currently compiling the conversation notes and feedback, which will be posted to the MASA conference resources section at www.gomasa.org. Later this month, the CJ development team will meet and review all of the feedback, comments, and ideas generated at the Conference looking for ways to build the CJ program into a successful experience.

Pat Reeves will continue to head-up the CJ project assisted by Carolyn Madden and a diverse team of developers and contributors. Members are encouraged to continue submitting ideas for resources under each of the Points of Learning. Continue to watch for updates and information on the MASA website. If you indicated interest at the Conference, we will contact you soon. Watch for an informational brochure with more program details. In the meantime, email Pat Reeves, preeves@gomasa.org with questions, comments, or your interest.

Thank you, MASA

Sponsors!



Did you know...?

Of members who attended the conference and returned evaluations:

- 98%** Attended to strengthen their professional work.
- 94%** Will be able to use the information and/or skills they acquired through the conference to improve their effectiveness on the job.
- 90%** Said the conference met their expectations.



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Examining Effective Mathematics Instruction

The cornerstone of effective mathematics instruction is, not surprisingly, teachers' knowledge of math. If you are going to teach multiplication, for example, you need to know how to multiply correctly. But is that all you need to know? The Fall 2005 issue of *American Educator* tackles these issues with articles by mathematicians and researchers that explore what it means to teach mathematics effectively. Read it online at www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/fall2005/index.htm or call 202-879-4400 to request a copy.

Practical Guide to Promoting America's Public Schools

Research and poll data suggest that Americans share deeply held values about, and a common vision for, their public schools. Reflecting a strong belief in America as "the land of opportunity" for those who work hard, Americans see public schools as almost a "right," an engine of opportunity for individuals. Public schools ensure that every child has equal access to a good education and thereby give every child a chance to succeed. Americans also believe that public schools provide concrete benefits for our nation, as good public schools help develop productive citizens who contribute to a strong economy. They say that strong public schools are an essential component of healthy communities. And, because all kinds of students attend public schools, young people can learn to respect others and "get along in the real world." Yet Americans also want

reassurance about their public schools. They want to ensure that schools champion certain important shared values. They want schools to set clear expectations for parents and for responsible student behavior. They want to see greater financial accountability and transparency. And they want to know that employers find students well prepared for work. Substantially updated and expanded since it was first released last year, this new communications tool from the Learning First Alliance is designed to help educators, policymakers, and others promote the value of public schools to parents, the public, and their constituencies. The Guide is based on an extensive analysis of new data on voters' values, their view of public schools' mission, and their vision of a good public school. www.learningfirst.org/lfa-web/rp?pa=doc&docId=72

Promising Partnership Practices 2005

Looking for ways to involve families and the community in children's education? The eighth annual collection of Promising Partnership Practices, published by the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University, features 86 practices of school, family, and community partnerships that support students from preschool through high school to achieve academic success and lifelong well-being. Schools, districts, state departments of education, and organization partners in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) all contributed to this year's exemplary collection. Their inspiring stories hail from 21 states, as well as Canada. The 86 practices can best be described as

purposeful, energizing, resourceful, inclusive of all families, and embracing of all children. There is something for everyone to learn from these stories. The collection is organized according to the NNPS goal-oriented partnership program structure, which links family and community involvement activities to academic and non-academic goals for students as well as to the school goal of fostering a positive climate of partnerships. Read it online at www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/PPP/2005/index.htm or call 410-516-8800 to order print copies.

Source: *Parent Education Network News*

Calhoun ISD invites districts to aid schools hurt by hurricanes

Chris Wigent, Superintendent of Calhoun Intermediate School District, spoke recently to a representative from the Mississippi Association of School Administrators regarding a plan to "adopt a school" affected by the aftermath of the recent hurricanes. The idea was very well received and the Mississippi educators were very excited at the possibility of this happening. They also indicated that some of the areas not in the news have tremendous needs in the very rural and poor areas of Mississippi. Chris is asking that MASA members notify him if your **district is interested in entering into this project. Contact Chris at wigentc@calhounisd.org or 269-789-2461.**

Winners' Circle Award highlights promising practices

Nominations now being accepted for 2006

Have you built a “better mousetrap” when it comes to leading your district to success? Could others learn from what you’ve done and get similar results in their districts? Why not share the idea with MASA members by submitting a nomination to the Winners’ Circle?

Each year the MASA Membership Services Committee presents Winners’ Circle awards to members who have initiated a unique, successful program or implemented an innovative idea which has had a significant, positive impact on their school districts that can be used through other districts across the state. Nominations are received from throughout the state and the award recipients are determined by the Membership Services Committee. Winners are then recognized during an event at MASA’s mid-winter conference.

This year, MASA will accept **rolling nominations throughout the year**. The Membership Services Committee will feature selected programs in the *MASA Leader* on an ongoing basis. We will continue to honor each year’s recipients at mid-winter conference. Nominations will be accepted at any time, but in order to be recognized at the 2006 conference, the Member Services Committee needs to hear from you by December 23. Rules and forms can be found at www.gomasa.org. Click on “Resources,” the “Awards, Scholarships and Recognition.” Questions can be directed to Linda Wacyk at 517-327-9268 or lwacyk@gomasa.org.



2004 winners include:

Daniel Heckman, Plainwell Community Schools, for their innovative IMPRESSIONS program that boosts student achievement, employee morale, and community satisfaction. This program includes tools to help employees access their behaviors and develop action plans for improvement and reinforcement.

Donald Spencer, Monroe County ISD for their Early Intervention Reading Project, designed to significantly reduce the number of older children identified as having specific learning disabilities. This project intervenes early in the child’s life before he or she develops a reading disability that becomes significantly more resistant to positive intervention later on.

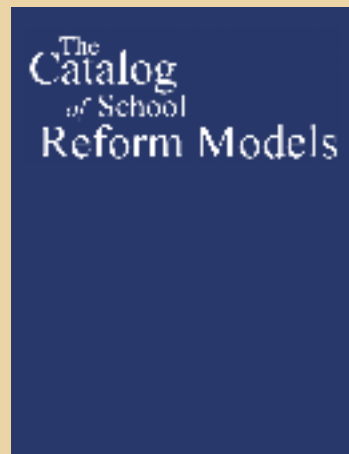
For a complete list of past winners, visit the Winner’s Circle web page at www.gomasa.org.

Are you getting MASA email?

Several times a month, MASA emails to members news, updates, action alerts or messages from our director. If you are *not* receiving these emails from MASA, please contact James Scofield at jscofield@gomasa.org so we can update our files.

Speaking of promising practices...

The *Catalog of School Reform Models* produced jointly by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement can help educators find an external model that meets the needs of



their school. It provides descriptions of whole-school models and is updated regularly as models are added or removed, based on the Center’s formal review process. Each entry analyzes the model’s general approach, results with students, implementation assistance, and costs, among other elements. A table accompanying each entry summarizes this information in a concise format. Demographic data and contact information for at least four sample sites are also included. Criteria for selecting models included evidence of effectiveness in improving student academic achievement, extent of replication, implementation assistance provided to schools, and comprehensiveness.

Read it at www.nwrel.org/scpd/catalog/index.shtml or order a copy by calling 877-277-2744.

High School Reform Work Session

The Michigan State Board of Education held a third work session devoted to high school reform and improving outcomes for high school students on October 5, 2005. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) staff are working to meet a deadline of November 15, 2005 to make high school reform recommendations to the Board, and this work session provided a number of insights into the issues and challenges in this effort. Discussion items included:

- Research on what high school graduates need to know and be able to do.
- Fostering innovation in reform efforts and assessing the current flexibility of Michigan laws and regulations to encourage innovation.
- Review of a recent survey of Michigan high school graduation requirements.
- Major themes on high school reform from state-wide student focus groups.



The Board also heard from a panel discussing what students are expected to know and be able to do following high school graduation. Panelists included representatives from the Ford Foundation, Michigan State University, Henry Ford Community College, the Education Alliance and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators.

MDE surveys districts regarding graduation requirements

During September, MDE surveyed Michigan high schools to learn what kinds of classes they require from students before they graduate. Out of 647 possible respondents (569 districts and 78 public school academies that have high schools through grade 12), responses were received from 293 (45%) by the close of the survey. The results of the survey were shared with the Board at its October 5 special meeting. The survey found:

- There does not seem to be consensus around a specific curriculum that is expected of all students.
- Beyond the core subjects (English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies), there is no consistent pattern of expectations for arts, languages,

technology, physical education, health and career preparation.

- Districts have implemented different ways of constructing instruction, such as block scheduling, dual enrollment and AP, but there is no common structure. We must allow for flexibility to encourage innovation.
- If any decision to change requirements is made that emphasizes science lab courses, schools will face a challenge in securing both highly qualified teachers and high quality lab facilities to handle the increased student demand.
- Technology requirements do not seem adequate to meet the needs of our changing environment. Those needs can be met in a variety of ways other than specific course requirements.
- A lack of required assessments and required minimum GPA seems to indicate a reduced expectation for graduates.

Read the full report at www.gomasa.org.

Members in the News

Misner receives WMU's Golden Apple Award

Dr. W. Craig Misner, superintendent of Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency received the 2005 Golden Apple Award from the Western Michigan University College of Education Alumni Society for his achievements in the classroom. He was honored at the 2005 Golden Apple Awards Dinner on Friday at the Fetzer Center in Kalamazoo. Misner, one of three Golden Apple recipients, was personally selected by his peers as representing educational excellence and commitment, according to the WMU Alumni Society. Misner was acknowledged for his groundbreaking work and action to improve education. The institute today is recognized nationally for its accomplishments.

"I'm certainly very honored and humbled," Misner said. "I'm just very honored to be recognized by one's peers. I've been around for a very long time and had the honor of working with very nice educators. It's been a great career," he said.

Misner went on to point out that because of the leadership these colleagues have provided, he has been able to leave the organizations he has led better off.

"There are two kinds of organizations," Misner said. "Ones that are moving ahead or moving behind — so hopefully in each circumstance we have made some progress," he said.



Districts receive an extension in MEAP window

The MDE has extended the window for the fall 2006 assessment of elementary and middle school students by two weeks, to end on Friday, November 4. Assessment materials must be returned by Friday, November 11 to Pearson Educational Measurement. This extension applies to all schools, whether or not affected by any delay of assessment materials.

Schools not affected by any delay are urged to stay on their planned assessment schedules and deliver their completed assessment materials to Pearson as quickly as possible so that Pearson can begin processing them. In order to accommodate the shipping of high school materials, a third week is being added to the high school testing window. The testing window will begin on October 24, as previously announced, and will now end on Friday, November 11. Assessment materials must be returned by Friday, November 18 to Pearson.

Districts and PSAs must certify eighth graders' technology literacy by June 2006

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) will need to report the percentage of eighth grade students meeting the state's definition of technology literacy at the end of the 2005-06 school year. This effort is in support of the U.S. Department of Education's Enhancing Education Through Technology program, whose goal is "to assist every student—regardless of race, ethnicity, income, geographical location, or disability—in becoming technologically literate by the end of eight grade."

State Superintendent Mike Flangan sent LEA and Intermediate superintendents a memo dated September 12 that outlines the ways in which students technology literacy may be evidenced, including:

- Teacher observation
- Portfolio (hard copy or electronic)
- Formal assessment
- Completion of coursework

Districts can download a sample checklist at <http://techplan.org>. Questions can be directed to Ron Faulds or Wanda Shunk at 517-373-0620.

Lessons from Conference

Keynote speaker Margaret (Meg) Wheatley of the Berkana Institute discussed the need for "life-affirming leadership" that frees people to find solutions in the context of powerful relationships. She outlined some current cultural myths about leadership and some unfortunate results.



Myths:

- Leaders know what to do about everything
- High risk requires high control
- Success can be found by restructuring the organizational chart and firing people who don't follow your lead
- People will do what they are told
- Fear is a good motivator
- Faster is better
- Only numbers are real.

The results?

- 33 percent of work days lost are stress-related
- 65 percent of employees receive no recognition for their work
- 85 percent of employees have ideas but don't offer them
- 16 percent are actively disengaged
- 55 percent are disengaged
- 29 percent are engaged, but only for the first six months of employment
- This means very little creativity is happening in the workplace—or in classrooms!

Did you know....?

Under the school code (380.1175), schools are required to be closed on specified holidays. Since both Christmas and New Year's days fall on Sundays, the law requires the following Monday to be observed as the school holiday.



Community conversations replace tired town hall meetings

By Shelley Rose

Looking for public engagement ideas? There are many around but those presented at the annual National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) conference in Boston this summer by Ruth Wooden, President, Public Agenda Foundation, sure seemed fresh and new! She asserted that the town hall format is tired and no one wants to hear a panel of “experts” pontificate. Instead, she suggested smaller groups of 15-20 people, intentionally invited participants, isolated advocates, media inclusion, and no sponsorships by the district. It’s important to get credible partners to say what we can’t say about ourselves.

Wooden asserted that the news in public engagement is education insight, which schools can use to address the undercurrent of miscommunication and resentment with honest communication with the public—creating a “no spin” zone.

Wooden’s model will be tested at three Your Child Community Forums in November and December. These forums, sponsored by the MEA and Detroit News, use Public Agenda’s organizers guide for public engagement, providing a step-by-step method that they have found particularly successful—community conversations.

This model is conceived as a public discussion or series of discussions around a particular education issue—in this case, the results of the recent series of Your Child surveys by EPIC-MRA. At the first conversation, citizens begin to discuss the issue in small groups, with a trained moderator, recorder and print and/or video materials to help them think through the issue. The forum wraps up by asking

participants to start thinking about possible next steps, which could include further discussions to develop an action plan around the issue, implementation of a specific action idea, creation of new committees, and more.

Public Agenda sets the following goals for community conversations:

- Promote a rich and productive dialogue among a broad cross-section of the community.
- Clarify areas of common ground about an important education issue.
- Help educators become more aware of the community's perceptions, misconceptions, questions, concerns, ideas, and suggestions.

Communications Corner is provided by the Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA). Each month, MSPRA members offer advice to help communicate more effectively with employees, communities, and local media. Administrators are welcome to join MSPRA, an award-winning professional association providing networking, resources and professional development to promote high-quality communications leading to better support and understanding of public schools. For more information, visit www.mspra.org.

- Help establish lines of communication so that new ideas can be better addressed as they arise.
- Begin to develop possible steps to build on the discussions and improve education.

To learn more about Public Agenda's Community Conversations, contact Public Agenda at www.publicagenda.org. You might also want to drop in on one of the Your Child Community Forums at Kent ISD on November 2, Oakland Schools on November 10 or Jackson Community College on December 5.

Shelley Rose is the Director of Communications & Marketing for Oakland Schools, and she is past-president of the Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA).

Members in the News

Petoskey project wins Civic Star Award

John Scholten, superintendent of Petoskey Public Schools, recently received news that his district has been selected as Michigan’s winner for the National Civic Star Award. The award is for Petoskey’s COATS: Community Offering Alternatives program, which judge’s felt exemplified the award criteria to successfully promote and encourage academic achievement. Co-sponsored by the AASA and Sodexo School Services, the Civic Star award, recognizes school and community partnerships that promote academic achievement. Judges look for partnerships that provide for the sharing of valuable resources and the involvement of students and community members.

As a state winner, the COATS program is now being considered for the National Civic Star Award, which will be announced during AASA’s National Conference on Education in San Diego in February, 2006.



New survey reveals what the public really thinks about school board member training

By Jennifer Rogers

With the added responsibilities constantly placed on school board members, and the 500 plus new board members elected each year, it is not surprising to find that 66 percent of respondents from a recent survey believe school board member training should be mandatory, not voluntary, as in Michigan.

A recent survey of 600 Michigan voters tested the public's perception of school board training and professional development. The Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) commissioned the survey, which was conducted by Survey Research Associates this past August.

The survey asked respondent's their opinion on various topics including the most important responsibility of a local school board, whether or not they believe training should be mandatory for school board members, and if they would be more likely to vote for a school board candidate who had received training, among others.

Other key findings include:

- 91 percent support board members going to classes within one hour of their local district location.

- 72 percent support board members attending classes held within Michigan.
- 52 percent oppose board members attending classes/training at a national conference.
- 55 percent support board member training via online/Internet.
- 66 percent oppose classes/training at a large hotel/resort in Michigan.
- 80 percent oppose classes/training at a large hotel/resort within the U.S.
- 74 percent support the local district paying for training/professional development for their board members.
- 76 percent of respondents are more confident in the decision-making ability of the board if they receive training/professional development.

school board member training should be mandatory, not voluntary

- 62 percent of respondents are more likely to vote for a candidate in a school board race if they received training/professional development.

Of the 4,067 school board members in Michigan in 2004-05, 1,268 or 31 percent, received MASB training, including boardmanship classes, conferences and workshops. Furthermore, each year there are approximately 500 new board members in school districts throughout the state who have not received any training.

Research shows a connection between student achievement and board governance, making the issue of board training especially relevant. "It's crucial that boards of education make the connection that their governing performance impacts the performance of students," said Kathy Hayes, co-director of leadership development at MASB.

"Without effective training it is difficult for boards to focus on student achievement issues, let alone adopting a balanced budget, hiring a superintendent, approving policies and keeping up with the ever changing legislation and school law," added Hayes.

Interestingly enough, survey respondents (49%) feel that improving student achievement is the most important responsibility of a local school board. Additionally, 25 percent believe it is the most important responsibility for the superintendent.

According to the survey results, 80 percent of respondents believe that once school board members are elected they should receive training and professional development so they can fulfill their responsibilities under the law as decision makers for public education.

With the current financial restraints placed on districts, it's easy to understand why boards are sometimes not supportive of professional development. In light of this data regarding the public's expectation of boards to raise student achievement, funding board training should be seriously considered.

Jennifer Rogers is the associate executive director of communications and public relations at the Michigan Association of School Boards. Contact her at 517-327-5908, jrogers@masb.org.

Navigating the New IDEA: What You Need To Know

October 20, 2005

Lansing Community College - West, Lansing

IDEA 2004 became effective July 1, 2005. Are you ready?

Join us for a timely presentation on the key statutory changes, proposed implementing regulations and relevant information needed to ensure compliance. Participants will receive practical information, tips, and tools to assist their schools with such tough issues as private school consultation, IEP amendments, manifestation determinations, excusals from IEP meetings, hearings and much more.

This meeting will be video conferenced. Sites include: AMA ESD, Coor ISD, Copper Country, Kent ISD, Macomb ISD, Marquette-Alger RESA, Oakland Schools, Sanilac, St. Clair ISD, Tuscola ISD, Van Buren ISD and LCC West.

Marketing Your School

October 26, 2005

Online Course

(This is a 4-week course)

In this course participants will learn the importance of being an ambassador for your school district on or off the job; the importance of keeping the community up-to-date with the school district's goals and challenges; techniques and factors that are considered by public relations specialists when marketing a school district to its community; the various forms of communication that can be used to deliver information to the school community; and the appropriate and practical ways to use the different avenues of communication. www.gomiem.org

Advanced Word

November 2, 2005

Bay-Arenac ISD, Bay City

This course is designed to extend the concepts covered in PTD's Intermediate Microsoft Word 2002 (XP) course, and presents new concepts in the areas of mail merge, table of contents and indexes and customization of the Word 2002 (XP) environment. www.gomiem.org

The Resilient Educator

November 4, 2005

MELG building, Lansing

Dan Wertz, Superintendent Emeritus of Okemos Public Schools and Dr. James Scott, Professor at Jackson Community College will lead us through an active and practical series of activities and discussions that will help both professionally and personally. We have gotten very positive feedback about the work done by this team.

Support Staff Conference for Administrative Professionals

November 10, 2005

Amway Grand, Grand Rapids

This conference is for building-level secretaries (elementary, middle school, and high school), superintendents' executive secretaries, business office support staff and administrative assistants. There are 40 sessions to choose from. Five sessions targeted to SAPC Required Certification and three sessions are targeted for MSBO Certification. Most offer SAPC elective credit. www.gomiem.org

Complaint Intake and Investigation program

The MASB/SEG Property/Casualty Pool is offering a program on Complaint Intake and Investigation: Sexual Harassment/Sexual Misconduct Allegations. The program allows MASA members to be prepared to handle sexual misconduct/sexual harassment complaints, and to learn how to conduct effective administrative investigations into such allegations.

The full-day, interactive session will focus on how to manage the complaint intake process, investigation techniques, identifying potential witnesses and interviewing the complainant, alleged perpetrator and witnesses. Forms and checklists will be provided in a comprehensive workbook. Dates and locations are as follows:

Nov. 7	Gaylord	University Center
Nov. 8	Marquette	Marquette-Alger RESA
Dec. 5	Big Rapids	Mecosta-Osceola ISD
Dec. 6	Charlotte	Eaton ISD
Dec. 7	Flint	Genesee ISD

For details and registration forms, visit www.setseg.org.



Michigan Institute for
Educational Management
www.gomiem.org

MIEM



Aspiring Superintendents Conference

**November 17 & January 26
Lansing Community College, West**

This series is cosponsored by our state's leadership associations. The need for front line leaders is critical. If one is taking a look and/or aspiring to this type of leadership, I promise you will get great words of wisdom from a variety of proven leaders. This event will take place November 17, 2005 and January 26, 2006 at the Lansing Community College West Campus in Lansing.

We aim to serve you with quality experiences that help you to serve your students, district, and community. Let us know what you need and how we are doing. Register at www.gomiem.org.

School Facilities Workshop

**November 11, 2005
Deerfield Elementary School, Novi**

This power-packed workshop is designed for school districts looking at 'how to plan a future bond project'. From pre-bond work to a close out survey, this workshop offers a wide variety of topics, as well as a tour of the "award winning" Deerfield Elementary building in Novi and the opportunity to tour the Fanning Howey architectural offices. During the Fanning Howey tour, you can participate in personalized seminars with the architects, engineers and company leaders, allowing you time to ask specific questions, relative to your district. Register at www.gomiem.org.

15th Annual Technology Conference & Exposition

Kellogg Center – MSU, East Lansing

This conference brings together approximately 200 technology directors, technology coordinators and others interested in school technology issues from across the state. Visit www.gomiem.org to register.

LEADER RESOURCES

The **IDEA Partnership** is pleased to announce the launch of a new website at www.ideapartnership.org. The website reflects the collaborative work of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), more than 55 national organizations, technical assistance providers, and State and local organizations. The website features also include the latest news about IDEA and NCLB, resources, information collections and services.

MASAtalk allows virtual conversations

Looking for new ideas in communicating about negotiations?

Wonder how other districts deliver some special education services?

Curious about who serves on panels to interview teachers?

These are just a few of the areas in which MASA members have asked for advice during recent weeks. Now, MASA offers an easier way to get answers. We will be launching MASAtalk, an opt-in interactive listserv to members who would like to share ideas and resources in a virtual setting. Members will be able to post a question via e-mail, and it will go to all members who have opted to participate in the listserv. Those who have answers or ideas to share can reply directly to the sender or to the entire listserv.

If you would like to be added to the MASAtalk listserv, send an e-mail to James Scofield at jscofield@gomasa.org. We will add your email address to the list and send information about how the listserv works, along with a few simple guidelines to follow. Then let the e-conversation begin!

By Jon Tomlanovich
Associate Executive Director
MASA/MAISA

MAISA discusses high school reform

On September 21, 2005, MAISA hosted a drive-in meeting on high school reform at Saginaw ISD under the leadership of MAISA President, **Rick Lane**. There were 57 participants, including folks by video hook-up from distant participants. The charge for the day was to discuss 10 topics surrounding high school reform and develop recommendations that could be used in a white paper to be shared with the State Board of Education, MDE, and state leaders.

The ten topics were: **Course Content and Standards; Professional Development; Best Practices; Assessment; Student Support and Intervention; Outreach and Dissemination; Social Architecture of the High School; Relationships; Rigor and Relevance; and Connecting to the "Real World."**

Jay Newman, chair of the MAISA Programs and Services Committee, facilitated the discussion. Subgroups shared their top recommendations with their priority order and then the entire group prioritized the recommendation from each subgroup. A resulting document shows both small and large group priorities.

In addition, participants volunteered to serve on an ad-hoc committee which will work with MAISA leadership to develop the white paper and continue to follow this important issue. (If you have an interest in being a part of that group, please contact Jon Tomlanovich at jont@gomasa.org)

Rick Lane and Jay Newman also participated in the October 5 State Board of

Education work session on high school reform and used some of the ideas in that discussion. Clearly, this topic will continue to be a part of MAISA's ongoing discussion and we will keep you informed about our involvement and any developing issues/concerns.

Data Warehousing in Michigan Schools

This past summer, the ISD/RESAs in Michigan completed a survey to determine the status of data warehousing in schools. The survey was conducted through the MAISA Technology Committee. Data warehousing is a tool to help districts become data-driven in order to meet state and federal requirements under NCLB and EdYes! It allows educators to collect various sets of data found in a variety of unrelated locations and formats into one regional database. The prime focus of data warehousing is to compile data that can lead to the design of data-driven student achievement and school improvement strategies.

Overall, the majority of responding ISD/RESAs are involved in various implementation stages of a data warehouse project. Nearly all of these projects are coordinated through an ISD/RESA and provide trend data and reports on local and state assessments for central curriculum administration, building administration and teachers to use for school improvement planning. A full copy of the survey results, including detailed graphs and numbers, is available on the MAISA website at www.gomaisa.org.

Attention Michigan School Administrators

The Freedom to Learn (FTL) program is proud to offer a complimentary workshop, open to all Michigan administrators. Administrators from around the state have the opportunity to attend *Balanced Leadership: School Leadership That Works™* at no cost! This exciting two-day workshop focuses on the six major research findings from McREL's meta- and factor-analyses on principal leadership. It also includes an introduction to the concept of shared leadership, balanced leadership, and the Balanced Leadership Framework™.

This 'research into practice' workshop will provide insight into specific leaders' activities that affect improved student achievement and effectively engage school reform initiatives.



There will be three opportunities to attend the *Balanced Leadership* workshop;

November 21 - 22, 2005 the MELG building in Lansing

November 29 - 30, 2005 at Wayne RESA in Wayne

January 12 - 13, 2006 at the Kent County ISD in Grand Rapids

For more information, or to register, contact Kate Kennedy by phone at 517.335.0449 or by email at KateKennedy@ferris.edu.

Battle Creek area teachers can take technology grad course in Pennfield

The Pennfield School District will team up with Michigan State University this fall to offer an educational technology graduate program for Battle Creek-area teachers. The nine-credit, three-course certificate program will be offered at Pennfield High School beginning Oct. 14 for any K-12 teacher interested. "It's a great opportunity for our teachers and other teachers in Battle Creek to get courses in instructional technology right here," said Pennfield Superintendent **Dale Kimball**. "That's not an easy thing to do." The MSU Educational Technology Certificate Program, which began in 1995, is designed to prepare educators to use and integrate technology into today's educational settings more efficiently and effectively. The classes focus on how to use technology as a tool for teaching lessons, working with programs like PowerPoint, WordArt, Excel and others. Teachers also learn how to use the Internet as a resource for

classroom learning. Teachers pay for classes as if they were taking graduate credits at MSU. Program proponents say Pennfield High School is a good fit, because it is very technology advanced, with advanced labs and mobile laptop carts that teachers can check out and use in the classrooms. After completing the certificate program, teachers can go on to get a master's degree in educational technology at MSU by taking classes in East Lansing or Traverse City.

Source: *Battle Creek Enquirer* 9-19-05

Support consortium a good move

A growing number of educational institutions are joining the SupportNet Tech Support Consortium. The computer and technology support consortium currently includes the public school districts in Hancock, Chas-sell Township, Adams Township, Lake Linden-Hubbell, Dollar Bay-Tamarack City, Ironwood, Bessemer, Wakefield

and Ewen-Trout Creek, as well as the Copper Country Intermediate School District, the Gogebic Ontonagon Intermediate School District and the Portage Lake District Library. In joining the consortium, Copper Country Intermediate School District Superintendent **Dennis Harbour** said it would resolve much of the staffing support issues suffered by area educational institutions, particularly in light of the state's budget troubles. Hancock Schools Superintendent **John Vaara** also said his district had worried about its lack of back-up tech support for "some time," as the only computer technology support person in the district had left, leaving no one to assist staff and faculty in times of technological crisis. The SupportNet consortium is attractive to small districts in particular, some of which have cut their already minimal computer and telecommunications support resources in severe and repeated belt-tightening. SupportNet will offer Vaara's district two on-site support techs as well as help-line staffed by Michigan Tech University students. With increasing transportation costs and health care costs, schools continue to feel the pinch of a stalled state economy that shows no signs of immediate resuscitation. Pooling their already stretched resources while utilizing the talents of local knowledgeable personnel seems like a step in the right direction.

Source: *Daily Mining Journal* 9-29-05

Members in the News

Jennette featured in *The School Administrator*

In the fall of 2004, **Jeff Jennette**, superintendent of Breckenridge School District, had a hunch that his Army National Guard unit might be activated. So Jennette, who is also a first lieutenant in the Guard, called on his predecessor, **Dennis Hagey**, for advice. By January, the two had worked out a plan to have Hagey take over in Jennette's absence. In April, Jennette headed for Iraq, leaving Hagey in charge.

"He just kind of handed me the keys," Hagey told reporter for *The School Administrator*, which describes the transition in a story about "Superintendent Soldiers" in its September 2005 issue. Read it online at www.aasa.org.



SET partners with BASIC for HSA, Flexible Spending Account administration, more

If your district would like to implement Health Savings Accounts (HSA), Health Reimbursement Accounts, Flexible Spending Accounts or improve its COBRA administration, SET can make it simple. We have partnered with Benefit Administrative Services International Corporation (BASIC) to provide you with all the resources needed to implement these plans. BASIC, based in Portage, MI, is one of the "50 Companies to Watch in Michigan," according to the Edward Lowe Foundation, due to its innovative technology and high-quality customer service.

Health Savings Accounts

SET can provide your district with a qualifying High Deductible Health Plan and work through BASIC to provide the HSA services. Districts enroll their employees in the HSA program through the BASIC web interface. Fifth Third Bank, with branches statewide, is the financial custodian of each individual's HSA. Fifth Third Bank provides a free debit card, which participants use to pay their eligible medical expenses. Online banking and toll-free support is available. Now setting up an HSA is fast, easy and worry-free.

Flexible Spending Plans

Section 125 Flexible Spending Plans allow employees to withhold pre-tax dollars to pay for eligible medical, dental and vision care, and dependent care. Through BASIC, SET is able to offer 24-hour claim processing, free direct deposit, a debit card option, toll-free fax claim submission, online claim submission, and no minimum amounts for reimbursement requests.

Account status can be checked 24 hours a day via telephone or online. Employers benefit by free, customized Plan Documents and the availability of Summary Plan Documents for participants. With employees being required to pay more out of pocket for benefits, a tax-sheltered Flexible Spending Plan is a great benefit. And it saves the employer FICA payments, too!

Health Reimbursement Arrangements

Creative health care plan designs often rely upon an HRA to help reduce premium costs. Employers contribute part of the premium savings to each employee's HRA. Balances in HRAs can roll forward annually or be returned to the employer at the end of the plan year. Having an HRA can make implementing higher deductibles and co-payments easier. Through BASIC, SET offers HRA administration that features 24-hour claim turnaround, free direct deposit, toll-free fax claim submission, and toll-free support for plan participants. Districts receive a free customized Plan Document, a Summary Plan Description, and Administration Manual and monthly reports.

COBRA

Layoffs, Terminations, Disability Leaves, Resignations. These events may trigger COBRA requirements. Relieve your staff of this cumbersome, time-consuming legal obligation. Improper COBRA administration can expose your district to significant liability in addition to federal fines. Let SET pull the fangs from COBRA by providing expert administration through its relationship with BASIC.



Contact your account executive today!

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