

Becky Fles, *President, MSAD 11*
James Grant, *President-Elect, Brunswick*
Maureen King, *Vice President, RSU 21*
Steven W. Bailey, *Executive Director, sbailey@msmaweb.com*
Victoria A. Wallack, *Director of Communications & Government Relations, vwallack@msmaweb.com*

UPDATE...

September 2017

DOE proposes shifting CDS to school districts

The Department of Education posted an announcement on Sept. 15 that it plans to shift responsibility for special education services for 3-5 year-olds to public schools and away from the state-run Child Development Services.

News of that plan came as a surprise to many in the field and raised questions about staffing, financing and space availability. A critical issue is the shortage of personnel certified to deal with these at-risk children.

The goal is to create a smooth transition into the public schools for young children in need of services. A major concern is the DOE says the current program is facing a multi-million dollar deficit – a funding problem that has plagued CDS for many years – and it appears to some as a cost-shift onto local districts and taxpayers.

MSMA is involved with other educational partners to better understand this proposal and its impact on districts, and what it will take to make sure all students are well served.

Below is a copy of the announcement posted by the DOE:

Child Development Services (CDS) is currently responsible for the state-wide administration of special education services for children with disabilities who are ages 3 to 5 years (or in the school age range) under Part C and Part B 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Recently, the Department of Education has developed a new model for providing these services, the intent of which is to move the provision of children with disabilities ages 3 years to school age range (Part B 619) from current State run programming to

(continued on page 2)

MSBA Delegate Assembly

This year's Delegate Assembly is scheduled for 3:25 p.m., Thursday, October 26, the first day of the MSMA Annual Fall Conference, in the Kennebec/Penobscot Room. **It will be preceded by a Delegate Assembly preview from 2:10 – 3:15 in the same room.**

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 your School Board of the importance of electing a Delegate.

(continued on page 2)

Annual Fall Conference celebrates public schools



David Schuler

The theme for the 44th Annual MSMA Fall Conference, scheduled for Thursday and Friday, Oct. 26 and 27, at the Augusta Civic Center, is “Public Schools: Learning for Life”, offering an unprecedented number of professional development clinics and top-notch keynote speakers focusing on the role of public education in shaping our students’ futures.

Clinic topics reflect the key issues going on right now with education in Maine, including implementation of a proficiency-based diploma; a discussion about distance learning; and, voluntary regionalization of services.



Laurie Lachance

There will be 15 clinics dealing with school law, giving board members and superintendents a chance to learn from and ask questions of the state’s top public education lawyers. Topics include how to deal with and discuss hot button topics from the legalization of marijuana to the expression of controversial political views; the basics of collective bargaining; student rights and the board’s role in discipline; court rulings that impact special education law; and, much more.

Commissioner of Education Robert Hasson will host two “Meet the Commissioner” sessions, along with array of clinics being

(continued on page 2)

School funding comes with policy changes

The biennial budget finally adopted on July 4 gave public schools an additional \$48.4 million in 2017-2018 and \$113.6 million for 2018-2019 and included some significant policy changes that affect how that money is distributed and how it can be used.

Key initiatives include:

- No longer subtracting Title I funds from district allocations and raising student-teacher and ed-tech ratios to make up the funding difference.
- Increasing the current weight of 15 percent for economically disadvantaged by 5 percent. It requires that additional funding of

(continued on page 5)

DOE proposes shifting CDS

(continued from page 1)

the public schools systems. Under this model, all aspects of special education services for this age group would become the responsibility of the local district. This includes case management, child find, evaluation, eligibility determination, IEP development, and the provision of special education and related services.

The impetus for this change is to transform the current model to better address the needs of children with disabilities by decreasing their transitions between programs at an early age, providing more frequent, appropriate and timely services closer to home, and introducing an earlier integration into their local schools.

Under the current model, flat state funding, rising costs in special education and inadequate management of resources have caused not only a multimillion dollar deficit within the CDS program, but also a shortage in state level special education service which has impacted hundreds of Maine children who are currently not receiving the services they need.

Also under the current model, children and families experience two transitions within the State's CDS program: the first from CDS' early Intervention program to CDS' program for children ages 3 to 5/school age range, and then another transition to the public kindergarten program. Under the legislation, children and families would experience only one transition – from CDS' early intervention program to the public school system. Also, unlike the current model, eligible children will have the opportunity to attend their local, neighborhood school rather than being transported, sometimes significant distances, to attend out-of-district, center-based programs.

The transformation is anticipated to address these issues by providing earlier integration into local districts, and by better use of resources already in place within districts, including existing district-employed special education teachers, therapists, human resource and finance staff, and transportation infrastructure.

The Department is currently working with one district that will take over special education services for children ages 3 to school age in their district, and a number of other districts have approached the Department eager to take on the responsibility as well.

At this point in time, Maine is one of the only states in which the public school does not assume responsibility for eligible children upon their 3rd birthday.

The Department recognizes that the proposed transition presents a significant paradigm shift, and that there is a need for a measured, tiered implementation, as well as ongoing fiscal and technical support.

This change will be reflected in proposed departmental legislation submitted for the Legislature's consideration during the 2018 short session.

While this proposed transition may present some initial challenges, the Department is confident that it is ultimately the right choice for the best interest of Maine's children with disabilities.

Annual Fall Conference

(continued from page 1)

offered by experts in the Department of Education.

The keynote on Thursday is David Schuler, the former president of the national School Superintendents Association (AASA), who will be talking about Redefining Ready. It is a national initiative launched by AASA to introduce new, research-based standards or metrics to more appropriately assess whether students are ready for college, career and life. The initiative is a response to college and career readiness scores reported by standardized test makers that fail to portray a comprehensive picture of student potential. Schuler is the superintendent of the second largest high school district in Illinois, overseeing six high schools and four specialized programs.

On Friday, the keynote is former State Economist and Thomas College President Laurie Lachance, who also served as director of the Maine Development Foundation. She firmly believes in the power of education to transform lives, communities and the economy of Maine and is a strong advocate for early learning.

"I have come to believe that in a knowledge-based, technology-driven economy, the single most important economic development investment we can make is to bring each person in Maine to his or her highest educational potential," she told a group of incoming legislators earlier this year.

Registration for the Annual Fall Conference should be done through your superintendent's office.

Delegate Assembly

(continued from page 1)

According to Article VIII of the Constitution, the Delegate Assembly is the policy making body of the Association. The Delegate Assembly has four specific powers.

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 Executive Board of Directors.
4. It may adopt amendments to the Constitution.

According to Article V of the Constitution, the Association is governed by the Executive Board of Directors. 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 report the name of the elected delegate and alternate prior to the Assembly. (See Delegate Form for actual date.)

The resolutions adopted at the Delegate Assembly are an expression of the Assembly's views regarding various issues. The body of resolutions adopted by the Assembly defines the Association's position on various legislative proposals.

As the Officers and Board of Directors approach any legislative session, it is crucial that they represent the Association's members. Make your local Board's voice heard and send a delegate to the MSBA Delegate Assembly held during the MSMA Annual Fall Conference on October 26, 2017.

MSBA Proposed Resolutions

The MSBA Board of Directors has forwarded the following resolutions for consideration at the MSBA Delegate Assembly on Oct. 26.

- 2.A.4.f. School Board Training.** The Maine School Boards Association is committed to sharing and expanding training opportunities, utilizing, in part, a regional approach and tapping local board members and others as trainers. MSBA encourages local boards to adopt policies that incorporate the local board's commitment to the education of its board members and reflect its need to annually budget the funds necessary to fulfill this important responsibility.

Rationale

This proposed resolution amends a current resolution. The School Board's responsibility to make sure public schools are meeting the needs of all students in the community has never been more important. To do their job well, board members need to be well trained, not only in how to work together as a board, but in other critical areas. Training is the most often heard request from MSBA members. The requests range from basic training for new members to training for board chairs. MSBA wants to offer more training and will encourage boards to request it. This will include a regional approach using board members and others as trainers to keep up with the anticipated demand. MSMA staff will help develop a shared curriculum.

- 2.B.1.g. Career and Technical Education Opportunities.** With a growing demand that public schools better prepare students for work as well as college, the Maine School Boards Association supports expanded opportunities for students to participate in Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes. Early exposure to hands-on skills helps students discover interests and visualize career paths. CTE also makes traditional learning more relevant and keeps students engaged. We support efforts to make CTE classes more available, understanding it will take local coordination efforts and greater flexibility in scheduling to make it work. It also is critical that our CTE programs form alliances with local businesses to support this effort, and that the state provides adequate funding to support CTE services and programs.

Rationale

The national (PDK) poll that annually measures attitudes toward public education has once again found the public wants schools to help students prepare for work, including direct career training. Maine has been positioning itself for some time to offer CTE to more students. Local school boards, working with their superintendents and CTE directors, need to make that happen.

- 3.A.2.3. Regionalization of Services.** The Maine School Boards Association believes initiatives to share services regionally must be locally driven and based on district needs. They must be initiated by school boards and superintendents who in their respective roles represent the best interest of students, the school community and local taxpayers. They should be measured not just on their efficiency or cost, but on whether they support educational excellence and opportunity for all students.

Rationale

Legislation was passed this year to encourage regional collaboration among school districts. Both incentives and funding penalties are included in law, but finances cannot be the only reason to move these initiatives forward. Regional services will only work if they are in the best interest of our students.

- 4.30. Technology in the Classroom.** The Maine School Boards Association reaffirms its support of technology in schools and asks the Legislature to pass legislation to provide broadband internet connections to all parts of the state. A state plan also is needed for the future of technology in schools that takes into account the dynamic nature of the computer industry and addresses how best to use technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Rationale

Maine was a leader in integrating computer technology into the classroom with its one-to-one laptop program initiated in 2001 and needs to maintain that effort as technology plays an ever increasing role in our students' lives and future employment. Concerns have been raised about whether there is adequate state support for the Maine Learning Technology Initiative – a concern underscored this year by a change in state purchasing for schools. MSBA views state supported technology in schools as a key way to address economic disparity by providing students, regardless of their situation, with a computing device and access to a reliable computer network. We need to build on the state's successes in this area and make sure the program stays dynamic.

(continued on page 4)

MSBA Proposed Resolutions

(continued from page 3)

- 4.31. Graduation Pathway for All Learners.** The first high school class that will have to meet standards under the diploma bill passed in 2016 entered its freshman year this fall. The Maine School Boards Association believes the law needs to be amended to create a clearer pathway for all learners, including students with special needs. The Maine School Boards Association will craft recommendations for legislation to be introduced in 2018 to improve the law. Areas to be explored include prioritizing our goals and making the law less prescriptive, while keeping a focus on proficiency-based learning.

Rationale

The Maine School Boards Association testified in support of the goals of the graduation standards bill in 2016, but raised concerns about the need to prioritize proficiency to focus on the so-called core four – English, Math, Science and Technology and Social Studies. That call for focus underscored concerns about capacity in school districts. A second significant issue is around assuring students with special needs have a pathway to graduation. We believe legislation is needed to address these issues and others we are discovering as districts work to implement the current law.

- 1.3. Support for Public Education.** The public education system is open to all children and provides learning opportunities and support systems to prepare them to be life-long learners, productive workers and good citizens. It also must support innovations that assure traditional public schools remain the schools of choice. This resolution officially puts Maine School Boards on the record as standing with other states to support the National School Boards Association’s “Stand Up for Public Schools” campaign. It calls for the adoption of local resolutions; better publicity around the excellent work going on in our districts; and public celebration of the educators and school leaders who support that work.

Rationale

Public schools are the backbone of our democracy and have educated our leaders, workers, advocates and entrepreneurs. That system is under attack by people who would like to siphon off public education money to support privatization in the form of choice and vouchers. Maine School Boards are in the best position to tell the success stories of public education. We can help the public understand our mission, which is to provide all students, regardless of their zip code, economic status or special needs, an education that prepares them to succeed. Our greatest allies in getting this message out are the vast majority of people in Maine who are products of the public schools. We need to find ways to get their stories out to the public and stand proud as a part of an education system that works.

Submitted from Baileyville School Department

- 4.32. Funding for Proficiency Based Graduation Standards.** Legislative action during the 128th Regular Session has eliminated all state funding support for Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements. The original law stated that if the legislature eliminated funding for this mandate the implementation timeline would be extended each year that lacked state funding. The elimination of funding for this law results in an unfunded mandate for local districts. Local districts are now required to establish and track proficiency-based standards without additional state support as provided initially within statute. MSBA requests the Maine Legislature re-establish state funding for this law.

Rationale

The original law provided additional state funding to support the training and program purchases districts faced in implementing Proficiency Based Graduation Standards. The 128th Legislature has removed this state funding without extending the mandated implementation date. This results in local property tax increases to support this important work.

- 3.B.1.b. Scheduling of Career and Technical Education Programs (CTE).** We believe there is a continuing need to examine ways in which the scheduling and delivery of secondary CTE programs can be more responsive to the needs of students, school officials, parents and other adult citizens at the local level. We feel this goal can be achieved by the advancement of legislation that would: a) allow more flexibility in the scheduling of CTE courses; b) provide for a greater opportunity for shared funding and decision-making responsibilities within units served by vocational centers; and c) improved coordination between secondary and post-secondary CTE programs and facilities.

Rationale

This proposed resolution amends a current resolution. The terminology has shifted from Vocational Education to Career and Technical Education. This proposed amendment updates the resolution to utilize current terminology for these programs.

School funding

(continued from page 1)

\$27.5 million a year be targeted and used for evidenced-based extended learning programs for disadvantaged students. To be eligible for this funding, districts must certify the money is used for the intended purpose, which includes summer school, extended learning programs, tutoring and other approved programs.

- Language that says at least 50 percent of the increase in a unit's state share of the cost of education for 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 be used to lower local tax contributions for schools. That language was mitigated in 2017-2018 by special warrant articles passed by voters designating the use of additional funds. Those will be honored this year. MSMA is still exploring the impact on 2018-2019.
- Allowing new or newly expanded pre-kindergarten programs to get a state allocation based on their projected enrollment, modified by actual enrollment data once school starts. This will give these new programs money up front, much like that afforded to the state charter schools, and goes into effect in 2018-2019.
- Minimum receivers of state aid are receiving 33 percent of their special education allocation this school year.

There also are several initiatives around special education. They include:

- Increasing the weight for special education students to 150 percent for identified students representing up to 15 percent of the unit's resident pupils, effective 2018-2019.
- Also in 2018-2019, the budget calls for an allocation for high-cost out-of-district special education placements. For private school placements, additional funds must be allocated for each student costing four times the statewide average; for public school placements the threshold is three times the state average; and, for regional special education programs it is two times.
- In 2018-2019, a special education budgetary hardship clause allows the commissioner to provide additional funding to districts who 1) receive a student as a result of an appeal of a student transfer request approved by the Commissioner of Education or 2) a student becomes the fiscal responsibility of a SAU after the district's budget passes. An example of the latter is when a family moves into the SAU during the current school year. A district is eligible for hardship funding only if the unexpected student(s) result in a 5 percent or more increase in the percentage of the unit's special education budget.

Other significant funding changes include:

- Requirement that the state recognize 100 percent of Essential Programs and Services versus the current 97 percent in determining its allocations for school districts. That will result in a 3 percent increase in the total cost of education that must be shared between the state and local taxpayers. It goes into effect in 2018-2019.
- Removal of the declining enrollment adjustment by basing all student counts on the October counts of the two most recent calendar years prior to the year of funding. This change eliminates the option of using the average of 6 pupil counts for April 1 and October 1 in the 3 most recent calendar years prior to the year of funding.
- Elimination of the funding provided by the state to transition to proficiency-based diplomas. That funding totaled around \$2 million in fiscal year 2017.
- Elimination of the funding provided to implement performance evaluation systems for teachers and principals.
- Lowering the per-pupil amount allocated for system administration and tying future funding to what are being called School Management and Leadership Centers. The law envisions 9 to 12 of these centers being established through inter-local agreements among school districts and other entities, including CTE regions, charter schools and municipalities. These agreements would allow for shared services covering four categories: Instructional; Education Support; Central Office; and Facilities and Transportation. Participation is voluntary but tied to system administration funding.

The budget also contains language that would require districts to report how much money is going into direct instruction, and does not count student and staff support services. Those support services include things like curriculum development, testing, all instruction-related technology, professional development, truancy prevention, guidance counseling and psychological and physical health services for students. The direct instruction targets in the budget are:

- 61 percent for 2018-2019
- 63 percent for 2019-2020
- 65 percent for 2020-2021
- 67 percent for 2021-2022
- 70 percent for 2022-2023

In the Department of Health and Human Services portion of the budget, final negotiations took money from the Fund for Healthy Maine to fill a budget hole and left School Based Health Centers without that funding source. There was no advance warning of the cut, and DHHS health center contracts that already had been mailed to schools were rescinded.

MSBA 2017 Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee met and interviewed prospective candidates for the MSBA Officers and Board of Directors on July 21 & 24, 2017. Traditionally at Delegate Assembly the Delegates elect only two officers, the President-Elect and the Vice President. This year you will note that there will be an election for all three offices. The President-Elect, Jim Grant, has notified us that he is unable to serve as the MSBA President. Therefore the Nominating Committee has slated the following Officers and Directors:

President:	Maureen King (IX)
President-Elect:	Kim Bedard (IX)
Vice President:	Susan Hawes (II)
Region II:	Michael Williams
Region IV:	Lawrence "Skip" Greenlaw
At-Large:	James Grant (VII) Jane Scease (VII)

Please note:

1. If the Nominating Committee does not nominate a candidate, the candidate may still be nominated by two member boards prior to September 26, 2017, which will ensure that their name is printed on the ballot.
2. Candidates for director positions may still be nominated from the floor of the Delegate Assembly to be held on October 26, 2017, at the Augusta Civic Center.



Poll shows public wants students prepared for work

The three R's alone don't cut it anymore: Americans overwhelmingly want schools to do more than educate students in academic subjects. According to the 2017 PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, they also want schools to help position students for their working lives after school. That means both direct career preparation and efforts to develop students' interpersonal skills.

When judging school quality, the public gives much more weight to students' job preparation and interpersonal development than to their standardized test scores, the poll shows. That said, though, Americans do still value traditional academic preparation, especially opportunities for advanced academic studies.

Key findings include:

- 82% of Americans support job or career skills classes even if that means students might spend less time in academic classes.
- 86% say schools in their community should offer certificate or licensing programs that qualify students for employment in a given field.
- Eight in 10 see technology and engineering classes as an extremely important or very important element of school quality.
- 82% also say that it is highly important for schools to help students develop interpersonal skills, such as being cooperative, respectful of others, and persistent at solving problems.

As in past years, the 2017 poll shows little public support for using public money to send children to private schools. The more Americans know about how voucher programs work, the less likely they are to support them or to say they'd participate in them.

These and other results suggest that some of the most prominent ideas that dominate current policy debates — from supporting vouchers to doubling down on high-stakes tests to cutting federal education funding — are out of step with parents' main concern: They want their children prepared for life after they complete high school.

The 2017 PDK survey is based on a random, representative, 50-state sample of 1,588 adults interviewed by cell or landline telephone, in English or Spanish, in May 2017.

Source: PDK Educational Foundation and Kappan Magazine



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, Steven Bailey. sbailey@msmaweb.com