Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Transforming the Path to High Student Achievement

Developing leadership and unity within our membership to achieve continuous improvement in public education.
Real retirement solutions begin here

Rediscover the definition of personal service with a dedicated client service team from VALIC.

> The service and attention you deserve, regardless of plan size
> Compliance solutions to fit any institution and any budget
> VALIC at your side as your business partner

SAVING : INVESTING : PLANNING

Committed to educators

Securities and investment advisory services are offered by VALIC Financial Advisors, Inc., member FINRA, SIPC and an SEC-registered investment advisor.

VALIC represents The Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company and its subsidiaries, VALIC Financial Advisors, Inc. and VALIC Retirement Services Company.

Copyright © The Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company. All rights reserved.

VC 23071 (03/2010) /77407 ER
Exceptional Coverage
Outstanding Service
Valuable Member Benefits

For more than 40 years, SET SEG School Insurance Specialists have been providing comprehensive and affordable insurance options for public schools across the state.

There’s a reason more than 500 Michigan schools choose SET SEG

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
Established in 1971

PROPERTY/CASUALTY POOL
Established in 1986

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION FUND
Established in 1977

SET SEG
School Insurance Specialists

415 W. Kalamazoo Street  Lansing, MI 48933  |  1-800-292-5421  |  www.setseg.org
Features

10  Connected Educator Series Brings Effective PD to Teacher’s Inboxes
12  Crucial Conversations About America’s Schools
14  …Huh?
16  Why Do We Continue to Do Unto Others as Was Done Unto Us?
18  Student Achievement Growth Scores Drive Change in Instruction in an Urban High School
20  Fall Conference Registration Form
21  Your Leadership Legacy—A “Now” Thing
22  Transform Learning by Transforming Your Leading
25  Transforming the Path to Student Achievement
28  Internet Essentials: Closing the Digital Divide and Opening Opportunities for Students, One Michigan Family at a Time

Departments

7  Say Hey, Let’s Talk
8  Keeping Up, Leading On
30  Index to Advertisers
Healthcare designed for you.

At Physicians Health Plan, we are dedicated to keeping you healthy. That’s why we’ve created programs like Life360 to assist you with your particular healthcare needs. These health management programs are designed to fit your lifestyle and the specific needs of everyone in your family.

If you’re already a PHP member, we’re happy to have you as part of our family. If you’re not a PHP member, it’s a great time to look at your healthcare options. Because you have a choice. phpmm.org

Physicians Health Plan of Mid-Michigan and its subsidiaries are affiliates of Sparrow Health System.
You asked and we listened...

Experience, knowledge and savings brought to you by PESG affiliate companies.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE SOLUTIONS, LLC
Full time custodial, skilled trades and security employees.

COACHEZ by PESG
Independent contractor coaches provided based upon MHSAA guidelines.

StaffEZ
Short term contracts for specialized classifications such as Schedule B, ie: drama, play, debate, year book and class sponsors.

ESR
Educational Staffing Resources
Full time clerical, administrative support, non-instructional classroom aids and child care employees.

For more information please contact us at 866-782-7277

PESG
Educational Staffing Solutions
EAST MICHIGAN
6431 E Atherton Road
Burtton, MI 48519

WEST MICHIGAN
6307 84th Street
Caledonia, MI 49316

TENNESSEE
402 REN Drive, Suite 202
Nashville, TN 37217
855-74-STAFF
Engaging Content, Inspirational Instruction, Adaptive Systems Are Keys to Learning

By William Mayes, MASA Executive Director

As I think about the year that was—a year of promise and heartbreak—I think of a classroom I visited this past spring and the wonderful instruction going on there. The children were engaged. The teacher was inspirational. They were learning and I was learning. That is what it is all about: being engaged, being inspired and learning.

In the coming year MASA will look at ways to transform the rocky road to high student achievement. And it is a rocky road without engagement, inspiration and quality teaching and learning. But when those things occur, lights go on and our world is transformed.

The classroom of today is transforming, too. The room I visited looks entirely different from the one I experienced in Port Austin back in the day. For one thing, it’s been transformed by technology. The bulky overhead projectors are gone. The encyclopedias are gone. The dictionary is gone.

This classroom has a sleek Smart Board being used to reinforce the lesson in one corner and to re-teach in the other. At the same time, children used iPads to get to answers more quickly. The key to the great lesson I observed was that everyone was participating and working in unison to “get it done.” The teacher was checking and re-checking to make sure everyone was “in the moment.” The learning was electric—fun and oh-so-much better and different than in Port Austin in my day.

Now I am not saying that the instruction I received was all bad. I had some great teachers like Miss Dowde and Mr. Lamb. I learned much from them. (I also had a couple of duds who had no business teaching.)

What I am saying is that today’s students have so much more to learn; the sheer volume and complexity is growing daily. Thanks to new practices and tools, we can help fill that gap. And thanks to tenure reform, providing only quality teachers for each and every child is easier to attain. We can no longer afford not to know how well we are doing.

The key is quality evaluation and assessment—of student progress and of the effectiveness of the teachers, principals, central office administrators and superintendents. We must have the right people on the bus and we must be able to share with our public that we have the best and most effective staff available.

MASA and Michigan ASCD, teaming with Zimco, Inc., provide a system of evaluation tools and services that can help districts assess, evaluate and transform the practices of building and district leaders and staffs. A research-based, fully aligned evaluation system can reveal just how effective educators are and help focus their efforts around student achievement.

Public educators move forward when we are not afraid to honestly examine ourselves. We do our best when we are not afraid to evaluate and make positive changes where they are needed. Our children need our best, and we will not let them down.

As fall comes into view, expect good things to happen in your buildings. We have the skills. We have the energy. We have what it takes to be world-class. We can do this, and MASA will be with you every step of the way.

See you in Traverse City.

School ADvance Administrator Evaluation System
- Affordable
- Research-based
- Aligned with state and national standards for administrator performance
- Meets all the requirements of Michigan’s new laws addressing employee evaluation
- Co-developed by MASA and Michigan ASCD

School ADvance Plus, available in partnership with Zimco, Inc., includes the enhanced features of STAGES—a software solution co-developed by Zimco, Inc. and Saginaw Valley State University. Use School ADvance to evaluate:
- Principals
- Central office administrators
- Superintendents

Professional Development available for every stage of system design and implementation. Call 517-327-5910 or contact lwacyk@gomasa.org to learn more.
Several years ago COP ESD started to make the transition from a district with general and special education departments to a district that focuses on learning for all students and support for all teachers. Our group meetings became entangled on the topics of the needs of our local schools, initiatives put forth at the state and federal levels, staff training requirements, curriculum requirements and the overall impact on student achievement. Our special education staff was addressing how to help students who were struggling in order to prevent special education referrals, while our general education staff were discussing how to address the needs of both lower and higher achieving students.

To bring our ESD together we started a book study with our Administrative Team, Local Superintendent Council, and in our ancillary staff meetings and school improvement team meetings using *Annual Growth For All Students, Catch Up Growth For Those Left Behind* by Lynn Fielding, Nancy Kerr, and Paul Rosier. This led to our work on braiding initiatives and developing a filter to determine what we could support within our ESD.

Along with all of this work, the planets seemed to align with the changes in special education laws, the initiatives of Positive Behavior Support, START, MiBLSi, Literacy Best Practice, Universal Screening/Progress Monitoring (DIBLES/AimsWeb), Response to Intervention, and data tools such as Data 4Student Success, Powerschool, and Data Warehousing.

The COP ESD staff is working hand in hand with our local school districts as trainers, coaches, and team members to assist in increasing student achievement and success for students. Both the ESD and local districts are focusing on the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach for student achievement and using RTI strategies and interventions for all children. Our COP staff started the discussion in our district about eight years ago so we know it takes time, but our locals are embracing the approach and continue to focus on student achievement. We all know that we must be diligent and work together. I am proud to work with the local districts within the COP ESD boundaries, and I applaud their efforts.

As you see in this *MASA Leader* magazine, the theme for the 2012-2013 school year is “Transforming the Path to High Student Achievement.” It’s a theme that will also guide the focus of this year’s two conferences. Be sure to join us, even if only for a day. You will want to hear, see, learn and grow with the rest of your fellow superintendents.

As we begin the new school year, I hope you had an opportunity this summer to enjoy the natural gifts of this Michigan we call home. When we gather together in our meetings, committees, and conferences with colleagues, be sure to take some time to ask about the “wonders” of their part of our state. There is always something new and wonderful to find right here in Michigan, which includes not only places and products but the people who dedicate their knowledge, skills and services to the education of our children.

Here we go again! Jump on and embrace the ride of another year of challenge and continued change. What fun we will have!

*Mary M. Vratanina*
These are more than assessment reports. They’re passports to a better future.

Introducing STAR Enterprise™—our new generation of reading and math assessments. With new tools, content, and reports, teachers can quickly get needed data to drive daily instruction and practice. Fast, accurate, and easy to administer, STAR Enterprise assessments include Core Progress™ learning progressions aligned to state standards and the Common Core State Standards to help you ensure all of your students are on a path to success.
Michigan teachers face the challenge of being proficient in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning within their classrooms. Administrators call for it, parents expect it, and students crave it. Unfortunately, teachers also have limited time, resources, and access to the latest applications of instructional technology.

To make matters worse, reduced budgets limit opportunities for educators to attend conferences and meaningful professional development. So how do we give teachers access to current examples of ed tech “done right” given today’s education climate? The REMC Connected Educator Series brings effective instructional technology strategies directly to the inboxes of every teacher in Michigan. Each video episode features a master teacher from Michigan demonstrating how he or she uses technology in their teaching, steps on how to get started, and ideas that can be tweaked to work in different classroom settings. As Connected Educator episodes are produced, REMC directors across the state forward those links to teachers within their region.

The library of episodes can be found at the REMC website www.remc.org/connectededucator and includes topics such as blogs, wikis, iPads, Skype, Moodle, Google, video assessment, and much more. For convenient access, they are also accessible through REMC’s Mi Streamnet at www.mistreamnet.org and iTunesU through MACUL’s MI Learning at http://www.macul.org/milearning.

*Family Access allows me to track not only my children’s grades, but their daily assignments and attendance. I don’t have to wait for grades to come home. It is also a great way to communicate with the teachers. Family Access is an outstanding tool for parents.*

Rob Pesick, Parent Walled Lake Consolidated School District, Michigan

**Skyward’s Family Access**
Improving student performance & parent communication

- Real-time information available (24/7) to parents.
- Auto alerts available for food service, attendance, grades and more.
- Parents set their expectations for student achievement with alerts.

Learn more at [www.skyward.com/family](http://www.skyward.com/family) or call 877.764.7237

Powerful Student, Finance and Human Resources administrative software exclusively for K-12 schools.
“The REMC Connected Educator Series introduces examples and ideas showing educators the effective use of educational technology tools from the convenience of their own computer.”

**Connected Educator Series**
- Exceptional Michigan educators sharing effective technology practices
- Anytime, anywhere access
- Professional development at your desktop
- New videos released bi-weekly
- Timely topics – blogs, Skype, BYOD, social media, digital textbooks and many more

For more information contact connectededucator@remc.org
Crucial Conversations About America’s Schools

By John Draper, Ed.D.

Anyone who has sat through a boring lecture knows that facts and information are remarkably forgettable. We have all had teachers in our past, many of them at the university level, who relied solely on lecture and offered little in the way of student engagement. However, there are some teachers whose lessons we still remember years later! What makes their teaching so sticky? And just as important, how do we “unstick” the myth of failing public schools that is so damaging to us?

Public schools are a huge operation organized and funded by every state and employing hundreds of thousands nationwide. They are labor-intensive and expensive. It is difficult to justify the expense if you approach public schools as a service industry for students. It is uninspiring.

To justify the expense of public education, we must appeal to the top of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Originally the theory was presented as a ladder of needs from physical to security all the way up to learning and transcendence (helping others realize their potential). Now, psychology textbooks recognize the needs but not necessarily the hierarchy. It seems that people pursue all these needs simultaneously.

An interesting study cited by Chip Heath in the book, Made to Stick, suggests that most people claim to be motivated by the “higher” rungs on Maslow’s ladder such as learning and self-fulfillment but, in a surprising twist, assume that others are primarily motivated by physical and security needs.

The findings are important for public education. If school leaders want others to support public schools, they must appeal to the “higher good” within. Education must be viewed in its broader sense.

Gilbert Chesterton said, “Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.” Henry Ford is known for saying, “Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.” It is too easy to mistake the daily tasks of teaching, transporting, feeding and managing students as just work. Teaching is a job—but saving lives through education is a mission. It is the mission that motivates—not the routine.

The challenge is to connect others to the mission of public education. We do it by personalizing the message. When school leaders talk about students, teachers, or support workers as a group, we lose the mission. Charities know that it is more effective to tell the story of one starving child and ask for a donation than to tell about 10,000 nameless, starving children in a third-world country. Similarly, a story that features the success of one student, the caring of one particular teacher, or the dedication of one specific
support employee is more effective in building support for the whole district.

Fortunately, you don’t have to make up these stories. They surround us. School leaders just have to learn the art of “story spotting.” Bob Ocieja is not particularly famous, but the story he spotted is one you’ll know. He was a Subway franchise owner in Chicago who heard about an obese college student who ate small, healthy sandwiches each day at a Subway in Bloomington, Illinois, and subsequently lost a lot of weight. Ocieja brought the story to the attention of a local Subway ad manager and the rest is history.

The first ad with Jared ran on January 1, 2000. It was simply Jared, who weighed only 185 lbs, standing in front of his home and holding a pair of the pants that he wore when he weighed 425 lbs! The next day, USA Today, ABC, and Fox News called. On the third day, Oprah called and invited Jared to be a guest on her show. You could say the message stuck! Today it’s a classic, Challenge Plot story. We remember Jared, but not Bob Ocieja. Bob just had to keep his eyes and ears open for stories that would resonate with the public—and that’s what school leaders must do as well.

You don’t need to be a talented speaker to be effective. Have your research and information, but don’t use it unless requested. Using it when you don’t have to will hurt your presentation anyway. If your time is short, just tell the story that will resonate with your hearers and help them care about your students, their success and the mission of your district.

John Draper, Ed.D. is the President of Cambridge Strategic Services, and co-author of the book Crucial Conversations About America’s Schools. Dr. Draper will provide the keynote address for the MASA Fall Conference on Thursday, September 27, 2012.

When school leaders talk about students, teachers, or support workers as a group, we lose the mission… tell the story that will resonate with your hearers and help them care about your students, their success and the mission of your district.

A trusted resource.

With a vested interest in your success, we understand how strengthening and building relationships creates value. Our experienced consulting team can help maximize your human capital, facility, and technology resources, delivering a higher return on experience.

Contact:
Laura Claeyes 586.416.4910
Judy Wright 248.223.3304
Paul Wills 248.223.3316
plante-moran.com
So what is ﻛُيْزْيِلْﺞَن? It is the Arabic spelling for the word English!

Coldwater Community Schools has a very diverse student population with over 360 English Language Learners, most of which come from Arabic- and Spanish-language backgrounds. Before we could begin to transform our path to higher student achievement across the district, we had to first identify the needs of our diverse student population.

What we uncovered was that many of our ELL students were being retained and tested unnecessarily for special education services based on their lack of English language proficiency. We were also finding that our ELL students were scoring almost 20 percent below their English speaking peers on state and local assessments. Lastly, since all of our ELL students were required to take the ELPA (English Language Proficiency Assessment), we had data that showed our students weren’t making a year of growth based on the services we were providing. In fact, it was taking many of our students two to three years to reach proficiency.

All of these issues forced us to dramatically change our delivery model; so, we decided to completely restructure our district and redesign the services we provide to our non-English speaking students.

New structures, new thinking

We began the process by working with our community to change the elementary configuration for all of our students in grades K-5. While our original motive for this was to streamline the resources and services we had available to our ELL students, we also knew it would allow us to improve services for all of our K-5 students. In our new configuration, we created a new Early Childhood and English Language Learner Service Center. This housed our newly-expanded pre-school programs, Young 5 Kindergarten program, and kindergarten, first-, second-, and third-grade classrooms for ELL students who weren’t proficient in English.

It was very challenging to convince our community this was a model that would support improved student achievement across the district. In fact, this plan was met with much community resistance, and we uncovered an even bigger underlying issue—racial prejudices. Even though our Yemeni and Hispanic families had been part of our community for decades, the attention that we had shifted to our ELL students created a huge rift throughout the community. We created Parent Advisory Councils to help educate our community on the needs of all our students, and, eventually, after a year of meetings and careful planning, we were able to start this school year in our new configuration.

Transformation in action

So what does our ELL program look like?

We have created a structured English immersion program where students receive intensive language instruction for a portion of the day. Each classroom is staffed with a highly qualified teacher who is fluent in English and, depending on the students’ needs, we have the benefit of an Arabic and/or Spanish ELL Coach, who provides additional support for those with very low language proficiency. The classrooms are all mediated with technology, so our students are being immersed in English through hands-on technology as well.

Our goal is to have our students achieve the grade-level content objectives and score at the proficient level on the English Language Proficient Assessment (ELPA). Once they have achieved that goal, they move to their respective “home” school at one of the other elementary buildings. We were hopeful that our ELL students would take less time to reach proficient levels through this new configuration so their scores on state and district assessments would be comparable to their English-speaking peers.

Is our new configuration and service model effective? YES!

Even though this is our first year in operation, we have already seen our students make tremendous gains on the ELPA and local assessments. In fact, of the 57 lowest ELL students currently attending the service center, only two students showed no growth this year. For the first time, we had students scoring at advanced proficient levels.

We have finally created a system that is sensitive to the cultural and diverse needs of our students. While we may not be able to change the closed-mindedness of some of our community members, we have opened our minds to a whole new system for servicing our English Language Learners.

Our program will continue to grow and transform with the needs of our students. We are looking at replicating this model where other system-level gaps exist, such as our at-risk population. This approach will ultimately allow us to transform our path to higher student achievement across the entire system.

Tina Kerr, Ph.D., is superintendent of Coldwater Community Schools and 2012 Michigan Superintendent of the Year. Contact her at tkerr@coldwaterschools.org.
“Lower costs, dependability, outstanding customer service—they’re all a Plus.”

*Dr. Vickie Markavitch has been through the process of choosing health plan options many times,* and cost is always a deciding factor. But HealthPlus brings more to the table than just low cost: a commitment to wellness, superior customer service and a truly easy transition. That’s why Dr. Markavitch recommends HealthPlus to others in her position.

*You could add a big plus for your employees, minus the high cost.*
Why Do We Continue to Do Unto Others as Was Done Unto Us?

The moral imperative to change grading and assessment practices to benefit all

By Amy Hodgson

As educators, we are currently swimming in a sea of change. The landscape changes so often that we find ourselves having to pause and take a good look around us just to get our bearings.

In light of this reality, it is difficult for many of us to consider changing one of the longest-running practices in education: how we grade and assess our students. We are great at coming up with excuses why not to consider this paradigm shift, but we cannot afford to procrastinate in addressing this significant educational practice any longer.

Thirty years of educational research by Rick Stiggins, Jan Chappuis, Steve Chappuis, Ken O’Connor and Robert Marzano all point to the impact on student achievement of changing how we grade and assess students, which is great to know. What is even greater is witnessing firsthand in student after student how standards-based grading and a balanced assessment approach have totally changed their educational trajectory.

Dansville Schools began the journey towards changing our grading and assessment practices six years ago. We have approached this with a teacher-by-teacher methodology that has resulted in many of our staff K-12 making this very significant change. We provided the research to all interested staff members, and teachers did action research in their classrooms in a supportive environment. Those who have made the change testify regularly that they would never go back to the old ways of grading and assessment.

We started by creating clear learning targets that are aligned to the Common Core Standards. Clear learning targets are much more than the learning objectives or essential questions I used to put on the board in my classroom. Everything the teacher teaches must be explicitly tied to the learning target. No more busy work!

From there, we had to make sure we had common assessments among teachers who teach common courses or at a grade level. The assessments need to be explicitly labeled with the clear learning targets so there are no more secrets about what students need to know to be proficient.

To make sure the shift of responsibility for learning landed where it belongs—with the student—we started having students self-assess and track their progress. Students monitor their progress on the clear learning targets throughout a unit by tracking their proficiency on their formative assessments and by seeing the descriptive feedback their teacher provides on some of these assessments. Students love to visually see their growth on graphs and charts—even high school students!

We provided training and continue to provide professional opportunities for staff regarding a balanced assessment system. We realized that we needed a common language and understanding for assessment as it relates to formative and summative assessments, when to use each and how to use them. We also had to teach our students this information to maximize the effectiveness of our assessment system.

We were finally ready to tackle our grading system—extra credit, late work,
zeros, missing work, retakes, and the weighting of summative vs. formative in a grade. We are still working on this, but in general, students are graded based on their summative assessments (90%) and their work habits (10%). We have shifted to a focus on proficiency for ALL students. Students are allowed to retake the learning targets they missed on summative assessments. This change alone has brought many reluctant learners back to the table.

Instead of grades, in many cases we are using a 0-4 scale with rubrics. Students use the rubrics for their self-assessments as well as to track their progress based on teacher feedback. Teachers are backing their learning targets with rubrics to make sure the target is crystal clear for all stakeholders.

This is a journey that has been extremely challenging, but also unbelievably rewarding—for teachers and students alike. We have stories of students who transferred into our high school without hope and behind in credits who started experiencing success. Success soon became confidence, which eventually led to a high school diploma. We would never purport to be experts or to have established a perfect system; but we realize that because of the impact on students and the shift in our mission to produce students who are all proficient, we need to keep plugging along.

I will leave you with one of our favorite quotes throughout this process: “What we know today doesn’t make yesterday wrong; it only makes tomorrow better.”

We had to put our teacher guilt about our former ways behind us. We are beginning to experience a “better tomorrow” and believe that it’s time to stop doing unto our students as was done unto us in the areas of grading and assessment.

Please consider reading the work of the authors and researchers referenced in this article. You may also want to check out the Assessment tab on our website at www.dansville.org for presentations and resources to help as you lead your staff on your own journey.

Amy Hodgson is superintendent of Dansville Schools. Contact her at Hodgson@dansville.org.
In an era of intense accountability and reform, assessment and evaluation have become paramount in importance. How we assess student achievement, analyze the results, and use that information to shape our practices has become part of the systemic dialogue among staff at Beecher High School.

By creating a growth mindset, we are examining our instructional delivery, student performance, and where we need to improve and duplicate positive results. We are using Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests to analyze student growth and focus on instructional support where it is needed most. In this article, I will describe what we do with growth score data to direct process and instruction and ultimately drive student achievement and school improvement.

There exist many challenges. Our high school has been identified as a Persistently Low Achieving school (PLA) as part of the identified bottom 5 percent performing schools in the state. It has been required to submit a transformational plan to the state and be monitored for progress on the plan implementation. According to census bureau statistics, we are also one of the poorest communities in the state.

However, according to Beecher Community Schools Superintendent, Dr. Josha Talsion, “We are determined to disprove that zip code determines academic success.” Consequently, we are reorganizing our processes, launching an intensive inspection of how we accomplish our goals and strategies, and embracing a data-driven approach. This approach applies to adherence to state requirements, test scores, programs and teaching—all as a way to gauge improvement and growth.

How we assess student achievement has become part of the systemic process of meeting and dialogue among staff. Our staff has embraced the team concept by working together rather than in isolation to address learning needs of students and building issues. We accomplish this through dialogue and analysis at Professional Learning Community grade level meetings, departmentally, at school improvement meetings, and finally administratively and individually as teachers. Although this approach is rather common, it is a new process for our school.

By creating a growth mindset, we have begun examining our instructional delivery, student performance, and where we need to improve in order to duplicate positive results. Through the use of classroom walk-through’s, inspecting best practice has become part of our open culture. By identifying clear learning targets, increasing student engagement and time on task, and by creating a sense of urgency, we emphasize the practices that get results such as formulating a warm-up focus at the beginning of each lesson and exit tickets at the end. Even though tardiness and attendance can be an issue, we start on time and teach up to the bell. Everyone’s instruction is on a growth curve and so is student performance.
We are using NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) Measures of Academic Progress to measure and analyze student growth and put more focus and instructional support where it is needed most. For the past two years we have put into place our norm-referenced testing regime, which gathers growth data three times a year and allows staff to make comparisons between individual students, classes and teachers. Data is not only diagnostic but prescriptive to the unique needs of each Beecher student. By using the MAP test we can determine not only which students are performing at grade level, but also who is growing their skills and who needs the most help. We also differentiate to the higher end and challenge the students who need higher levels of rigor.

We are reorganizing how we conduct our processes and embraced a data-driven approach. Our state monitoring includes looking at our data and how we use it. A rolling data cart of Data Binders and PLC Binders form a repository to collect, show and monitor our use of data. We have working documentation for our own purposes to guide us, but also have a repository warehouse of deliverables and proof of our intentions, progress and implementations. We use data walls in each room, data binders and a rolling cart of data binders about performance and school process. We call it “data ala cart.”

Our MAP testing results show improvements in almost every area and grade, which is something to reflect on as we move into another year. Ultimately, as we cross the bridge of change into systemic best practice and high functioning process, we have learned to embrace not only where we are, but more importantly where we are going. With increased scrutiny in what we do and higher proficiency cut scores, having growth scores and proof of our processes, we can celebrate success and show that our school and our students are growing.

Donald Hammond, Ph.D. is currently a Biology and Environmental Science teacher at Beecher High School. A former administrator, Don returned to the classroom and has created several dynamic learning opportunities for his students, earning him several awards and grants. Contact him at dhammon@beecherschools.org.
Okay, here’s a bit of personal truth. I’m 61 years old. For most people my age, we’re using the word “retirement” more and more. For me, however, that’s the farthest thing from my mind. Yeah, 2008 messed with my portfolio but even if it didn’t, I wouldn’t consider retirement. I’m just having too much fun, meaning, and energy to consider anything else. I have, however, begun thinking about something else: the “L” word—legacy. I’ve begun to speculate about how my family, clients, and co-workers might regard me when I’m “done.” I wonder what words, impressions, or recollections they’ll have of me. I hope for at least a few positives. And equally so, I’m sure there will be some thoughts that will cause me pause—a pause that will say, woulda, coulda, shoulda.

While “legacies” are typically thought of in past tense, what if you took that concept into the present? What if you started right now—even during your busy back-to-school days. There is no upside for delaying. And this is true if you are 25, 45, or even 61.

A book appropriately named, *Your Leadership Legacy* by Robert Galford and Regina Fazio Maruca, recently brought this thought into focus. These words struck me: If you are a leader of a company, a department, or any group of individuals, you will leave a leadership legacy. It won’t be a record of your company’s performance (although that is how it might be summed up by the press). Instead your legacy will be revealed in how your colleagues, employees, and others think and behave as a result of the time they spent with you.

If you start thinking about your leadership legacy now, rather than just before you change jobs or retire, you will greatly increase the odds of leaving a legacy that reflects your best qualities, as well as the elements of your leadership that you would like to see embedded in the fabric of the organization you leave behind. More importantly, you will be a better and happier leader for the effort.

In other words, your leadership legacy is a now thing. Amidst all the “stuff” you contend with each day, a legacy serves as a filter by which you make decisions, engage in conversations, and regard others. This time, however, you’ll do these things with a crystallized purpose.

Mulling over your legacy is one thing. Actually going through a process and crafting one is another. It often has less to do with what to say as having someone hold us accountable to actually take action.

I know school leaders are held accountable by boards, communities, staff members, the media, parents and students. I am advocating a kind of accountability that involves you making a choice to initiate a one-to-one professional coaching relationship with someone committed to helping you achieve your goals—*your legacy*—when staying true to your core vision day in and day out is incredibly difficult.

I encourage you to read the stories here and consider making this choice. No matter what brand of coaching you choose, bouncing your thoughts off someone in a safe and confidential setting who is on your side but who has a different way of looking at things can be a good thing. I, along with the directors at MASA, would be honored to help you get started.

In closing, I’d encourage you to consider a pair of questions. What and who will benefit from having you cast a legacy now? And what’s the cost later if you don’t?

Mark de Roo has been an executive coach for 11 years. He is the proud father of three Holland High School grads; a former representative on Holland’s City Council, and a community liaison on the Holland Public School District’s bond project oversight committee. Contact him at mderoo@keystonecoach.com.
I met my executive coach at the June 2011 “Relate, Reflect and Reframe” one-day conference hosted by MASA in St. Ignace. At the end of the conference all the attendees were offered five free coaching sessions. I had considered using an executive coach, but thought it was cost prohibitive. Still, free is free, so I thought I would give it a try. It was a fantastic decision.

My coach has provided me with some outstanding information. She’s offered feedback on my performance and ideas to expand my growth edges as a superintendent. After an intense all-day job shadow, we now engage in monthly conversations lasting an hour and a half. They involve some pointed questions designed to get me to think about what I am doing, what more I should be doing and tips and tricks of the trade.

Thanks to my coaching experience, I’ve improved my district communications, adapted my leadership style, and incorporated student art in the superintendent’s office. Coaching has given me deeper understanding of implementation, and so much more.

One of the other great things about the executive coach model is that it gives me a person to bounce an idea off—a person who is always available to take my call and tell me if I am thinking clearly. She’s someone who can ask me the tough questions without a personal agenda and who also knows what I am going through. Finally, a coach is someone who isn’t afraid to ignore both my position and personality and tell me the truth.

I have some funding for professional development written into my contract and I choose to spend it on this. What better professional development than a personal conversation with someone who has walked in your shoes and knows you? Who can follow you around and offer immediate and written feedback? Executive coaching is well worth the cost.

When transitioning to my new role, I was unprepared for the various pitfalls and challenges associated with the transitioning process. My coach helped me to think through the various complexities and approach the transition systematically.

I first saw Katy at a Courageous Journey™ presentation, then ran into her at last year’s fall conference. She asked how I was doing and I was honest. We started meeting shortly after. She has helped me regain my confidence in who I am as a leader and tap the courage that is within to do the hard things in my job.

Our district now has systems in place for practicing strategic intent where members of various levels of management have a say and ownership in the governance of the organization. Executive coaching has been a very powerful experience and has made me a better person and leader.

According to the International Coaching Federation (www.coachfederation.org) individuals who engage in a coaching relationship can expect to experience fresh perspectives, enhanced thinking and decision making skills, enhanced interpersonal effectiveness, and increased confidence in carrying out their life work. They can also expect to grow in the areas of productivity, personal satisfaction, and the achievement of personally relevant goals.

We asked some MASA members who’ve experienced coaching about the most important benefits they’ve received, and how it is transforming the path to higher student achievement for their districts. Here’s what they’re saying.
I was aware that highly effective organizations in business used executive leadership coaching services to work with their senior leadership teams. As a relatively new superintendent with a very new leadership team, I looked for someone to help me build a highly effective team and help me grow as a leader. Based upon a recommendation from a fellow superintendent, I contacted Tom to learn about his services.

It is through the coaching and reflection process that I can understand more clearly my strengths as a leader and how my “type” influences my behavior. This has made me more able to recognize conflicting values (i.e. people versus performance) and address those so that I am clear about what is best for the district. Coaching has helped me become more skilled at dealing with conflict, holding others accountable, articulating my vision and giving clear expectations.

Tom provides individual and team coaching for our entire senior leadership team in order to facilitate leadership, organizational development and culture change. In the last two years, our focus has been on expanding voice and collaboration throughout the district. We regularly seek feedback to determine if we are making progress. These results show we are moving the needle toward the desired state and culture.

It is important for superintendents to understand that using a coach is a professional development resource for themselves and their districts. Having a coach does not mean that there is a performance issue—just the opposite. It means that you are willing to invest in yourself in order to make your district more effective. If you look at business, performing arts or professional sports, the best performers continue to use coaches throughout their careers. Leadership coaching has helped me personally grow as a more effective leader, which continues to benefit my district.
She skipped school.
She got into fights.
She dropped out.

But leaders at Vanessa’s school district wouldn’t give up on her.

In dozens of Michigan school districts, we’re helping leaders like you turn dropouts into diploma holders — without impacting their budget.

NoDropouts
A service of The American Academy
586-453-6960
NoDropouts.com

Recover what’s been lost
Join hundreds of your peers and business partners who will gather in beautiful Northern Michigan for three days of highly engaging, relevant professional learning opportunities for MASA members of all types.

Enjoy a great lineup of keynote speakers:

**Stephanie Hamilton**, Educational Specialist, IT and Learning Technologies from Apple, Inc.

**John Draper, Ed.D.**, President of Cambridge Strategic Services, and co-author of the book *Crucial Conversations About America’s Schools*

Hear timely updates on education policy:

**Brad Biladeau**, MASA Associate Executive Director of Government Relations

**Bruce Umpstead**, Director of Integrated Technology at MDE,

**Amber Arellano**, Executive Director of The Education Trust-Midwest

Choose from dozens of clinic sessions presented by experts and peers.

**NEW FOR 2012!**

**Added features for first-line assistants/Michigan ASCD members:** Wednesday morning preconference plus a dedicated conference clinic track: Leading from the Middle

**Friday Optional Dialogue Sessions:** Pre-register to participate, at no additional cost, in one of five highly engaging dialogues:

1. Issues in Evaluating Superintendents and Other School Administrators
2. Creating Effective Governance Team Relationships
4. Welcome to School Administration—Population 1
5. Colleagues Empowering Others in Creating 21st Century Learning Environments

**Preconference One:**

**New Superintendents Conference**

Tuesday, 9/25, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
(followed by networking reception)

Wednesday, 9/26, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
(includes lunch)

Join fellow new superintendents for two days of hot topics such as:
- Negotiations
- School Law
- Dealing with the media
- Working with boards
- Evaluation and Tenure Reform
- Take-home resources
- Networking with peers
- Policy and advocacy tools
- And more...

Learn more at gomasa.org/new-superintendent-conference.

**Preconference Two:**

**Educator Evaluation and Quality Instruction**

Wednesday, 9/26, 8:30-noon
(lunch included)

Co-hosted by Michigan ASCD and open to all Michigan ASCD and MASA members

Join Debra Pickering, Senior Scholar from Marzano Research Lab, to discuss how to keep quality instruction at the center of your educator evaluation efforts.

**Conference Registration** 9/26-9/28

$275

Please choose a payment type:
- Check
- Purchase Order
- Credit Card

Fax this form to 517.327.0779 or mail to:
Michigan Association of School Administrators
Attn: Susan White
1001 Centennial Way, Suite 300
Lansing, MI 48917-9279
As educators, we have sincere passion for youth and a strong drive to give all children the opportunities they need to succeed in life. Franklin D. Roosevelt once said: “We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” That need was true in his generation, and may be even more pressing now.

Our schools are full of students who have lost hope and are facing depression and apathy. Their life stories are full of tragedy and disappointment. Suicides are rising, drugs and alcohol are at an all time high, and bullying and negativity plague our hallways. It must STOP. As adults we must model right actions, and create a desire for our youth to live healthy, intentional lives. Often times, the best example our youth will see will come from school.

So how do we change the culture within our schools? Many schools have found one solution to be providing character education or leadership programs for their youth. If your school is considering this approach, here are four things to consider as you evaluate potential programs:

**Personal, individualized approach.** Students thrive when they feel that someone truly believes in them. Look for a program that offers a very personal and individualized approach to character building. In today’s world, it is easy to get lost in the crowd. The strongest programs are those that allow each student to be genuinely heard without filtering or judgment, and to be reflected and valued. Taking a sincere interest in EACH student allows for tremendous growth, and builds HOPE in a tough world.

*Example: Orlando* was a sixth grade student from northeast Detroit who had had a rough start in life. Like so many children, he was dynamic and brilliant, yet was lacking a strong support network at home. After being coached and mentored through a 9-session leadership program, Orlando started to bloom, and was equipped with new tools to handle his challenging personal situation. This year, he proudly graduated from Eastern Michigan University and is now working as an intern for Fox 2 News Detroit. Orlando has told us that seeing empathy modeled and reflected was a key motivator to his long term success!

**Mentorship Components.** People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care! When selecting a leadership program for your school, make sure it includes a strong mentorship component. In our “technology-based” world, people are missing the human connection. We often don’t take the time to really “care” for one another. Your leadership program should create a safe space for students to share their hearts, to be heard, and to thrive in communication with others.

*Example: Kelsey,* a junior at Brighton High School, was left feeling hopeless after her parents had divorced. Formerly a good student, her grades started falling drastically, she disconnected from her...
Nine Weeks To Success!  
The Reaching Higher Curriculum

1. You Are A Miracle  
Explore our miraculous and unique nature and create a positive community among peers.

2. Remembering  
Identify negative messages that we have ‘learned’ over time and re-discover the precious parts of who we are.

3. Purpose In Life-Setting Goals  
Look at our unique gifts. Explore how to set and attain realistic goals in school, relationships, and other pursuits.

4. Managing Stress  
Learn techniques for impulse intervention and healthy methods to relieve stress.

5. Changing Limiting Beliefs  
Identify our negative self-beliefs and replace these falsities with positive and productive images.

6. Fear to Freedom  
Explore the impact of fear in our lives & learn productive methods to release it.

7. Positive Life Choices  
Hear personal testimony of poor life choices and learn the process and discipline of making good choices.

8. Happiness Through Giving and Loving  
Learn, give to, and empower one another through kind action and communication.

9. Graduation  
A community celebration of student accomplishments featuring stories of struggle, hope, and victory.

Transforming the Path, Continued from page 25

After nine weeks of participating in a strong leadership program, she discovered a reason to “care” about her own future. She invested in her studies, improved her grades, reconnected with her friends, and made intentional choices for her future. Today Kelsey is thriving, having just completed her first year at Curry College in Massachusetts where she made the Dean’s list all terms. Kelsey attributes a large part of her success to the relationships she developed with caring mentors; people who believed strongly in her until she could believe in herself.

Positive Culture and Core Values. I’ve heard it said that “you are who you hang around with.” Creating a positive culture in your school starts at the top. Look for programs that reference and enhance your school’s core values; programs that model integrity, honesty, truth, kindness and compassion. Human beings thrive when they are given love, attention, and appreciation. Mother Teresa was known to have said, “There are no great deeds, only small deeds done with great love.”

Example: Last week I received a call from a student named Annisa from Royal Oak High School. When she came to us, all the odds were against her. Her father was in prison, her mother a drug addict, and she had little family structure to speak of. Through participating in our programs over time, she learned how to take control over her circumstances. She improved her grades, focused on making good choices, and developed a deep sense of inner belief. Her call this week was to let me know that she’s been accepted to Oakland University where she will pursue a medical degree this fall. Receiving calls like this are the BEST events in my week!

Sustainability. There are no “quick fixes” for our youth. Look for a program that can offer a sustainable mechanism to support and strengthen students over time.

Example: Stephani took our leadership training course in her sophomore year of high school. She came back to mentor in a class in both her junior and senior years, continuing to learn, apply, and reinforce key concepts. She also volunteered to help middle school students understand healthy lifestyle choices.
We walked by her side for many years, and being a positive example for others has strengthened her to make healthier choices.

In summary, make sure that your program motivates through individualization, allows for personal mentoring, models positive core values, and is sustainable over time. Following this recipe, your program is sure to succeed! Remember these sage words of Margaret Mead: “Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world, for indeed, its all that ever has.” Working together—administrators, teachers, counselors, parents and students—we can make a difference!

Susie Dahlmann is Executive Director of Reaching Higher, Inc. Contact her at Info@reachinghigherinc.com.

Dawn Zimmer, President of Zinco, Inc.
dzimmer@zinco.net | cell 989.529.7310 | www.stagessoftware.com

IT’S MORE THAN JUST THE LAW.

Lawyers Serving School Districts

WE ARE WHERE YOU ARE. LOCAL FIRM. GLOBAL RESOURCES.

- Bond Counsel
- Employment-Retirement Benefits
- Revenue Enhancement
- Equipment Financing
- Shared Services Agreements
- Outsourcing Agreements
- Student Conduct
- Act 4 Counsel and “Best Practices”
- Teacher Tenure and Evaluation
- Construction-Related Agreements
- FOIA/OMA/Governance
- Technology
- Labor Agreements
- Environmental
- Elections/Campaign Finance
- Special Education
- Employment Litigation/Grievances

Michelle Crockett • 313.496.7655 • crockett@millercanfield.com
Amanda Van Dusen • 313.496.7512 • vandusen@millercanfield.com
E

Edu

Educators know first-hand that now more than ever students need a growing cadre of technology tools to keep them current and maximize their learning potential. Over the past decade, Michigan and the US have seen a virtual explosion in the use of the Internet as part of this trend, opening new possibilities for bringing the online world into an ever-expanding virtual classroom.

Yet too many students remain disconnected from this learning lifeline every day, the moment they leave school. These are the students who have no home Internet access—students who are forced to find public Internet access, perhaps at their local library if it’s available, or by simply doing without. And there are millions of them. Every day, they try to cope with this major learning handicap while their fellow students connect and thrive.

Research shows that the lack of Internet access is typically tied to a family’s income. Fewer than half of those with household incomes under $30,000 have broadband at home, according to the Pew Research Center. This lack of access is effectively shutting the door to learning, and can affect the fortunes of the entire family—stifling everything from job searches to educational and professional networking and acquiring new job skills.

There’s no single solution for solving the problem, but Comcast is joining the fight to connect more of America’s low income families through an innovative new program called Internet Essentials. This program aims to grow these connections by providing:

• Low-cost broadband service for $9.95 a month + tax.
• The option to purchase an Internet-ready computer for $149.99 + tax.
• No price increases, no activation fees and no equipment rental fees.
• Multiple options for digital literacy training in print, online and in person.

Families with children eligible to receive reduced or free school lunches are eligible for Internet Essentials. This initiative represents the largest broadband adoption program anywhere in America. Much more work needs to be done, however, to ensure Internet Essentials reaches the families this program was designed to reach: students from low-income families who have not adopted broadband due to a complex mix of low digital literacy, perceived lack of relevance of online content, and the need for low-cost, good quality computers and Internet service.

School leaders can spread the word, build trust

Principals, teachers and counselors are key players in making Internet Essentials an effective tool to help bridge the digital divide. In a world in which individuals are bombarded with marketing pitches, families may be skeptical when they see the pricing—just $9.95 a month plus tax—and perhaps even more skeptical when they learn that families enrolled in the program will see no activation fees or price increases. A family whose child starts now in Internet Essentials will pay only $9.95 a month for the duration of their program eligibility—even if that means they are eligible, without interruption, from pre-school through their senior year of high school. Receiving this message from a trusted source will help to overcome any hesitation they may feel.

Internet Essentials offers a full suite of complimentary communication materials available on a partner portal. Go to InternetEssentials.com/partner to find:

• A detailed information packet.
• A letter to introduce the program to principals, teachers and counselors.
• A sample letter to help your schools inform families about this opportunity.

“Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.”

—Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund
The impact of the digital divide is not confined to families who lack an Internet connection,” said Chris Wigent, Superintendent of Wayne RESA. “If we are truly going to reach our mission of quality education for ALL students, the education community needs to work with a variety of partners to help close this gap as much as possible. Since the inception of Internet Essentials, I have been impressed by Comcast’s level of investment and commitment to providing this critical access to as many of Michigan’s eligible families as possible.”

Wigent believes an affordable computer and a broadband connection represent much more than the latest technology; they represent access to a boundless world of learning and communication.

“One of our roles as educational leaders is to ensure that we are doing our part to help increase awareness of this unprecedented opportunity for digital access,” Wigent said.

Leslie A. Brogan is Senior Director of Government & Regulatory Affairs for Comcast’s Heartland Region. Leslie may be reached at 517.334.5890 or by email at Leslie_Brogan@cable.comcast.com.
Index to Advertisers

AmeraPlan, Inc. ................................................................. www.ameraplan.com ........................................... 17
The American Academy ................................................ www.nodropouts.com ....................................... 23
Dean Transportation ..................................................... www.deanschoolbus.com & www.deanrailways.com IBC
GCA Services Group ................................................... www.gcaservices.com/k-12 ................................. 22
Go Solutions Group, Inc. ................................................ www.go-sgi.com ................................................ 19
HealthPlus Health Plans ............................................. www.healthplus.org .......................................... 15
Integrated Designs, Inc. ................................................ www.intdesigns.com ........................................... 26
Lexia Learning/CSC Learning ....................................... www.lexialearning.com .................................... 30
McCarthy & Smith, Inc. Construction Services. ............... www.mccarthysmith ........................................... 22
Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, P.L.C. ................. www.millercanfield.com/PublicLaw .................. 27
PESG Educational Staffing Solutions ......................... www.phpmm.org Opp. TOC
Physicians Health Plan ............................................... www.plantemoran.com ........................................ 13
Renaissance Learning .................................................. www.renlearn.com ............................................ 9
Schooldude.com ............................................................ www.schooldude.com OBC
School House Electronics ........................................... www.schoolhouseelectronics.com ................. 29
SET SEG School Insurance Specialists ....................... www.setseg.org Opp. IFC
Skyward ........................................................................ www.skyward.com ........................................... 10
Valic Retirement Services Company ......................... www.valic.com IFC
VARtek Services, Inc. .................................................. www.VARtek.com ............................................... 20
Western Michigan University Extended University Program www.wmich.edu/offcampus .......................... 29
Zimco, Inc. .................................................................. www.stagessoftware.com .................................. 27

---

Lexia
The Future of Reading Education

- Lexia Reading® advances reading skills development for all students pre-K through grade 4, and helps intensify and accelerate learning for at-risk students in grades 4-12.
- Lexia Reading is a technology-based system that provides individualized learning and norm-referenced performance data without interrupting the flow of instruction to administer a test.
- Lexia’s differentiated reading instruction addresses all student populations, making it effective as an RTI tool and an essential component of every reading curriculum.

To learn more contact Lexia Learning 800-435-3942

www.lexialearning.com

Improve reading performance for all students.
Welcome to the Lexia classroom.
Getting them there safely

For over 50 years, Dean Transportation has been a proud partner to schools across Michigan, safely transporting nearly 20,000 students daily.

DeanSchoolBus.com | DeanTrailways.com
“Nirvana is simple, easy-to-use IT asset management!”

Easy and Efficient.

Schools and districts are tracking hardware, software license and usage of their IT assets quickly and stress-free with SchoolDude software. You can too.

LEARN MORE FROM YOUR PEERS: www.schooldude.com/mi-ITAM

“ITAM can assist with Tech Readiness assessment!”

Contact Herb Crawford: 877.868.3833 or herb@schooldude.com