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UPDATE...

June 2018

Diploma bill debate continues

The future of proficiency-based learning and diploma standards – a work in progress going back to the passage of the Learning Results standards in 1997 – is unclear, with a bill being held in the Senate that would give districts the option of going back to traditional seat time and credits.

The bill, L.D. 1666, got overwhelming support in the House of Representatives, but the vote was closer in the Senate, with a number of members missing for the final roll call.

Senator Brian Langley, R-Hancock, the chair of the Education Committee, and a strong proponent of proficiency-based learning and graduation standards, gave an emotional speech on the Senate floor.

“I probably shouldn’t be here,” Langley said, describing a tough childhood growing up on the “wrong side of the tracks,” who was saved by the ultimate proficiency-based learning experience – Career and Technical Education in the Culinary Arts. Langley owns a successful restaurant and is finishing four terms in the Senate. During three of those terms he served as Education Committee chairman.

Senator Rebecca Millett, D-Cumberland, the Democratic senator on the Education Committee, cited the emotional arguments on both sides and said L.D. 1666 simply gave people a choice between the current proficiency-based system and the credit-based system. Millett also served as Education Committee chairman in 2015-2016.

“This is a very fine thread that we are trying to weave here to respect those who see a potential and have buy-in within the community to move forward, and those that do not,” she said.

MSMA Fall Conference October 25-26

Plans are well underway for the 45th Annual MSMA Fall Conference, which provides outstanding professional development clinics for school leaders and a chance for board members and superintendents to meet and share ideas.

Information packets have been sent out to superintendents and school board members. See pages 2 and 4 for reminders on board nominations, School Board resolutions and nominations for board awards.

Update on Legislation

As the Legislature continues to meet long after its traditional adjournment in what is supposed to be a short session, the following bills are still in play.

L.D. 1869, An Act To Establish the Total Cost of Education and the State and Local Contributions to Education for Fiscal Year 2018-19, authorizes the release of anticipated state funding and sets the minimum mill rate at 8.48, slightly lower than the predicted 8.51. It was enacted by a two-thirds vote in both the House and Senate to allow it go into effect immediately once signed by the governor.

L.D. 1666, which now has a misleading title of An Act To Ensure the Successful Implementation of Proficiency-based Diplomas by Extending the Timeline for Phasing in Their Implementation, would make proficiency-based diplomas optional in school districts. It passed both the House and Senate, but is being held in the Senate until the Legislature reconvenes on July 9.

L.D. 40, An Act To Strengthen Requirements for Water Testing for Schools, was enacted by the Legislature with some changes. The bill still calls for the water division in the Department of Health and Human Services to write the rules around testing, but the mandate to test is now contingent on the Department of Education providing testing grants to schools. A larger funding concern is paying for remediation if lead is found. The School Revolving Renovation Fund is the funding source for remediation cited in the bill, but that fund already is woefully underfunded. This bill has been vetoed by the governor and a veto override will be considered when the Legislature returns.

L.D. 1902, An Act To Implement Certain Recommendations of the Task Force To Identify Special Education Cost Drivers and Innovative Approaches to Services, is one step away from enactment, but needs approval by the Appropriations Committee. The focus of the bill was narrowed in committee to include a more robust response to intervention systems for both general and special education students; promotion of dual certification programs for general and special education teachers; school-wide use of Title I programs; a review of the purpose and efficacy of maintenance of effort funding; and review and improvement of MaineCare billing practices.

L.D. 925, An Act Making Certain Appropriations and Allocations and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government, was a vehicle for

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MAINE SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Potential Nominees for At-Large and Regional Directors of the MSBA Executive Board of Directors

Per by-laws, the MSBA Nominating Committee will consider nominations for At-Large and Regional Director seats. All will be presented for election at the October 25 meeting of the MSBA Delegate Assembly.

Please note the following restrictions apply: a) only one member on an active regular member School Board is eligible to serve on the MSBA Board of Directors; and b) no more than three officers and/or directors can be members of School Boards in any one region. Note: Individuals serving on Associate Members Boards, including vocational regions, are ineligible to serve on the MSBA Board of Directors.

DEADLINE: Names of suggested nominees, who must be from MSBA member boards, must be received at MSMA by **July 9, 2018**, to assure consideration by the Nominating Committee. Remember to indicate the seat for which the person is being suggested. Regional Directors must be from the correct Region (click link below). A listing of the current Board of Directors is provided (click link below). Open seats are those expiring in 2018, or those indicating a vacancy. The Nominating Committee will advance a slate of nominees for consideration by the Delegate Assembly.

After the July 9 deadline, in order to nominate a candidate, two MSBA active member boards must file the Application for Nomination - Director form (click link below) along with a copy of the minutes of the board meetings indicating a formal vote in support of that nominee. This statement of endorsement must be received at the MSMA office at least 30 days prior to the Delegate Assembly—no later than **September 25**. In the case of an At-Large Director nominee, the endorsement can be done by any two active member boards. In the case of a Regional Director nominee, the endorsement must be done by two active member boards in that Region.

Anyone interested in more information on the duties of MSBA Board of Directors should contact Steven Bailey at 1-800-660-8484 or email sbailey@msmaweb.com.

[Region List](#), [MSBA Board of Directors](#), [MSBA Application for Nomination - Director](#)

A Call for Nomination of Board Awards

The MSBA Board of Directors calls for nominations for three awards in recognition of service in support of public education in Maine. The three award categories include:

- [MSBA Business Friend of Education Award](#)
- [MSBA Distinguished Service Award](#); and
- [MSBA School Board Service Certificate](#).

The MSBA **Business Friend of Education Award** may be awarded to no more than two companies located in Maine, which have made significant contributions to public education.

The MSBA **Distinguished Service Award** recognizes an individual or a group who has made a significant contribution to public education in Maine.

The MSBA **School Board Service Certificate** will recognize individual school board members for their length of service on a local school board. Any board member having served twelve or more years who has not received a certificate since 2012 is eligible to receive this certificate of recognition. **The nomination form must be received at MSMA no later than September 28, 2018.**

The criteria and the appropriate forms for each award category are linked above. **MSBA Business Friend of Education Award and MSBA Distinguished Service Award nomination forms must be received at MSMA no later than August 31, 2018.** If you have further questions, please call MSMA (1-800-660-8484) or email msma@msmaweb.com. A subcommittee of the MSBA Board of Directors will review all nominations, with the final selection being approved by the MSBA Board of Directors.

Maine Schools in Focus: Lifespan Literacy Community supports grassroots initiative statewide

By Susan Bennett-Armistead

In 2012, the state of Maine developed a statewide literacy plan. An integral part of that plan was to develop grassroots literacy initiatives across the state, designed to support, improve and celebrate literacy among all the state's citizens, from birth throughout life. Individual communities developed their own plans to meet the needs of the people that live there. Some focused on developing increased programming for families with young children, others worked to create after-school tutoring programs for school-age children, still others celebrated local authors and libraries. Some did all of the above.

Literacy faculty at University of Maine found ourselves in an odd position. Because of our statewide focus, we could not really serve as members of local community groups but we wanted to support the initiatives in those communities. Instead of a local level group, we created a consortium of groups that work at a statewide level and engage in a variety of activities that local groups could try as well. Partnering with [Raising Readers](#), the [Maine State Library](#), [Literacy Volunteers of Bangor](#), [Adult Education](#) in 13 communities, and the leadership of the [Barbara Bush Foundation](#), we created The Literacy People of Maine. Meeting quarterly, we shared new initiatives each of us was engaged in and found ways, with the resources each of us had, to support each other.

Some examples of this include our faculty and Literacy Volunteers partnering with [Darling's Ice Cream for a Cause](#). This initiative involves book drives to collect gently used and new children's books. Volunteers distribute the donated books to families from an ice cream truck along with free ice cream. This family-fun service takes place at sites where free lunches are distributed in the greater Bangor area (e.g., Old Town, Bradley, Winterport, Bangor, Alton, etc.). Additionally, UMaine faculty started and now continue to support Literacy Volunteers of Bangor as they take the lead on putting on a Literacy Tea each spring to celebrate children's books and raise funds for Literacy Volunteers. Further, for more than a year now, several UMaine faculty have worked with Adult Education to provide [literacy support to female inmates](#) at the Penobscot County Jail through book clubs, writing groups, and family literacy groups. Currently we are working with the Barbara Bush Foundation, the Maine State Library, and Raising Readers to create "Lit Kits" for kindergarten teachers using books distributed to families by Raising Readers.

About a year ago, The Literacy People consortium morphed into [The Lifespan Literacy Community](#) (LLC) and is now housed in the Lindlof Center in Shibles Hall. This move has allowed us to focus on developing a "cradle to grave" approach to supporting literacy. The LLC provides a context for tutoring school age children, a behind-the-glass training center for master's degree program students in literacy to engage in intervention with struggling readers, video- and audio-recording capability to archive sessions for use in both

classroom examples and later training sessions, and a site for research. We are currently working with Literacy Volunteers of Bangor to offer volunteer training sessions so that UMaine students can act as literacy volunteers for other adults who wish to improve their literacy or English language skills. Finally, we have a parent and child play group, The Language and Literacy Play Partners, designed to work with parents and their young children to promote the children's language and literacy skills.

Parent educator Sayoko Mori facilitates The Language and Literacy Play Partners program with the support of Dr. Susan Bennett-Armistead. The families come from all over the community, including children of international students, children referred through the [Conley Speech and Language Center](#), and Child Development Services. We also reach out to groups serving children in foster care and teen parents and their babies. Each hour-long weekly session is designed to model for families play-based strategies for developing their children's vocabulary, world knowledge, and awareness of and love for books, storytelling, and songs. Divided into age groups from birth to 30 months, families enjoy meeting other families with children their children's age and learning from each other's experiences. Field trips to the farm, campus gardens, and simply walking on campus have allowed Ms. Mori to demonstrate ways families can incorporate language development into their everyday experiences.

Dr. Bennett-Armistead is currently undertaking a research study with the families to explore the effects of daily read aloud with their children. This study, done in partnership with a local high school honors student, will teach families strategies for maximizing read aloud time with even the littlest literacy learner. Results are expected later this spring.

The Lifespan Literacy Community, with its multi-agency support, links to university students and courses, and a broad focus of

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A Call for Resolutions

The Maine School Boards Association will be holding its annual Delegate Assembly in conjunction with the 45th Annual Maine School Management Association Fall Conference scheduled for October 25 and 26 at the Augusta Civic Center. During the Delegate Assembly the election of the Officers and the Board of Directors of MSBA takes place. The Delegate Assembly also provides an opportunity for school board members to discuss and adopt resolutions that express the collective views of local school boards on current issues in education.

Each school board has the opportunity to submit to the MSBA Resolutions Committee subjects, positions, and rationales for possible resolutions to be considered by the 2018 Delegate Assembly.

Please identify the subject you would like considered, describe your position and briefly state your rationale using the form, below.

The deadline for receipt of your recommended resolutions is August 10, 2018.

[A Call For Resolutions & Proposed Resolution Topic Form](#)

Insurance Trust Fund Trustees so important to the mission of MSMA

“MSMA serves as an advocate for the interests of the state’s public school students and school units and provides programs and services that support the needs of the membership.”

With the above statement as part of the Mission of MSMA, important components of that mission are the Trusts that are operated by MSMA for the member units. Property and Casualty Trust, Workers’ Compensation Trust, Dental Trust, Unemployment Trust, and Group Insurance Trust are the five Trusts that are operated for and by the member units to serve the needs of the membership. Deb Roberts, as the CFO and Insurance Trusts Administrator, provides general oversight and guidance to the Trusts. The Managers/Client Service Directors are listed with the Trusts they oversee.

In my first year of really understanding all that goes into operating the Trusts, I can’t overstate how impressed I am with the work done by the trustees from member districts and the Trust administrators to assure each Trust is performing to serve member needs. These Trusts are truly of and for the membership. They perform at a very high level of service. Each Board of Trustees is made up of School Board members, Superintendents, and Business Managers. Each Trust has dedicated members who are knowledgeable and serve the Trust in the best interest of the Trust and the overall membership.

I’d like to thank those unit members who serve on these Trusts:

Property and Casualty (Anita Folekemer): Sarah Thompson, Portland School Board; Barry Patrie, School Board MSAD 17; Brigitte Williams, Business Manager RSU 38; Vickie Raymond, Business Manager RSU 2; John Backus, Superintendent MSAD 23/RSU 87; Jim Boothby, Chair, Superintendent RSU 25; Tim Doak, Superintendent RSU 39 and RSU 86/MSAD 20.

Workers’ Compensation (Wendy Douglas): Fred Grant, School Board RSU 29; Colin Walsh, Business Manager RSU 57; Luci Milewski Business Manager Northport; Andrea Disch, Business Manager MSAD 11; Tom Ward, Chair, Superintendent RSU 9; Brent Colbry, Superintendent RSU 54; Jim Hodgkin, Superintendent AOS 93.

Unemployment (Doug Burdin): John Logan, member at large; Dan Higgins, Superintendent RSU 24; Kris Pottle, Business Manager RSU 9; Jerry Nault, School Board RSU 12; Kristen Shumway, School Board Winthrop.

Dental Trust (Wendy Douglas): Marc Cone, Chair, School Board MSAD 11; Kate Brix, School Board RSU 14; Betsy Webb, Superintendent Bangor; Scott Eldridge, Business Manager RSU 4; Adam Hanson, Business Manager Auburn.

Group Insurance Trust (Wendy Douglas): Dhyana Blanchard, Business Manager RSU 20; Craig King, Superintendent RSU 15; Marc Cone, Chair, School Board MSAD 11; Gwen Bedell, Business Manager Sanford.

Steven Bailey
MSMA, Executive Director

Update on Legislation

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appropriations needed for the start of the fiscal year on July 1. It includes one-time funding of \$600,000 from the Fund for Healthy Maine to operate school-based health centers in this fiscal year. It also includes language from a bill on CDS that establishes a task force to study and plan for the implementation of Maine’s early childhood special education programs and services provided for children from 3 years of age to 5 years of age. It also funds a \$3.7 million shortfall in the existing CDS program. It passed both the House and Senate with a two-thirds vote, but has been vetoed by the governor. A veto override will be considered when the Legislature returns.

Maine Schools in Focus:

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serving infants, school age children, adults as students, and pre-service and in-service teachers, is unique in the United States. It offers rich opportunity for instruction, research, service, and celebration of literacy in our state. This work has helped us focus on new directions for thinking about supporting children, families and adults with their literacy, but several questions remain, including:

1. The need for tutoring is greater than the supply of tutors. In what ways might we incorporate undergraduate students into the tutoring sessions? What training might be needed for them to be effective?
2. Other communities might want to replicate some or all of the programming we offer. How might our program support other versions of these services? What will people want to know about?

Those wishing to learn more about the LLC are welcome to contact Dr. Bennett-Armistead, Associate Professor of Literacy, susan.bennett-armistead@maine.edu.



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