

# NEWSLETTER

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*“Better Schools for Maine Students”*

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## President’s Message



Dear Colleagues,

As we enter the last month of school, I want you to know that it has been a pleasure to serve as your president this year. It has been a privilege to work closely with the Executive Committee and the MSMA staff to support the work of superintendents across the state. We have developed an educational platform that has been shared with a variety of

constituents, celebrated the importance and value of public education, and increased our advocacy efforts.

I encourage you to attend the Commissioner's Conference on June 24th and 25th. This is an opportunity to learn more about resilient leadership, connect with colleagues, and honor and recognize our peers. I realize summer is short and you have other work and personal commitments, but please make it a priority to attend to strengthen our association. Our profession is constantly under scrutiny, and we need to make time to support and learn from each other.

I hope that all of your budgets pass successfully and that you enjoy the end of the year celebrations. Please take time this summer to enjoy family and friends, pursue hobbies, and reflect on this past year as you gear up for the 2019-2020 school year. I want to thank you for all you do for your district, your region, and your colleagues across the state. Please join me in welcoming your new MSSA president, Scott Porter. I know Scott's leadership will well serve you well.

Patrick

**20th Annual  
MSMA Golf Scramble**  
Tuesday, July 16, 2019  
11:00 a.m. light lunch & putting contest

Plans are underway for the *20th Annual MSMA Golf Scramble*. You are invited to come and join fellow members of the education community for a fun day of golf. Once again we will be playing at The Meadows Golf Course, 495 Huntington Hill Road in Litchfield.

For more information contact Doug Burdin at (207) 622-3473 or [dburdin@msmaweb.com](mailto:dburdin@msmaweb.com).

## Global Competence in Schools

Systemic leadership practices to prepare students for diversity and interconnectedness in the world around them

By Ariel Tichnor-Wagner



In a geographically isolated and economically struggling rural school district in eastern North Carolina, kindergartners through high school seniors are making their mark on the world.

Three years ago, I had the pleasure of spending time in Edgecombe County Public Schools to understand how district leaders, principals and teachers incorporated global competence into curriculum and instruction for all students.

Early elementary school students enrolled in a dual immersion program spoke Spanish to one another as they walked down hallways decorated with murals of continents and flags from around the world. Sixth-graders debated proposals they developed for how their school could reduce its carbon footprint. High school juniors used Skype to connect with a graduate of their school working for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Rwanda, a conversation that yielded insights about life a continent away and how their career choices could have a global impact.

Edgecombe County’s global education initiative addressed much more than stagnant student achievement scores. It opened students’ eyes to possibilities they never imagined existed while priming them for success in college, careers and civic life.

No matter where our feet are planted, our students and schools are inextricably connected with the rest of the world. When students graduate high school and college, they will compete for jobs in a global marketplace and work with colleagues and customers from around the world. Most are already digitally connected to global networks through social media, apps,

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## A Clear Path to Greater Public Support

By Jamie Vollmer

ESSA, Title IV, Part A, directs administrators to “strengthen ties with the people of their communities.” Maine’s State Department of Education encourages administrators to “engage stakeholders.” The strategic plan of every district in the state prominently features a public engagement objective. And yet, attention to the so-called “community piece” is quickly overshadowed as the drama of the school year unfolds. Pursuit of this strategic goal is left to the superintendent and the communications director, if you are lucky enough to have one.

Once upon a time, this was good enough: Educators were trusted, most folks had kids in school. Those days are gone. Shifting demographics, rising expectations, and intense political scrutiny have changed the school/community relationship. Spend a day in any Maine public school and it becomes clear before lunch that the traditional mandate, “Teach our students,” has mutated into, “Raise our kids!” And as administrators strive to meet this challenge, media pundits, ideologue policymakers, anti-tax crusaders, and self-serving entrepreneurs work 24/7 to erode public support. The time has come for everyone on staff – certified and classified – to stand up and promote their success. Your schools need all the support they can get.

MSMA members have listened to me talk about increasing public support for almost thirty years, most recently in October in Augusta where I said I was developing a video series to advance the cause. What I didn’t realize, until after the series was complete, is that I had described a path - a logical progression that administrators could follow to inspire their staffs to become better ambassadors for their schools and, at the same time, dramatically increase community support. This path has six interrelated steps.

### **Step One – Promote Public Education and Praise Your Staff**

In this time of rampant criticism, it is vital that administrators and their staffs stand up and tell the story of public education’s success. Make it clear that public schools have unleashed the potential of tens of millions of Americans both privileged and disenfranchised. Explain that no expenditure of tax dollars yields as high a return as our investment in public schools.

Promote the fact that your teachers are the most important professionals in your community. Show the public how every road to individual and community success runs right through their classroom doors. Highlight their record of achievements. Applaud their dedication. Stress the value of their individual and collective experience. Publicly celebrate their success.

### **Step Two – Defend public education and promote your success**

Acknowledge the threats facing your schools. Analyze the motivations of those who seek to undermine your support. Provide your staff and allies with the information they need to refute baseless criticism and expose the dangers of empty, free-market rhetoric.

Help your staff see that they have the power to increase support for themselves and their schools. Remind them that they are one of the largest employee groups in the county. Impress upon them that the stakes are too high to remain silent.

At the same time, encourage the staff to eliminate self-inflicted wounds. Make it clear that everyone’s reputation is damaged when staff members bad-mouth one another and their schools in public. Explain the professional and personal benefits that accrue when people shift their attention from the negative to the positive. Ask everyone to look for examples of things in and around their schools that might be considered encouraging, hopeful, or inspirational. Urge them to share their triumphs – big and small – within their social networks.

### **Step Three – Accept the need for change**

Make it clear that defending public education does not mean defending the status quo. Help staff, parents, and the public understand why schools need to change. Reference Thomas Jefferson’s seminal “Notes on the State of Virginia” to expose the sorting problem that sits at the heart of the system. Raise awareness that our schools were created to serve an America that no longer exists.

But make sure everyone understands that attempting major change can, and will, inflame passions. Even reasonable reforms backed by logic and research will anger those who hold on to rigid mental models of “the way school ought to be.” Ignore this reality at your peril.

### **Step Four – Overcome resistance to change**

Place today’s need for reform in context. Offer a history lesson to show that our schools have always been a work in progress. Review the choices our ancestors made to meet America’s evolving needs and explain the choices we face today.

Address the symbiotic nature of the school/community relationship. Help everyone see that schools are a reflection of local values, traditions, and beliefs. Accept the hard truth that raising student achievement requires more than changing our schools. It requires changing the culture of the communities they serve.

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## **A Clear Path to Greater Public Support**

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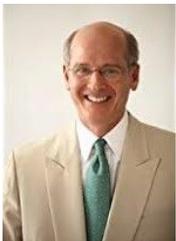
### **Step Five – Increase community understanding**

Help the public understand the challenges you face. Educate the great majority of people who haven't stepped inside one of your schools in decades, and, therefore, have archaic and/or simplistic notions of what you are up against. Expose them to the mountain of academic, social, and medical responsibilities that society has heaped upon your schools.

Be sure to make the need for reform personal. Connect the dots between improving the quality of local schools and improving the quality of life of everyone in the community. Show the people that they have still skin in this game, whether or not they have children in school.

### **Step Six – Reap the benefits of engagement**

Watch as more members of your staff become proactive ambassadors for your schools. Enjoy greater public respect, trust, and resources as you work to prepare all children to thrive and prosper. Expedite fundraising. Fulfill your community engagement objective. Set the stage for ever-increasing student success.



Jamie Vollmer is an award-winning defender of America's public schools. He is the creator of the video series, The Great Conversation™ and author of the book, Schools Cannot Do It Alone.

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## **Global Competence in Schools**

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gaming and more. Our communities and classrooms are becoming more culturally and linguistically diverse, and challenges that impact local communities — from disease to violent extremism to climate change — require solutions that transcend borders.

For all of these reasons, global competence is a must-have for every staff member and student.

### **A Working Definition**

Global competence is the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to thrive in a diverse, interconnected world. Various organizations have developed frameworks that define global competence for students and teachers (see additional resources below). All coalesce around key attributes: empathy, valuing multiple perspectives, appreciating diversity, critical thinking, problem solving, an understanding of global conditions, events and interconnectedness, and cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

To instill global competence in students requires an instructional shift in how learning takes place in classrooms and schools — from traditional transmission of knowledge through lectures, textbooks and worksheets to the co-construction of knowledge using the real world as curriculum.

Embedding global competence as a learning outcome requires a systemwide approach that has the backing of school and district leaders. Yet up until this point, little work had addressed how educational leaders can best prepare students to thrive in a diverse, interconnected world.

### **Seven Tenets**

By examining research and best practices of educational leaders committed to this work, ASCD and the Longview Foundation developed a framework for globally competent educational leadership. The framework includes seven globally competent leadership tenets centered around four leadership domains: vision setting, pedagogy and practice, situated action, and systems and structures. They are intentionally aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, adopted in 2015 by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, as globally competent leadership is integral to best leadership practices, not an add-on.

The seven tenets apply to leaders in districts large and small, from affluent suburbs to urban centers to rural communities. The examples below are drawn from interviews with more than 20 district and school administrators nationwide.

» **Tenet 1: Facilitating and enacting a shared mission and vision of high-quality education that includes preparing students for life, work and citizenship in a global society.** Bring stakeholders together to collectively define global learning, determine how to implement it and connect it to local needs and priorities. A school principal in the District of Columbia, prior to starting a global studies program, conducted meetings with students, parents and community activists to incorporate their perspectives into the school's definition of global competence. Other districts and schools have created global task forces with multiple stakeholders to articulate a global vision and oversee its implementation.

» **Tenet 2: Implementing and supporting curriculum, instruction and assessment that incorporates global competence.**

Give teachers the time, space and training to rework lessons, units and projects to incorporate a global perspective and build into the schedule new global classes and programs (such as global studies electives, Mandarin language lessons, dual immersion programs and global project fairs). District administrators can further support these efforts by clearing teachers' professional development plates to focus on integrating global competence into their content area and by funding curricular resources.

» **Tenet 3: Fostering a professional community where school personnel work together to build capacity around developing global competence.**

Create opportunities for staff to lead collaborative work around global competence. In some districts, this has been addressed through monthly morning collaboratives, daily common planning time or cadres of mentor teachers and professional learning teams with staff from different content areas or grade levels. Some site leaders give staff the

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autonomy to control the global topics and projects pursued. As one middle school principal in a suburban Massachusetts district shared, “You have to let teachers experiment and decide how they incorporate global competence. You’re the gardener that lets it grow. . . . Sometimes you have to prune and scaffold so that their ideas will end up successful and sustainable in the long run.”

### » **Tenet 4: Connecting and collaborating globally to promote global competence development.**

Build a global professional learning community of local, national and international colleagues to augment students’ and staff’s global learning. Edgecombe County, N.C., sent groups of principals to observe schools in a neighboring district with similar demographics that already had a global initiative in place. Another mid-sized school district in the Southeast paid for administrators to attend international study programs to cultivate a global mindset and to make connections for school partnerships. Social media also has a powerful role in building virtual global professional learning networks without having to leave the office or break your budget.

### » **Tenet 5: Advocating for global competence and engaging families, community members and policymakers for support.**

District leaders promote the importance of global learning to key stakeholders, including school board members and policymakers. They use the experience of families and community organizations as global learning partners. In some districts, parents have served as guest speakers or guests of honor at events showcasing students’ global work, and local businesses have sponsored global programs. Administrators have partnered with local universities and nonprofits in teacher exchange and professional development programs.

### » **Tenet 6: Striving for equity of access to high-quality global learning opportunities and cultivating an inclusive, caring and supportive school community that values the cultural and linguistic diversity of each student.**

Recognize that global competence is a must-have for all students, regardless of ability level, disability, language proficiency or background. To achieve this, administrators in urban and high-need rural communities have required all teachers to participate in professional development on integrating global content across the curriculum. A Massachusetts high school principal whose school started a global citizenship certificate program intentionally did not make GPA a factor in the application process.

With schools serving as microcosms of a community’s global diversity, they accommodate the needs of students, families and staff from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and spread an ethos of tolerance and civility so that all students, families and staff feel safe expressing their beliefs.

### » **Tenet 7: Managing school operations and resources to support global competence development.**

Re-allocate existing resources, seek new resources through grants and partnerships and revise policies to support global learning. Districts have re-organized central-office positions to make global education implementation an explicit job responsibility. Districts also have used federal Title I and Title II funds to support global learning, sometimes by hiring instructional coaches focused on global project-based learning or by funding outside training.

Notably, globally supportive administrators emphasize that integrating global competence isn’t expensive. It’s about creating time in the schedule and prioritizing global learning when determining how professional development and personnel budgets will be used.

## **Getting Started**

Leaders can incorporate these tenets into practice in the following ways.

» **FIND YOUR WHY.** Understanding the wider world begins at home. School leaders embrace global education for different purposes based on local needs. Some whose schools serve students hailing from across the world see global education as a way to create an inclusive school environment. Others see this as an equity issue to ensure all graduates are prepared to compete in a global economy. Grounding the global focus in local concerns can motivate you — along with teachers, parents and students — to embrace global learning.

» **REACH OUT.** Whether developing a globally focused mission statement or planning global professional development, don’t go at it alone. Create committees, bring content experts in or search online for existing courses, microcredentials or training to help teachers develop appropriate teaching practices. And administrators ought not be afraid to learn with and from students and staff by participating in educator exchanges or chaperoning an international student trip.

» **GIVE YOURSELF TIME.** This is an ongoing learning journey. Systems don’t change overnight. Districts that have implemented global learning initiatives have taken a year of planning time to gather support or have chosen to start with a small cohort of teachers before scaling up across the district.

No single prescription will lead to globally competent leadership. Much depends on local context and comfort level. But the time to begin is now. The world is waiting.

**ARIEL TICHNOR-WAGNER** is senior fellow of global competence at ASCD in Alexandria, Va.

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Ariel Tichnor-Wagner

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## 2020 Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent of the Year program information now available

These programs are run independently. The Superintendent of the Year is national program that is conducted online directly through the AASA website <http://soy.aasa.org>.

In 2016 Maine implemented an award for an Assistant Superintendent of the Year. This will be awarded by MSSA and conducted through our office.

The timelines for both awards are as follows:

### **SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR (through the AASA website)**

July 1, 2019	All applicants invited to AASA National Conference on Education being held on February 13-15, 2020, in San Diego, CA. To register (when available) go to <a href="http://nce.aasa.org">http://nce.aasa.org</a> .
August 5	Deadline for <i>nominations</i> to be completed online at <a href="http://soy.aasa.org">http://soy.aasa.org</a> .
September 3	Deadline for applications to be received online for State of Maine.
October 3	MSSA Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent of the Year Committee meets to review applications and select the winner(s). Winner announced at MSSA Annual Meeting.
November-December	Blue Ribbon Selection Committee determines four finalists for AASA National Superintendent of the Year.
December 16	National finalists notified by AASA.
January 9, 2020	Blue Ribbon Selection Committee interview four finalists individually.
February 13	AASA National Conference on Education in San Diego, CA. All State Superintendents of the Year, Finalists for AASA National Superintendent of the Year, Canadian and International School Superintendents of the Year honored on stage during the general session of NCE.



**AIG Retirement Services**



### **MAINE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR (conducted by MSSA)**

May 20	Announcement sent out for Assistant Superintendent of the Year nominations.
August 5	Deadline for <i>nominations</i> to be submitted to MSSA.
September 3	Deadline for completed applications and resumes' to be submitted to MSSA.
October 3	MSSA Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent of the Year Committee meets to review applications and select the winner(s).
Annual Meeting	Winner(s) are announced.



# Mark Your Calendar



EVENT	VENUE	DATE	
<b>108th DOE Commissioner's Conference for Superintendents</b>	Atlantic Oceanside Hotel & Event Center Bar Harbor, ME	6/24-6/25/19	<a href="#">More info</a>
<b>AASA Legislative Advocacy Conference</b>	Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill Washington, DC	7/8-7/10/19	<a href="#">More info</a>
<b>20th Annual MSMA Golf Scramble</b>	The Meadows Golf Course Litchfield, ME	7/16/19	Save the date
<b>MSSA Regional Presidents (9am-12pm) MSSA Officers (1-3pm)</b>	MSMA Augusta, ME	8/22/19	Save the date
<b>MSMA New Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent Workshop Series Meeting #1</b>	MSMA Augusta, ME	8/23/19	Agenda available after 7/1/19
<b>MSSA Annual Meeting</b>	Augusta Civic Center Augusta, ME	10/23/19	Save the date
<b>MSSA Winter Convocation</b>	Marriott Sable Oaks South Portland, ME	1/16-1/17/20	Save the date
<b>MSSA Drive-In Workshop</b>	Augusta Civic Center Augusta, ME	3/6/20	Save the date

## Professional Vacancies

**Coplin Plantation**  
P/T Superintendent of Schools  
Coplin Plantation, Maine

*Position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.*

**Milford School Department**  
P/T Superintendent of Schools  
Milford, Maine

*Position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.*

**MSAD 6**  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Buxton, Hollis, Limington, Standish and Frye Island, Maine

*Position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.*

For more information on vacancies, please visit  
<https://www.msmaweb.com/services/job-vacancies/>

## MSSA Mission Statement

*The Maine School Superintendents Association (MSSA) is an organization that is committed to leadership:*

- Leadership to provide equity, create opportunities for and promote the success of every student;
- Leadership to develop ethical, visionary and competent leaders by:
  - Offering professional learning opportunities for leaders
  - Promoting community and legislative support for education
  - Providing member services

### Core Values and Beliefs

We believe members shall:

- Maintain high expectations for all students, staff and ourselves
- Advocate for resources essential to student learning
- Act with integrity and model professional behavior
- Champion the advancement of public education



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

You can contact me, MSSA Executive Director Eileen King at  
[eking@msmaweb.com](mailto:eking@msmaweb.com).