CAAMAL CANUL

School Leadership: Through Her Eyes

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Chocolate Milk MYTHS

SHOULD YOU WORRY IF YOUR KIDS ONLY DRINK FLAVORED MILK? A DIETITIAN SHARES WHY CHOCOLATE MILK AT HOME AND IN THE LUNCHROOM IS A GOOD THING.

No dessert if you don't finish your chocolate milk! Doesn’t sound like something you’d say to your kids! But maybe it should be.

Yes, chocolate milk can be good for you. In fact, experts say a serving of the chocolatey and delicious drink might be just what the doctor ordered for your family.

“I think parents feel that chocolate milk is more of a treat as opposed to the nutrient package that it really is,” says Janice Jackson, a dietitian with the United Dairy Industry of Michigan. “It's a vehicle to get calcium into children’s diets that they may not otherwise get.”

That’s especially true for older children, who typically aren’t meeting recommended calcium requirements.

“It's really important for them because it's during the time of critical bone mass development,” Jackson explains.

Here’s a look at five more myths parents tend to believe about chocolate and other flavored milk.

1. It’s not as healthy
Chocolate milk provides all the same health benefits of white milk, Jackson says, and it can even replace less healthy drinks in kids’ diets. Plus, research shows that children in the U.S. who drink flavored milk don’t have a higher BMI than those who don’t drink it.

2. It shouldn’t be in the lunchroom
White milk offered in schools today is low-fat or fat-free, but schools only offer fat-free chocolate milk. Think you’d rather your school go chocolate-free? You might not like the results.

“Parents think, ‘So what if my kid doesn’t have chocolate milk?’ They’ll just drink white milk,” Jackson says. “Actually, there’s a drop in overall milk consumption when chocolate milk is not offered in schools.”

3. There’s too much sugar
Chocolate milk has the same nutrient profile as white milk except for a difference of about 6-12 grams of sugar. Flavored milk only contributes about four percent of the added sugars in children’s diets, on average, and American adolescents who drink flavored milk aren’t consuming more sugar, Jackson explains.

“It’s actually not associated with higher added sugar intake,” she says. Parents should also know that flavored milks contain less added sugar per eight-ounce serving than cola drinks.

4. It makes kids hyper
While flavored milk has less added sugar than parents may realize, there are still some misunderstandings about added sugar, even in lower quantities. One of these myths is that sugar consumption causes hyperactivity in children, Jackson says.

“I think it so easily fits into our vernacular that if you give kids sugar, it’s going to make them hyperactive. But it’s really not the case,” Jackson says.

5. It’s not that important
When the choice is chocolate milk or no milk at all, parents should keep in mind just how important milk is to a healthy diet. Milk consumption—including chocolate milk—in kids and adolescents is associated with higher intakes of calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium and vitamin A compared to those who don’t drink milk.

“Most Americans are really falling short of their dairy requirements,” Jackson says. “Would your child rather drink one cup of milk or would they rather eat 10 cups of raw spinach to get the same amount of calcium?”

As for chocolate milk, she says, “We equate it to giving ranch as a dip, so kids will eat vegetables.”

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About NAMI Michigan?

NAMI Michigan is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for persons living with serious mental illness and their families. NAMI is Michigan’s voice on mental illness.
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ON THE COVER: Superintendent Yvonne Caamal Canul’s collaborative and innovative leadership has energized the Lansing School District and earned her the 2017 AASA Women in School Leadership Superintendent Award. COVER PHOTO BY MITCH SMITH
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ONE OF THE FOUR MASA CORE values is collaboration. Long gone are the days when leaders can be effective or, quite frankly, even survive trying to do things alone. Effective collaboration is key these days when we all have limited resources and maximum challenges, and it continues to be the intent for MASA to model this point for its members.

The current relationships between the statewide education associations is extremely healthy. Whether it is co-sponsoring a statewide professional learning event, joining forces in a lawsuit, or working together to ensure that all members have the most important and up-to-date information on the latest happenings in education, we all understand the critical importance of not duplicating or replicating each other’s work.

The Education Alliance is also a great example of wide and deep association/organization collaborations. This statewide group meets monthly and consists of executives from all walks of the education world. Membership includes leaders from public, private, postsecondary and administrator education associations, the Michigan Department of Education and teachers unions. Those who are at this table work extremely hard to ensure that in those areas where we have a common interest, our thinking is combined and that we collaborate to take appropriate action on the task at hand. MASA also collaborates with MDE, legislators, and additional public and private education organizations at the state and national levels to ensure that we are maximizing our resources and our influence in the areas in which we lead.

It is our hope that superintendents around the state will also continue to work to effectively collaborate with traditional and nontraditional partners that make sense for school districts in this current climate.

ISDs/RESAs and other school districts are natural partners for so many education-related projects. We regularly see increasing collaboration, as evidenced by the Reading Now Network initiative that continues to keep a laser focus on how to help children from around the state improve in the critical area of early literacy. An increasing number of superintendents are working with postsecondary leaders to ensure that students have early and/or middle college experiences before they graduate from high school. Education/business collaborations continue to grow around the state, and there seems to be a more open level of discussion between these entities than ever before. Of course, there are many other examples of collaboration that are occurring, and we anticipate these will only grow in the future.

Certainly there are many other leadership traits that superintendents are required to possess in order to be an effective leader in today’s world. However, effective collaboration is an area that needs and deserves a leader’s attention, and one that MASA will continue to pursue along with service, leadership, and excellence as we work to continue to be a highly effective statewide association that truly meets the wants and needs all of our members.
School districts across Michigan are all-encompassing organizations, engulfed with complex interrelationships, and obligations to fulfill statutory and other government requirements. Education leaders are the individuals who can change an organization and provide results. These results can range from increasing student achievement to balancing budgets to creating safe learning environments, while at the same time engaging a diverse group of stakeholders.

More than at any time in history, education leaders are pressured by policymakers, school boards, government, parents and the community to demonstrate academic improvement in school systems. The public expects performance from school systems, and leaders are being held accountable for improving student outcomes.

Responsibility for increasing student achievement is not a new obligation for education leaders. How leaders are trained and interact within the organization are components essential to the success of leadership. Superintendents need a set of transitional leadership skills for negotiating the sometimes chaotic and often unforgiving external accountability systems within a volatile and often uncertain education reform environment (Bredeson and Kose, 2007). Leaders who care about increasing student achievement will look to research that demonstrates successful strategies.

MASA tools and training can help administrators develop and sustain a sound knowledge base. Along with proper training and preparation to build skills needed for leaders, experiences can play an important part of successful management in the education area.

The key point here is that over the years the role of education leaders has changed dramatically. The responsibility for education leaders has shifted over time, and even if they are held accountable for student results, many superintendents find that the actual day-to-day activities are far from the role they need to play as leaders to yield increase in student achievement. Superintendents in Michigan richly deserve all the accolades for their leadership. You are the heartbeat that keeps beating on.

Sue C. Carnell is Superintendent at the Westwood Community School District. She can be reached at 313.565.3864 or carnells@wwschools.net.
ANY YEARS AGO, BEFORE YVONNE CAAMAL CANUL BECAME superintendent of the Lansing School District, she attended leadership workshops with her mother. Those workshops were designed to help women mitigate the social barriers they would often face ascending to top leadership positions. However, at the time Caamal Canul was attending them, these workshops were offering advice such as “wear blue suits, play more golf and do a lot of things that men do.”

This type of advice wasn’t hitting the mark for Caamal Canul.

“I don’t look good in blue,” she said with a laugh. “What I mean by that is, the issue for me as a woman is that, I have a certain worldview, one that is distinctive and unique. I believe it’s filled with collaboration and networking.”

She thinks that using this insight can ensure that, in her words, “this corner of the world is connected to that corner of the world.”

“I think that these are skills that women have that are sorely needed in organizations, and we need to recognize these skills,” Caamal Canul said.

The Yale School of Management agrees that women add unique value and perspective in the workplace. Women shatter groupthink, improve communications dynamics and have even been shown to reinvigorate companies, making them more competitive.

Caamal Canul wants women to stop looking at top leadership as being a masculine role.

“Years ago, I was working with a project that had identified the fact that 85 percent of teachers were women and only 11 percent were administrators, especially in the higher levels of administration,” she said. “There were a lot of women elementary school principals who were just dead-ending their career in these positions and not moving into higher levels of administration.”

Why was this happening? Caamal Canul discovered through her project that women believed they would have to sacrifice their femininity in order to ascend the leadership ladder to reach central office and superintendent positions. They would have to be stronger, braver, bolder and more aggressive—more like men.

“I don’t think you have to sacrifice your femininity,” said Caamal Canul. “I think the skills women have as women are sorely needed in organizations, and it’s okay to be gentler, kinder or softer in a leadership role.”

The nurturing nature of Caamal Canul’s leadership has helped build ecosystems and support for programs within the Lansing School District.
that have a collaborative feel. For example, the simple change from individual teacher planning times to a collaborative model not only saved the district about $8.5 million, it also became a teacher planning model that resulted in a cultural shift for the district. Lansing School District also restructured its entire district around child development philosophies, with buildings built around cohorts of students pre-K to third grade (early learning), grades 4-6 (middle years), and grades 7-12 (high school years).

The Lansing School District also successfully passed a bond issue that wasn’t about bricks and mortar, but about an educational plan for the district involving student choices within the district, supporting development of programs such as STEM, STEAM, and visual and performing arts buildings. Additionally, the district offers a vision for students to begin choosing buildings that focus on college- and career-ready opportunities and language-immersion programs, to name just a few.

Caamal Canul’s instructional vision and courageous leadership of the Lansing School District has not gone unnoticed. Her energetic advocacy for public education earned her the 2017 AASA Women in School Leadership Superintendent Award. This award recognizes female educators whose talent, creativity and vision are exemplary. It honors women who are making a difference in the lives of students every day. But for Caamal Canul, the award is more about the Lansing School District community collaboratively coming together to turn a district around than it is about her leadership.

“I was so grateful to be considered for this award, but I was absolutely stunned when I received it,” said Caamal Canul. “I came to this job in 2012 as an interim superintendent for an 82-day period while the district went through a search process, now I am under contract through 2020. I was encouraged to make bold decisions as an interim, and it energized me. So now I’d like to see those changes take place.”

Caamal Canul exemplifies what it means to ascend and be successful in a top leadership position within the public school system, as well as to break some of the social barriers that women face to reach them.

“I believe that this is the greatest nation on earth, and I want to contribute to the single defining feature of this nation, one that sets it apart from every other nation, and that is a free public education opportunity,” said Caamal Canul. “It’s not insurmountable in this country because of public education,” said Caamal Canul. “That’s what inspires me every day. It’s a lofty inspiration, but I want to be a part of it.”

Mitch Smith is a communications specialist for MASA. Contact him at 517.327.9244 or mitchsmith@gomasa.org.
HEN MICHIGAN STATE POLICE SGT. Kim Vetter spoke earlier this year with the MASA Council about human trafficking, she made one thing clear: Human trafficking of minors is happening in every corner of our state.

Sgt. Vetter shared the story of one Michigan girl who was the victim of human trafficking. Every Friday after school she was trafficked out the back door of her grandmother’s home and taken to Detroit for the weekend. Come Monday, she would be dropped off at school, with none of the adults in her life aware of the double life she was living. It’s likely that there were warning signs that simply were not recognized.

It is a startling truth that this form of modern-day slavery could be happening to students within your own district. Sgt. Vetter compiled an overview of human trafficking, including warning signs and indicators. Read on to learn more.

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to exploit a person for
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labor or commercial sex. Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked in countries around the world—including the United States. Many of these victims are lured with false promises of financial or emotional security; instead, they are forced or coerced into commercial sex (prostitution), domestic servitude, or other types of forced labor.

Any minor under the age of 18 who is induced to perform a commercial sex act is a victim of human trafficking according to U.S. law, regardless of whether there is force, fraud, or coercion. Increasingly, criminal organizations such as gangs are luring children from local schools into commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Human trafficking is different from human smuggling.

Human smuggling involves bringing (or attempting to bring) a person into a country in violation of immigration or other laws. Human trafficking is the exploitation of a person for sex or labor. Human trafficking does not require movement or transport across borders—the exploitation is what makes the person a victim.

Who are the victims? Who is at risk?

Victims of trafficking can be any age, race, gender, or nationality, including U.S. citizens.

Trafficking victims can be men or women, boys or girls, U.S. citizens or foreign nationals. Human trafficking can involve school-age youth, particularly those made vulnerable by unstable family situations, or who have little or no social support.

Traffickers may target young victims through social media websites, chatrooms, after-school programs, on the streets, at shopping malls, in clubs, or through other students who are used by the traffickers to recruit other victims. In fact, a person can be trafficked without ever leaving his or her hometown.

Child trafficking can take a variety of forms including commercial sexual exploitation (prostitution) or forced labor.

Those who recruit minors for the purpose of commercial sex are violating U.S. anti-trafficking laws, even if there is no force, fraud or coercion.

Indicators of human trafficking

Human trafficking can often go unnoticed, even by individuals interacting with a victim on a regular basis. Recognizing the “red flags,” or indicators, can help alert school administrators and staff to a human trafficking situation. While no single indicator is necessarily proof of human trafficking, recognizing the signs is the first step in identifying potential victims.
**Behavior or physical state:**
- Does the student have unexplained absences from school, or has the student demonstrated an inability to attend school on a regular basis?
- Has the student suddenly changed his or her usual attire, behavior or relationships?
- Does the student suddenly have more (and/or more expensive) material possessions?
- Does the student chronically run away from home?
- Does the student act fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense or nervous and paranoid?
- Does the student refer to another person to speak for him or her, especially during interactions with school authority figures (this may include an adult described by the student as a relative, but also may be a friend or boyfriend/girlfriend)?

**Social behavior:**
- Does the student have a “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” who is noticeably older?
- Is the student engaging in uncharacteristically promiscuous behavior, or making references to sexual situations or terminology that are beyond age-specific norms?
- Does the student appear to be restricted from contacting family, friends, or his or her legal guardian?

These indicators are just a few that may alert you to a potential human trafficking situation. You can use this information to help recognize relevant suspicious behaviors and take appropriate action.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE TROOPERS (CSTs)** are available through the MSP’s T.E.A.M. school liaison program to provide information and training on human trafficking, as well as other important topics, such as internet safety, bullying, distracted driving, personal safety, and drug use/prevention. For additional information or to request a CST presentation, visit www.michigan.gov/mspcst. Read more about the T.E.A.M. program on Page 18.
THE MICHIGAN STATE POLICE (MSP), in collaboration with public and private school curriculum experts, developed Teaching, Educating, and Mentoring (T.E.A.M.) in 1998. When originated, T.E.A.M. was aligned with the most widely implemented school health education curriculum, Michigan Model for Health. The T.E.A.M. program is updated regularly to stay current with changes to state or federal laws, crime and cultural trends, and education standards. Today, certified officers throughout Michigan provide T.E.A.M. lessons free of charge to any school that requests the service.
The goal of the T.E.A.M. program is to unite educators, students, and law enforcement to prevent crime and build positive relationships between law enforcement officers and students. The philosophy of T.E.A.M. is that while working together as a team, law enforcement agencies can create relationships with schools and the broader community to be united in protecting children from becoming victims of crime.

The program allows T.E.A.M. certified officers to teach at any of the three levels of education: elementary, middle, and high school. The curriculum teaches students various safety rules including bicycle and pedestrian safety, the proper use of 911, fire and gun prevention, internet safety, and how the law applies to them.

The program is flexible and adaptable to virtually all classroom settings. Each lesson is approximately 30 to 45 minutes in length and can be used as a stand-alone platform for assemblies or special events, or can be instructed in a consecutive sequence. Working together, the T.E.A.M. certified officer, the classroom teacher, and/or school administrators decide when it is most appropriate to incorporate a lesson that will assist in classroom instruction. Often, lessons can correlate with classroom assignments, such as artwork, writing or social studies assignments.

T.E.A.M. certified officers receive 40 hours of training that introduces them to more than 30 lesson plans to present in their communities. In addition to learning the curriculum, attendees participate in several public speaking scenarios to prepare them for the classroom environment. Training is also received from content experts in student and juvenile psychology, classroom management, bullying and harassment, cyber crimes, and school security issues.

MSP has trained hundreds of troopers, police officers, and deputies from all regions of Michigan, as well as officers from Indiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas. The curriculum has been implemented in approximately 250 Michigan school districts.

If you are interested in having T.E.A.M. lessons presented at your school, contact your local Community Service Trooper (www.michigan.gov/mspcst) or local school resource officer.
EVERY ORGANIZATION NEEDS effective leaders in order to be successful. School districts are no exception to this rule.

Principals, curriculum staff, superintendents and school boards bear a weighty responsibility for the success of the education process. Their work directly affects how teachers do their jobs and how students learn. Having purposeful evaluations for school leaders that are practical, professional, and personal—not to mention aligned with teacher evaluations and systems—enriches the annual evaluation process for all administrators.

The School ADvance administrator evaluation system is exactly that kind of evaluation tool. Developed through a partnership between MASA, Michigan ASCD and K12 Evaluation Solutions, School ADvance establishes research-supported domains of principal and district administrator evaluation and developmental rubrics mapped to each domain.

Even before the Michigan Department of Education moved to mandatory evaluation of all school administrators, Southfield Public Schools, under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Lynda Wood, started implementing the School ADvance evaluation tool for principal and superintendent evaluations in her district.

“The principals and I saw an alignment to the work of the principals in the buildings to the School ADvance rubrics,” Wood said. “Another immediate factor was the alignment with the Charlotte Danielson evaluation framework that we had begun using with our teacher evaluations. Alignment stood out as an important thread—later it was a critical feature when choosing School ADvance as the tool that the board and I would also use for my superintendent evaluation.”

Getting it right, top to bottom

For school board members like Southfield’s Yolanda Charles, having an objective, observational, and
measurable tool is essential. “It is critical to get administrator evaluations right,” Charles said. Working with School ADvance gives the superintendent an opportunity to see what they are being evaluated on. It creates a map to use, and then formulates how to utilize that map in the evaluation.

“It also helps determine the evidence used in the evaluation, those things we can take to the community to show the work,” Charles said.

“Furthermore, I’m allowed to keep my hands out, my eyes in, and allow the superintendent to do her job, holding her accountable to this evaluation tool,” she said. “It gives the superintendent a clear direction, focuses on where she needs to go, and where to spend her time.”

Additionally, there are benefits to using the same evaluation tool for the superintendent that is used with the administrators they evaluate.

“It’s about the top down. Adopt it firmly at the top, disseminate it down, and ideally everyone will buy into it,” Charles said.

The collaborative process
School ADvance helped Southfield build an evaluation model as a collaborative team, with key components important for the district.

“As an educator, as a district leader, I have always believed it is important to provide structure, but to allow freedom,” Wood said. “This is a tool that allows for rich reflection and collection of evidence, enabling the principals and myself to be flexible within the structure of the model.”

Southfield begins the year with what it calls a “Superintendent’s Cabinet.” This is a meeting with all the district principals, with the expectations that they bring thoughtful and reflective knowledge of their growth goals, what they would like to learn, and what they would like to bring forward from the previous year as it would relate to improved district outcomes.

A key component to supporting principals is providing professional development. Wood says School ADvance is built on a developmental model, being as much a professional development tool as an accountability tool. Recognizing the fact that the role of the principal is complex, the evaluation process must have value in providing support.

“Our implementation of School ADvance does just that,” Wood said.

Administrator perspectives
Dean Marcia Williams of Southfield’s University High School Academy believes School ADvance helps her to be more reflective in her practice and prioritize her work.

“It also allows me to reflect on how I led instruction, how I worked with teachers, students, and parents,” Williams said. “It helps me look at data in a more meaningful way to create greater impact in the classroom.”

School ADvance is a framework for continued district improvement, aligning with the work of central office administrators. Derrick Lopez, Southfield’s assistant superintendent for school performance and instructional services, says the tool also marries well with the district’s
With respect to instruction, with student growth, with community development and community leadership, School ADvance works at actually building capacity and empowering our students,” Lopez said. “To the principals, it is less of an evaluation system and more like a reflection and growth system. Using School ADvance is a way to grow their professional practice.”

An ongoing process

Southfield is implementing the evaluation system over three years. Now in the third year, district leaders have been choosing several domains and building on them. Additional domains will be added later so principals don’t feel overwhelmed by the process, and can focus more on specific areas. Lopez emphasizes that the process is not without challenges, but that is where the growth truly takes place.

“What does this domain mean? To be highly effective? To be highly effective it means you are empowering the person you are observing to really do the work themselves, to grow and develop themselves,” Lopez explained. “Asking principals to really step back and say to themselves that ‘we shouldn’t be telling folks what to do,’ but asking them questions and giving them feedback so they can improve their own performance.”

Lopez describes the evaluation process as a cycle that doesn’t end for administrators. “They are not in a finite space where at the end of the year we have a summertime evaluation and then we are done,” he said. “They have to actually think about what goal they have set at the beginning of the year, and move some clarity towards those goals at the end of the year, and then build upon this next year.”

Wood emphasizes her belief that an educator is someone who is a constant learner, who continually grows, always looking at ways to improve their practice. “I love being an educator, and I always see where there is room for growth,” Wood said. “I want to take advantage of where I can support our children, our staff and our community. All three of these audiences are part of the School ADvance tools, domains and factors, as well as a part of what I do in my job every day. It is a very aligned and reflective tool.”

Mitch Smith is a communications specialist for MASA. Contact him at 517.327.9244 or mitchsmith@gomasa.org.
ONE NEVER KNOWS WHAT exactly plants the seed of an idea in one’s brain—most likely a collection of experiences paired with a need sparks creative thinking. Once that seed is planted, nutrients are needed to germinate and grow that seed of an idea.

This is how Math in the Mail came to be.

The idea was shared with a colleague who pushed a napkin across a table and suggested that the best ideas start with a paper napkin sketch. After many meetings and a generous donation, that idea on a napkin blossomed into life as Math in the Mail—and it’s now reaching into the homes of young children across the Great Lakes Bay Region.

Research supports that young children are eager and developmentally ready to build their foundation of math skills in the earliest years of life. Math in the Mail uses engaging activities to develop mathematical
“building block” skills in 3-year-old children, providing the tools needed in the home environment for parents, guardians, and other caregivers. It’s widely known that reading books to young children can help develop language and reading skills, while instilling in them a love of reading. Laying a solid foundation for math, however, is not as intuitive for many caregivers. Math in the Mail makes it easier to communicate the concepts of math to young learners.

**Sparking excitement**

Everyone gets excited when a package arrives in the mail with their name on it – especially young children. Sending boxes through the mail addressed to 3-year-olds is just the first step in the unique way that Math in the Mail helps children build a positive relationship with math, which becomes one of the building blocks for future STEM experiences.

“I love seeing my kids explode with excitement when our Math in the Mail arrives,” said Amanda Schoch, whose son, Hagan, receives Math in the Mail. “It has gotten them very excited about math.”

Enrolled children receive a free kit in the mail six times a year. Each kit contains materials, resources, and instructions for several age-appropriate math activities. Math in the Mail is part of a region-wide focus to better prepare our students for STEM experiences and careers. The initiative is funded by Dow Corning and Hemlock Semiconductor through the Dow

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**Degrees for Educators**

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We also offer the MDE-approved (as of May 2016) reading diagnostic course LS 5160 Professional Symposium in Reading (K-12) online.

Learn more at [wmich.edu/extended/masa](http://wmich.edu/extended/masa)
Corning Foundation, and represents a collaboration between the Bay-Arenac ISD, Clare-Gladwin RESD, Gratiot-Isabella RESD, Midland ESA, and the Saginaw ISD.

Additionally, Math in the Mail partners with Great Lakes Bay Region organizations and businesses in two ways: providing an opportunity for them to contribute supplemental resources in the kits and utilizing their employees as volunteers to assemble the kits.


**DIGITAL FEATURE**

See Saginaw ISD Superintendent Kathy Stewart give an MASA Ed Talk about Math in the Mail at the MASA Midwinter Conference at [www.gomasa.org/Leader](http://www.gomasa.org/Leader)

**Getting started**

Low-income families can qualify to receive free Math in the Mail kits, and a subscription option is available for families who do not qualify for the free program or who live outside the targeted region.

To qualify for the free program, families must:

- Live in Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Midland or Saginaw county.
- Have a 3-year-old child in the household.
- Have a household income that is at or below 250% of the federal poverty line and submit proof of that income.

To enroll for the free program or paid subscription, visit [www.mathinthemail.org](http://www.mathinthemail.org) or call 989.737.9532.

Families can also follow Math in the Mail on Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter to gain information and ideas that will help them strengthen their child’s preschool math skills.

- [SISD Math in the Mail](http://www.mathinthemail.org)
- [Math in the Mail](http://www.mathinthemail.org)
- [@MathintheMail](http://www.mathinthemail.org)

Cultivating a love for math early on will help our young children every step of the way as they grow into lifelong learners.

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**Saving up to 35% on auto insurance is good.**

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[Meemic.com](http://Meemic.com)
STUDENTS FROM TAMMY BROWN’S CLASSROOM AT THE WOODLAND DEVELOPMENTAL Center paid a visit to the classroom of the future. They loved it. Brown, who teaches moderately cognitively impaired young people, is participating in a RESA-sponsored pilot project to introduce moveable, flexible and (dare we say it?) fun furniture into today’s classrooms.

“When I started with this, I thought: Cool! It’s like an ’Extreme Makeover Classroom Edition,”’ Brown said. “But it’s really so much more than that.”

The “Classroom 4 the Future” project identified 10 teachers from St. Clair County’s seven public K-12 districts, to each get up to $20,000 in modern furniture for their classrooms. In addition—and perhaps more importantly—those teachers also are receiving focused professional development designed to give them the tools they need to teach differently; to learn how new classroom furnishings can free them in ways many never thought possible.

Brown’s Woodland classroom is an 11th participant in the project. East China schools also have two additional teachers, participating alongside its two grant recipients.

In one sense, Classroom 4 the Future is all about furniture. In the larger sense, the furniture is secondary.

RESA Superintendent Dan DeGrow said the furniture is a means to an end. “We want to help teachers conform their teaching methods to what we have now learned about students—group learning, physical activity and so on,” DeGrow said. “If we just provided the furniture and nothing else changed, it wouldn’t be worth it.”

Stephen Bigelow, Superintendent with Capac Community Schools in St. Clair County, has a teacher participating in the RESA grant program.

“Many of us grew up with the sit-and-get-style of instruction, and we struggled to pay attention while fidgeting and getting reprimanded in the process. Research has clearly shown us not only is fidgeting normal and healthy, but movement is important for cerebral function and should be encouraged,” Bigelow said.

“It’s exciting that something as basic as classroom furniture design can help teachers create appropriate groups and mimic real-world workplace environments that promote problem-solving in a safe, non-distracting manner.”

Jamie Cain, Superintendent of Port Huron Schools, the county’s largest district with about 8,500 students, is leading the implementation of a major bond project there that will include flexible furniture. Three Port Huron teachers are Classroom 4 the Future grant recipients.

Cain is enthusiastic about the new approach to teaching that flexible, student-centered furnishings allows. “It really gives us the ability to make education more relevant and
meaningful for students in a way that allows them to take ownership of the physical space,” he said.

Patti Lowhorn, a third-grade teacher at East China’s Palms Elementary, is still months away from actually seeing a remodeled classroom, but the professional development in advance of the furniture already has value to her and her students.

“I’m already changing my approach to lessons in my classroom,” Lowhorn said. “It has me looking at so many things in a different way. When my classroom is renovated, it will be beautiful. But it’s so much more than furniture.”

Rachel Verschaeve, RESA consultant for Education Technology, has been immersed in this project, researching the latest in furniture innovations, as well as 21st century teaching methods designed to better engage students in their learning.

Verschaeve was watching Brown’s students try out the furniture. That’s a key to the project, she said.

“We are watching the kids, seeing what they like, what they use. It’s not just adults thinking what’s best for students. It’s having the students tell us,” she said.

RESA had budgeted over several years to cover the costs of this one-time project. The grants were announced at the end of summer in 2016. Each classroom will be evaluated and individually redesigned over the course of the school year. Professional development is continuous.

The ultimate goal, Verschaeve said, is to create classrooms that will be models for other teachers and district leaders.

Just ask the kids in Brown’s Room 113: They can’t wait.

Garth Kriewall is the communications office supervisor for St. Clair County RESA. Contact him at kriewall.garth@sccresa.org
WITH PLANNING IN FULL SWING, MASA is putting together a Fall Conference lineup that you won’t want to miss. Below are some highlights to look forward to. As we get closer to September, you can expect updates on speakers, Learning Sessions and other conference features. To register online, please visit www.gomasa.org/events.

- WHEN: Sept. 20-22, 2017
- WHERE: Grand Traverse Resort & Spa, 100 Grand Traverse Village Blvd. Acme, Michigan
- REGISTER ONLINE: www.gomasa.org/events

Highlights

2017 KEYNOTE: “No Easy Walk to Freedom”

“If America is going to hold on to the position its held for the past 200 years as a bastion of freedom, we will have to dramatically improve our education system.”

—Dr. Tim Quinn

MASA will welcome Dr. Tim Quinn to our 2017 Fall Conference as the keynote speaker. Dr. Quinn is a nationally recognized pioneer in superintendent preparation, coaching and support. During his keynote address, “No Easy Walk to Freedom,” he will discuss the superintendent’s role in ensuring that every student has the knowledge and skills to succeed in the international marketplace.

Learning Sessions

MASA is poring over an impressive assortment of proposals that were submitted for Learning Sessions. With more than 30 slots to fill, you can be assured that you will have your pick of enriching Learning Sessions at our Fall Conference. The full list of Learning Sessions will be compiled in July, and we’ll be sure to keep our members in the loop as planning progresses.

Lunch & Learn Sessions

On Thursday, spend your lunch hour in the Governors’ Hall gaining valuable insight to some of the problems that district leaders wrestle with every day. Attend targeted presentations from sponsors—who are problem solvers by trade—to learn more about the products and solutions that may work in your district.

Plus much more to come!

Stay Informed

Get the latest information about the 2017 Fall Conference on the conference page at gomasa.org.
New Principals Network
PD for the principals in your district: The New Principals Network. This year-long program offered by the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals is designed to provide support to secondary principals in their first five years on the job. Learn more at www.gomasa.org/Leader.

#FundTitleIIA
ESSA's Title II, Part A funding is a critical source of professional development dollars for Michigan's school districts. President Trump's proposed budget zeroed out the program for 2017-18. MASA is working hard with other education partners to ensure that Title II-A funding remains in place to help prepare, train and recruit top-notch educators and leaders. Learn how to get engaged at gomasa.org/Leader.

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This year brings EXCITING NEWS! We are returning $16 million in combined assets to Property/Casualty Pool & Workers’ Compensation Fund members for the 2017-18 policy year.