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New school lunch rules difficult to swallow

New federal regulations on what can be offered in the school lunch line are raising costs, turning off students, and resulting in untold pounds of food being thrown in the trash, according to food service directors who met recently with staff in Sen. Angus King's Augusta office looking for some relief.

The meeting was organized by King's Senior Policy Advisor, Marge Kilkelly, a food service director herself in the 1980s in Boothbay. She brought in U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Under Secretary Janey Thornton, food service and nutrition directors from across the state, and other interested parties to the Sept. 16 meeting.

Thornton defended the regulations, saying, "We've got to be a voice for the kids, not of the kids."

But the kids are dropping out of the school lunch program, according to statistics presented at the meeting, and that is making an already costly program more expensive when money in schools is tight.

The drop is more precipitous among students who pay full price for lunch versus those who get a free or reduced lunch

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MSBA Delegate Assembly

The Maine School Boards Association 2014 Delegate Assembly will be held on Thursday, October 23, 2014, at 2:20 p.m., at the Augusta Civic Center. Registration materials for elected delegates have been emailed to superintendents' and board chairs.

Governance and policy decisions affecting MSBA are dealt with at the Delegate Assembly. The importance of each school board being represented at the Delegate Assembly cannot be overstated. The following information about the Delegate Assembly is to inform board members of the importance of electing a delegate.

According to Article VIII of the MSBA Constitution, the Delegate Assembly is the policymaking body of the MSBA. The Delegate Assembly has four specific powers.

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MSMA Fall Conference: Supporting All Students



Ken Kay

The essential and changing role of public schools in Maine is the focus of the 41st Annual MSMA Fall Conference, featuring keynotes on how school boards and administrators can help improve and support student success.

Scheduled for Thursday and Friday, Oct. 23 and 24, at the Augusta Civic Center, the conference offers more than 50 professional development clinics, including 16 from attorneys with expertise in school law.

The keynote speakers this year will talk about how school boards and superintendents can effectively lead change that improves our public education system and supports student achievement.

Ken Kay, head of EdLeader21, will kick off the conference with his address at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 23, on how school districts can successfully make the transition from industrial-age education to 21st century learning. He will talk about the Common Core standards and relevant curriculum; ways to inspire creativity in the classroom; and, fostering genuine community involvement in public schools.

Kay's organization works with educational leaders to help them innovate

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Arnold Shober



Michael Hartney

Conference Schedule On Your Smartphone

MSMA is now offering an application that will allow you to view the entire 41st Annual Fall Conference schedule, including all the clinics and special events, on your mobile devices. Further details will be provided to registrants on how to take advantage of this new technology.

MSBA 2014

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee met and interviewed prospective candidates for the MSBA Officers and Board of Directors on July 25 and August 4, 2014. Following is a list of the candidates slated by the Nominating Committee.

President-Elect	Becky Fles (MSAD 11)
Vice President	James Grant (Brunswick)
Region I	Lucy Richard (MSAD 1)
Region II	Michael Williams (Greenbush)
Region III	Everett Grant (MSAD 37)
Region VIII	Gerard Nault (RSU 12)
Region IX	Kim Bedard (Kittery)
At-Large V	Kristin Malin (Georgetown)
At-Large IX	Lester Harmon (MSAD 6)

Delegate Assembly

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1. It adopts resolutions that express the beliefs and purposes of the Association.
2. It transacts such other business as presented to it prior to the opening of the Delegate Assembly by any delegation or the Executive Board of Directors.
3. It elects the Officers and the Executive Board of Directors.
4. It may adopt amendments to the Constitution.

According to Article V of the Constitution, the Executive Board of Directors governs the Association. The Board is comprised of regional directors and at-large directors.

The Delegate Assembly consists of one voting delegate for each member district. In order to be an official delegate, the member school board must complete the Certification of School Board Representative form with the name of the elected delegate and alternate. The Certification must be mailed to Maine School Management Association, 49 Community Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330 or faxed to (207) 626-2968 no later than October 10, 2014.

The resolutions adopted at the Delegate Assembly are an expression of the Assembly's view regarding various issues. The body of resolutions adopted by the Assembly defines the Association's positions. Make your local board's voice heard and send a delegate to the MSBA Delegate Assembly on October 23, 2014.

Welcome Back to School!!



MSMA Fall Conference

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using a seven-step program that starts with adopting a vision and ends with school improvement. In addition to his keynote speech, Kay also is giving a workshop.

The lunch speakers on Friday, Oct. 24, are Arnold Shober and Michael Hartney, who on behalf of the Thomas Fordham Institute co-authored a study entitled "Does School Board Leadership Matter?"

It does, and the authors of the study will talk about what types of boards get results in terms of improving student achievement.

Shober and Hartney also will give a clinic talking about the characteristics of an effective board; how to create a vision for districts; and, accountability.

For the first time this year, there will be regional breakout sessions based on the nine superintendent and school board regions in the state. These regional sessions will allow school board members and superintendents in each region to meet each other and their regional leaders and talk about strategies for legislative advocacy.

The 16 legal clinics being offered at the conference cover a range of topics including aspects of collective bargaining, the impact of RSU and AOS withdrawals, health care and the always popular School Law Year in Review.

Other titles from the attorneys include:

- Standards-based Education and the World of Special Education
- The Implications of Social Media in School Administration
- Teacher Tenure Laws are Constitutional, Right?
- New Educator Evaluation Systems: The School Board's Role
- Protecting Students: Board Responsibilities

Along with the legal clinics, there is an excellent mix of clinics offered by people in the field who will share their expertise and experience.

Some examples are:

- When Good School Boards Go Bad
- The DNA of a Successful Online Program
- The Domino Effect: Managing Grief and Loss
- 90 Percent Proficiency Goal for K-2 Schools
- Proficiency Based Diplomas
- MSMA's New Teacher Contract Database
- Proficiency for ALL Students
- Communications 101 or KISS (Keep It Simple...)

Conference registration should be done through your superintendent's office.

Focus on Boardmanship

Board leadership helps struggling schools

By Anne M. Byrne, President, NSBA

It's more critical than ever to show the good things that happen each day in your public schools. After all, we have much to celebrate, including the record high school graduation rates announced this summer.

Yet, we also must acknowledge that there are struggling schools. This impacts all of public education and it is an issue that school boards must address.

We want—and need—to tell our good news stories. But we won't have credibility until all students are successful. This is going to be hard work: We have more students living in poverty, students with special needs, and every day more students whose first language is not English enter the system.

We must ensure each child not only graduates but also has the skills to be successful in college or their careers.

And we are well aware of what schools need to be successful. Research shows with no doubt that certain strategies greatly improve student achievement. These include high expectations by school boards that each child can be successful, effective principals and teachers, ongoing professional development, and a strong curriculum.

But these types of initiatives take money and resources. And for the vast majority of school districts, hard choices must be made.

This is where *school board leadership matters*. Your board's priorities will guide the performance of your school district. Research shows that the policies and practices your board puts into place directly impact school climate and student learning. We can do this. In fact, we must do this. It is too important for the future of this great nation, and for our children.

It's a heavy weight to carry. But NSBA and your state school board association can help provide guidance, research, and training to help you accomplish your goals.

Over the next few months, NSBA's Agenda for Action committee will make recommendations for improving all our schools, but especially our struggling schools. NSBA also is building a reservoir of best practices for school boards to tap when facing particularly tough challenges.

The Center for Public Education has research on school board practices and other information that will help your board most effectively address student achievement.

We also must remain diligent about our very vocal opponents who want to turn over public schools to private interests or resegregate the schools based on wealth.

We must remain focused on seeking the best education for our students, for their sake as well as for the sake of our nation's economy and national security.

And we must tell our stories.

If you haven't already done so, please join NSBA's Stand Up 4 Public Schools. Sign our pledge at www.standup4publicschools.org, share your story or ideas on Facebook with our more than 30,000 fans, and engage in in-depth conversations on www.mindmixer.com.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Candidate Forum Snapshots



MSMA's nine Regional Candidate Forums being held across the state in September have generated excellent discussion among legislative candidates, superintendents and school board members. Above are shots from the York County forum, on the left, and the Penquis Region.

New school lunch rules

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subsidy, and that itself is a concern. The last thing schools want is for the school lunch line to become a stigma.

Concern with the new regulations, some of which just went into effect in July, is they are making it more expensive to prepare food; making offerings less palatable for students; and, forcing students to take food – namely full servings of fruits and vegetables – that they won't eat. That food ends up in the trash.

In addition to the fruit and vegetable requirement, another problematic regulation is that as of July, 2014, 100 percent of the grains offered for lunch and breakfast have to be “whole grain rich” versus the 50 percent standard, which itself was a substantial change that went into effect in 2012.

A third area of concern is the tightening of regulations in the a la carte line, which helps subsidize the regular lunch program. There already are restrictions on fats, calories, sugars and sodium in the a la carte line, but the new regulations go even further.

Concerns with the new regulations were underscored in an anecdotal survey done by Maine School Management Association in preparation for the meeting.

“A lot of food (fruits and vegetables) are being thrown away given that students are required to take ‘complete’ meals. When students are forced to take things they don't like or aren't interested in eating, regardless of the efforts of food-service staff to spruce them up, they go to waste. This is in addition to the many, many cartons of milk that suffer the same fate,” one superintendent wrote.

“The worst new regulation is the one requiring us, for both breakfast and lunch, to serve 100 percent whole grain items versus 50 percent, which was the rule last year. It's a huge impact on us financially because whole grain items are more expensive and kids don't like the taste. The blueberry muffins we served with white flower were popular; the whole wheat ones taste like sawdust,” a food service director said.

Sen. King's office is looking at several avenues for relief, including: delaying further restrictions on a la carte lines; allowing a taste option for students instead of taking the full serving of fruits and vegetables; looking at ways to help rural schools pay for higher food costs; and, creating a School Nutrition Advisory Committee to consult with the USDA.

Three charter school applications now under review

The Maine Charter School Commission has set tentative dates in October to get public testimony on three charter schools that would like to open next year – one in Lewiston, one in the Sanford area and one virtual school that, if approved, would be the second virtual charter school in Maine.

The commission will vote on Oct. 15 on whether to move all three applications forward to the public hearing phase.

The three applicants include:

- Acadia Academy (name changed from All of ME Academy), proposed by the Margaret Murphy Center for Children, a special purpose school in Lewiston serving children with autism and other developmental disabilities. The application says the school would provide a comprehensive program in academics and social/emotional development, first serving pre-K through grade 1 and adding grades 2-6, in the Lewiston area.
- Inspire ME Academy, offering curriculum based on the Common Core to students in grades, 4, 5 and 6 in the Sanford area.
- Maine Virtual Academy, using educational services provided by the national K-12 corporation, serving grades 7-12 statewide. Maine Virtual Academy's application has been denied once already.

Click on the following link to review the full applications:

<http://www.maine.gov/csc/requests/2015-16.html>

Hearings have been tentatively scheduled for Monday, Oct. 27, in Lewiston, for Maine Virtual Academy and Acadia Academy; and Tuesday Oct. 28 in Wells for Inspire ME Academy. Time and places will be finalized once the vote is taken to move the applications forward.

Three other proposed schools had indicated in late June they were going to apply to the commission to open next fall, but pulled out of the process.

There are six charter schools currently operating in Maine, with a legislative cap of 10 through 2021.

The newest school, Maine Connections Academy, opened for business in September, pulling 281 students from 86 public school districts, including 70 home-schooled children.



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

You can contact me, MSBA Executive Director, Connie Brown. cbrown@msmaweb.com