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## New approach to learning needed

In order for students today to succeed in the ever-changing work world they are going to need skills not typically taught in a public school system still following a traditional content model – skills like critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity.

Content is still important, said Ken Kay, head of EdLeader 21, during his keynote speech at MSMA's fall conference, but teaching students how to think, innovate and solve problems will better serve them in an era where they are likely to change jobs many times because technology and the marketplace are evolving so rapidly.



Critical thinking also allows students to be more self-directed, Kay said, and that is key in the business world where layers of administration have been flattened and employers are looking for employees to find solutions.

"If somebody needs to be managed, they're no longer employable at Apple," Kay said he was told by a company executive. He warned so-called "helicopter parents" to beware they may be making their children "unemployable" in the new work world.

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## Virtual charter school with ties to K-12 approved

The Maine Charter School Commission voted 6-to-1 to approve the state's second virtual charter school, which will provide content from the national K-12 corporation charter chain.

Charter Commission Chair Shelley Reed was the only member to vote against Maine Virtual Academy. She did so out of concern about the national reports on the poor academic performance of K-12 Inc. programs across the nation. The vote was held Nov. 13.

"I'm really concerned when I read about their academic results," Reed said. "It's really hard to escape the media reports on this: in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Colorado, Florida.

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## Tallent elected MSBA President

Marlene Tallent of Surry is the new president of the Maine School Boards Association and believes school board members play an important role in children's lives by working to get them the best education possible.



"Being on a school board and influencing the lives of children is a huge responsibility," Tallent said. "The decisions that we make as school board members should not be taken lightly, as those decisions will eventually affect what our students do in the future."

Tallent, who is chairman of the Surry School Committee, has served on her board since 2008 and was elected MSBA president in October. She said being a board member is not an easy job.

"Being on a school board requires commitment, dedication, time, energy, respect, ability to work well with others and critical thinking," she said. "It is essential that we should always remember 'keep children first'."

As president of the organization that represents school board interests statewide and takes positions on bills before the state Legislature, Tallent said there are a number of issues that need attention.

Chief among them is education funding, at the state and federal level, and in specific areas like pre-kindergarten and charter schools. Also of importance is what assessments will be used to test children in the Common Core standards.

Tallent said she sees MSBA as a strong advocate for public education and local school board control. It also offers professional development for board members, including training on how to be a more effective board. That training is key because of the work boards are charged with doing on behalf of students.

"Planning for their education, setting the vision and making sure the curriculum is adequate for the children in our communities is an important role," she said.

Tallent, who has a master's in psychology and worked in

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## Common Core resolution, two others approved by Delegate Assembly

Following a spirited debate on the Common Core, the MSBA Delegate Assembly passed a resolution in support of the standards along with two other resolutions dealing with student transfers and charter school funding.

All three needed and received a two-thirds vote from delegates, who had done their homework, talking to their fellow board members and articulating arguments for and against. The closest vote was on the Common Core resolution, which passed 62 to 21.

The three resolutions passed by the assembly are:

### 4.36 Support for Common Core

With progress underway to fully implement the Common Core standards in English Language Arts and math, the Maine School Boards Association supports moving forward with those standards and opposes efforts to slow down or block their implementation. Maine was already ahead of many states with its support of rigorous standards under the system of Learning Results. Implementing the Common Core is a logical progression in our commitment to better prepare students for higher education and work after high school.

### 4.37 Local Control of Student Transfers

The Maine School Boards Association believes the decision to grant or deny a student transfer request should be made locally by the two superintendents involved and not be subject to an override at the state level. We support legislation that says if two superintendents agree, a student transfer is approved. If they don't, it is denied, and the state should not become involved. This would build on legislation approved in 2013 that says a student can only be transferred to a district that tuitions its students to a town academy, if the two superintendents agree, with no appeal available at the state level.

### 4.38 Charter School Funding

The Maine School Boards Association supports changing the way charter schools are funded so no one district is penalized simply because of its proximity to a charter school. Instead of requiring the home district to forward funding for each student that enrolls in a charter school, legislation has been proposed that would have the state pay the entire per-pupil cost. The local share of that per-pupil cost would essentially be spread over all districts in the state. MSBA supports this cost-sharing, while continuing to advocate for increased state funding to help cover the cost of charter schools.

#### New approach to learning needed

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Describing the 20<sup>th</sup> Century school model with its focus on content mastery in English, Science, Math and Social Studies as obsolete, Kay said making the switch to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century model of critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity won't be easy, because the system is entrenched.

“School boards need to lead us,” to the critical thinking model he said, and that starts with an honest assessment of where individual districts are at today. It also mean overcoming the critics, many of whom say you can't measure critical thinking skills – a claim Kay said was not true.

“It's not a question of whether we can measure it,” he said, explaining there's a rubric for that. “It's a lack of political will.”

Kay recommended some reading for those interested in learning more about critical thinking skills. His reading list includes:

- “A Whole New Mind” and “Drive” by Daniel Pink
- “Creating Innovators” by Tony Wagner
- “The Wisdom of Crowds” by James Surowiecki
- “Preparing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Students for a Global Society” on the National Education Association's website

#### Virtual charter school

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There are troubles here.”

Other board members said they had faith in the local board to assure the new virtual school meets expectations.

Maine Virtual Academy will now move to the contract negotiation stage in anticipation of a 2015 opening.

When it opens for business next fall, it would be the second virtual school in Maine – both serving grades 7 through 12. Maine Connections Academy opened in September.

There are six charter schools currently operating in Maine. With the approval of the K-12 school, the commission has now approved 7 of the 10 schools it can authorize under law through 2021.

#### Tallent elected

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social and elder services, has volunteered countless hours in her public schools and her community on projects too numerous to list and has a passion for school libraries. She was named Surry Community Association Citizen of the year in 2009.

She is married and is the mother of four daughters, who all attended public schools and, in her words, got a “great education.”



# Business Friend of Education Awards

Two businesses were honored with Business Friend of Education Awards at this year’s MSMA Fall Conference – Bangor Savings Bank and the Gideon Hastings House restaurant in Bethel

Bangor Savings Bank President-Elect Bob Montgomery-Rice received the award on behalf of the bank for its philanthropy through the Bangor Savings Bank Foundation. This year, employees of the bank will give more than \$100,000 to community causes and the bank will give nearly \$1 million. They contribute to education through that fund and beneficiaries include the Bangor High School STEM program, Calais Elementary School, Educare of Central Maine, Good Will-Hinckley, Hall Elementary School, Lewiston Education Fund, Jobs for Maine Graduates, RSU 68 school library, MSAD 22 Education Fund, Penobscot School, RSU 20 after-school program, to name some. The bank was nominated by the Bangor School Committee.



Bob Montgomery-Rice

The second recipient was the Gideon Hastings House restaurant, which has an annual tradition of adding 22 cents to the bill of each patron to donate to area schools. This year, owners John and Amy Amann decided to help replace the 46-year-old backboard and pads in the Telstar Middle/High School gymnasium. During a six-week period last spring when the restaurant is typically closed, the Amanns opened for dinner on six evenings and donated all the proceeds to the basketball fundraiser. They covered out-of-pocket expenses and training for the Telstar students who assisted them in this effort. The Gideon Hastings House was nominated by the MSAD 44 Board of Directors.



John and Amy Amann with MSAD 44 board members

# Two honored with Distinguished Service Awards



Ted Damon

Two retirees received Distinguished Service Awards this year -- one going to Ted Damon, who started the Education Foundation of the Kennebunks and Arundel and the second to school volunteer Albert “Frank” Washburn Jr., who gives his time to the Boothbay Region Elementary School.

Since Damon, a retired Singer Company vice president, started the Education Foundation in 2006, it has funded more than \$715,000 in grants to offer unique learning opportunities for students and staff. Those opportunities include subsidizing the cost of the entire seventh-grade class at the Middle School of the Kennebunks to attend Camp Kieve for four days to work on team-building, decision-making and communication skills; a pre-engineering lab focusing on things like robotics and computer-aided design; the opportunity for all fifth-grade students in RSU 21 to attend an art studio class at Heartwood College of the Art; and allowing more than 20 teachers and administrators to attend the “Learning and the Brain” conference. In its nomination, the RSU 21 Board of Directors described the Education Foundation as a “vibrant, strong and forward-looking organization that has distinguished itself as a strong advocate for quality education.”



Frank Washburn

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## Steven Bailey named Superintendent of the Year

AOS 93 Superintendent Steven Bailey has been named Maine Superintendent of the Year for his commitment to helping all students achieve and his work through the state's superintendent association to provide effective and relevant professional development to his colleagues.

Bailey was selected by a committee of his peers, including former Superintendent of the Year recipients, Maine School Superintendents Association (MSSA) officers and presidents of Maine's superintendent regions.

He said what motivates him in his work is the opportunity to provide a positive influence in the lives of students, families and staff.

"I want to improve the learning situation and opportunities for all students and raise the awareness and urgency for change so that our public schools are the schools of choice," Bailey said.

Bailey started his career in education as a teacher and then went on to be a principal in South Portland, earning recognition as a National Distinguished Principal. He was director of curriculum and then assistant superintendent in South Portland before taking over as superintendent in AOS 93, serving central Lincoln County.

Bailey believes the greatest issue facing public education today is lack of consensus at the local, state and federal level around the tenet that all students deserve a quality education regardless of their background.

"Privilege begets privilege, while not enough people consistently support the notion that all students, regardless of socio-economic status should be provided equal opportunity," he said.

MSSA Past President David Murphy who nominated Bailey for the honor praised his dedication to excellence.

"Steve Bailey has developed a reputation among his peers in Maine as a visionary educational leader and strong advocate for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning. His commitment to both his school district and our state association is without comparison," Murphy said.

In his district Bailey has worked hard to close the achievement gap among students, particularly those under special individual education plans (IEPs) and is getting results. Students identified as needing help based on test scores and teacher observation are given clearly communicated goals and help to meet those goals.

"The strategy employed is not new. It is not earth-shattering. It is the application of data informed decision-making to help make learning deliberate, intentional, and purposeful," he said.

Bailey said his role is to focus the work being done by teachers and principals by emphasizing the data; continuing the development of appropriate strategies for each learner; and debriefing with principals regarding the success their teachers are having.

Asked what advice he would give to those considering public school administration as a career, Bailey had this to say.

"Be a learner – the landscape is constantly changing; be a reader; be willing to be a model; observe, observe, observe; and, listen, listen, listen," he said.

"I once thought you could be apolitical as an administrator. How quickly that idea faded away. Being a 'principle-centered leader' took center stage, with all decisions being based on what is in the best interest of the student," he said.




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### **Two honored**

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The second award went to Washburn, who started volunteering at Boothbay Region Elementary School several years ago. He largely helps students in fifth and sixth-grade math, but lends a hand in science, as well. One year, some of the kids nicknamed him the "answer man". He works with students on their homework when they stay after school and often prepares handwritten problems or finds games to make their learning more fun. The math teacher whose students he assists wrote this on his behalf: "If your organization wants to recognize someone who has and is making a significant contribution to the education of Maine kids, Frank Washburn is just such a person." Washburn was nominated by the Boothbay-Boothbay Harbor CDS school board.



## MSBA School Board Service Certificate Recipients



Charles Peterson, Jr.,	RSU/SAD 37	30 Years
Debra Murphy	RSU/SAD 37	18 Years
John Neel	MSAD 31	17 Years
Everett Grant	RSU/SAD 37	15 Years
Drusilla Ray	RSU/SAD 37	14 Years

### Check out MSMA's new website

[www.msmaweb.com](http://www.msmaweb.com)

Click on the link above to see MSMA's newly redesigned website.

Not only is the website easier to navigate and a better showcase for superintendent and school board news and information, there are new features to check out.

A key one is the searchable contract database that allows MSSA and MSBA members to search current collective bargaining contracts in Maine by school unit, county or keywords.

MSBA, MSSA, labor, law and policy newsletters are now online, and back issues archived for reference.

There is also a link to MSMA's new Twitter feed. Please follow us on Twitter so we can update you on breaking news and legislative hearings and votes.

To view snapshots from the 41st Annual MSMA Fall Conference or to access Clinic Handouts, click [here](#).



**If you have questions about any articles in this newsletter or suggestions for improving this publication, let us know.**

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