

# FUTURE READY STUDENTS

2017 MREA Annual Conference

**MREA**  
Voice For Greater Minnesota Education



**November 12-14, 2017**  
Cragun's Resort and Hotel on Gull Lake  
Brainerd, Minnesota

# Meeting Rooms

## LAKESHORE:

One level directly beneath Dining Room

## PAUL BUNYAN:

One level directly below Sun Deck

## PIONEER:

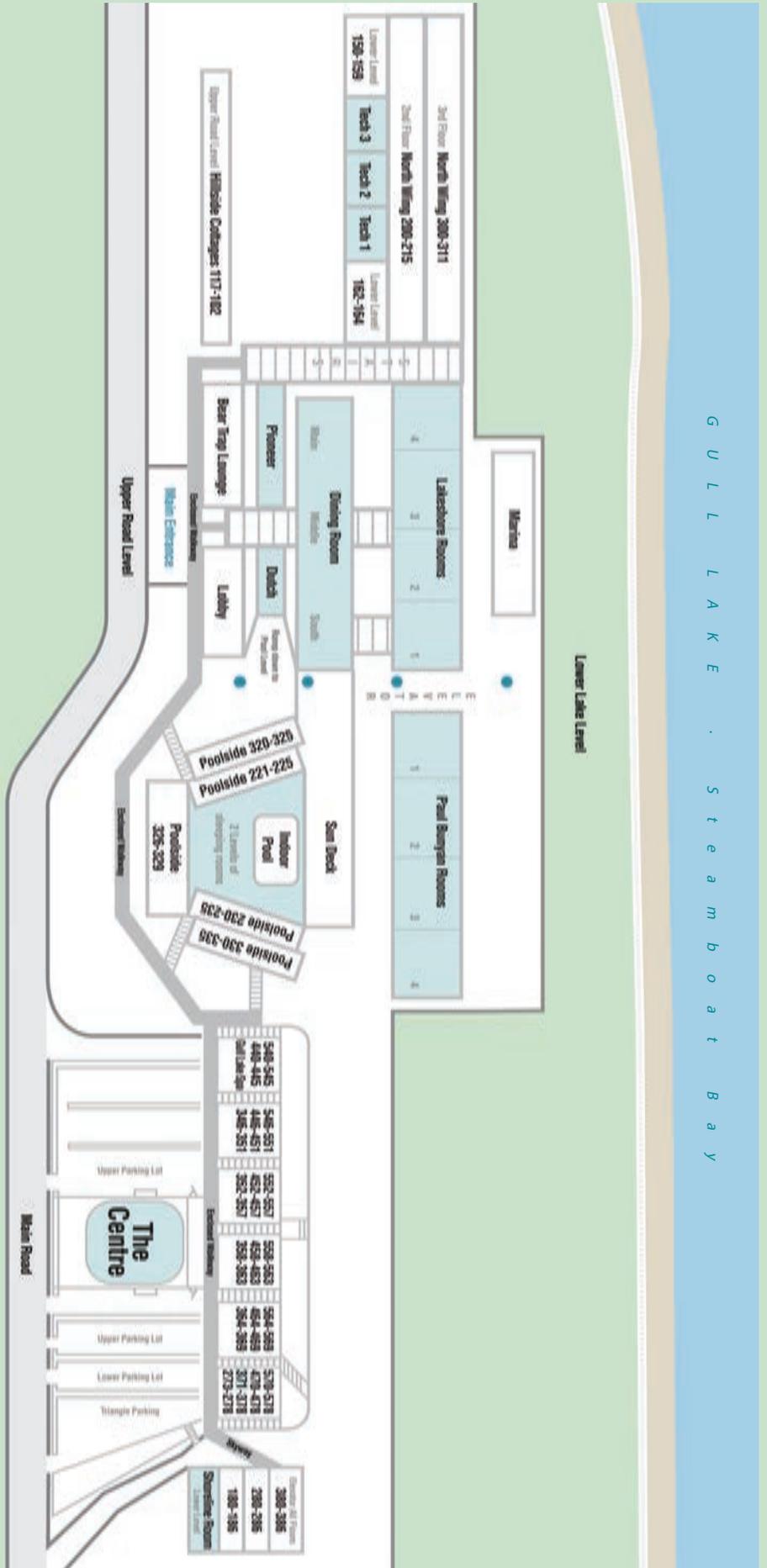
Halfway down Dining Room stairs, on right

## LUXURY 371:

Located by the Event Centre

## SHORELINE:

Lower level past Event Centre



# Conference Schedule

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12

- 4:00 PM **Conference Check-in Begins** – Main Lobby
- 5:30 PM **Light Dinner Buffet** – Poolside
- 6:15 PM **Conference Connections Kickoff** – Poolside
- 7:00 PM **Early-Bird Sessions**

## MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13

- 7:00 AM **Breakfast Buffet** – Main Dining Room
- 8:15 AM **Welcome & Opening Keynote Speaker** – Event Centre
- 9:45 AM **Break** – Poolside
- 10:05 AM **Breakout Session 1**
- 11:10 AM **Breakout Session 2**
- 12:00 PM **Lunch** – Main Dining Room
- 1:30 PM **Breakout Session 3**
- 2:45 PM **Break** – Poolside
- 3:00 PM **MindStorm** – Poolside
- 4:15 PM **Legislative Update & Social** – Lakeshore 1-4

## TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14\*

**\*ALL TUESDAY ACTIVITIES HELD IN EVENT CENTRE**

- 7:30 AM **Breakfast Buffet**
- 7:30 AM **Gallery Walk**
- 9:30 AM **Closing Speaker**
- 10:30 AM **MREA Annual Business Meeting**
- 11:00 AM **Prizes & Send-Off**

# WELCOME TO FUTURE READY STUDENTS

On behalf of the Board of Directors of MREA, welcome to your 2017 Annual Conference! MREA is proud to be your voice for Greater Minnesota education, representing teachers, school board members, and administrators from 225 rural school districts. Highlights this year include:



## **EVERY STUDENT NEEDS A WHY TO TRY**

Motivational speaker, author and educator John Baylor shares simple strategies and shows how schools can affect change and improve motivation.

## **GALLERY WALK**

Browse Gallery Walk on Tuesday morning and visit with professionals and practitioners about tools to help your district.

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Get the insider knowledge you need and learn from MREA's legislative staff how legislative changes can affect your district.

## **BREAKOUT TRACKS**

More than 30 sessions focused on helping you, your students, and your district succeed:

- Student Career and College Planning
- Early College Options and College Affordability
- Promoting Individual Success and Rural Community Development
- Students, Teachers and Learning
- Rural School and Community Leadership

### **RICK FREDERICKSON**

**MREA Board President 2017**  
Windom Public Schools

### **FRED NOLAN, PH.D.**

**MREA Executive Director**

### **TODD HOLTHAUS**

**MREA Board President Elect**  
Hills-Beaver Creek Schools

Get more resources,  
speaker bios and details at  
[MREvoice.org/AnnualConference](http://MREvoice.org/AnnualConference)

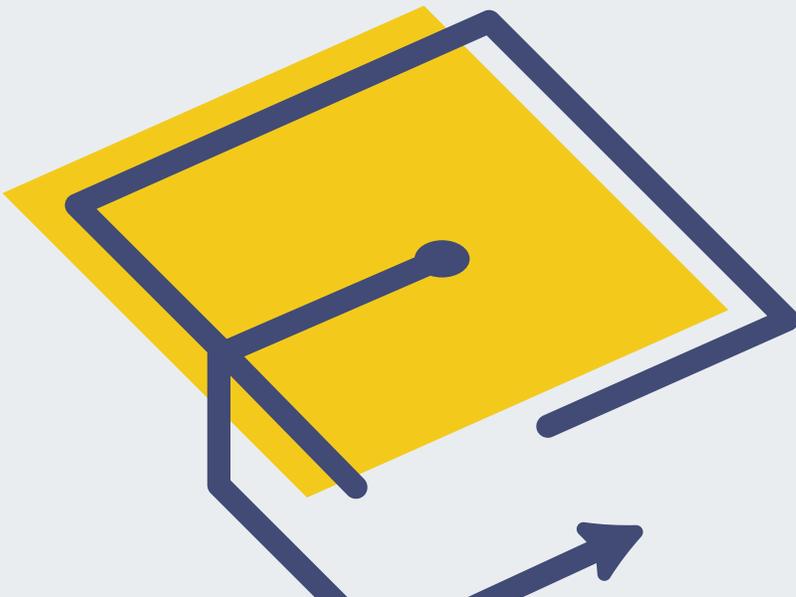
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**A SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE SUPPORTERS**



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## Featured Speakers

### OPENING KEYNOTE



### John Baylor

#### Every Student Needs a Why to Try

Imagine how much more enjoyable and effective our days would be if filled with more enthusiastic students. Imagine disciplining less and teaching more. Imagine more parents regularly supporting you, pushing your students to achieve. Drawing on his more than 20 years working with schools and preparing students for the ACT, John Baylor will provide the simple strategy for attacking the student disengagement that undermines educational outcomes, providing you with the blueprint for going on offense and motivating students, parents, and even teachers—the secret to improving all academic outcomes.



### Sam Walseth

#### Legislative Lessons: What's Next for Rural Schools?

Sam Walseth has logged 17 legislative sessions lobbying at the Minnesota State Capitol and leading successful coalitions to improve equity in educational opportunities for rural students. He will provide an insider's perspective on the 2017 legislative activities and share what's next for rural schools.

### CLOSING SESSION

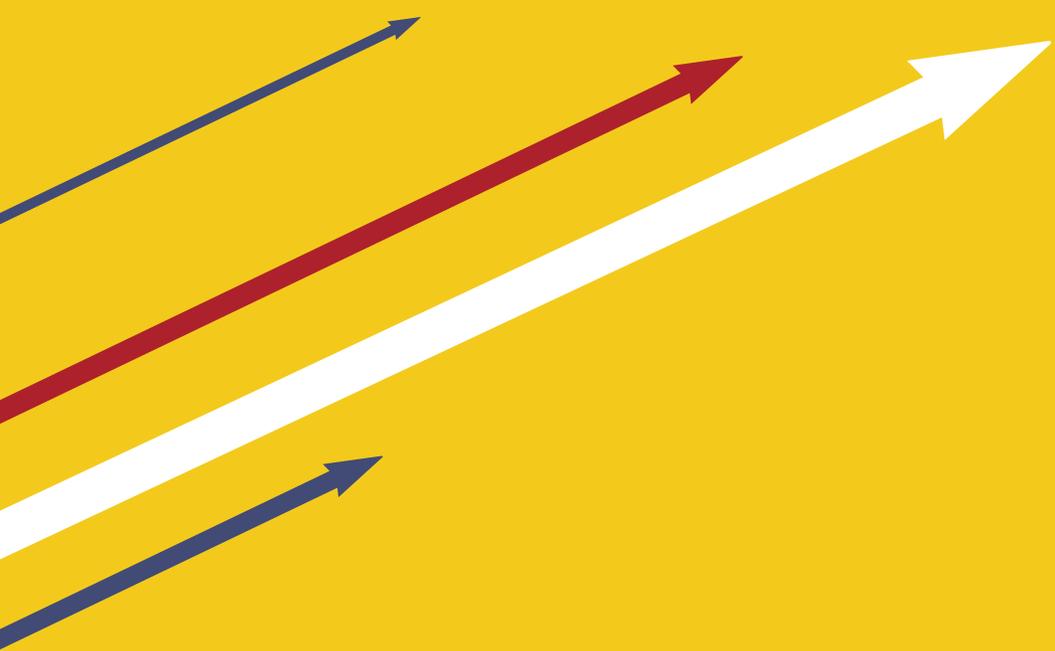


### Craig Cegielski

#### Soft Skills + Tech Skills = Real Life Learning

What does it look like to create future ready students? Hear how one teacher is achieving results through a student-run manufacturing company. With real customers, real deadlines, real problems and real money, Cardinal Manufacturing successfully teaches both technical skills and soft skills and gives them opportunities in everything from marketing and administration to maintenance and production.

# SESSIONS



## Early Bird Sessions 7:00 PM Sunday

### **Affordability of College: A Message of Hope** Lakeshore 2

**John Baylor**

About 40 percent of college students drop out. About 80% of them blame the high cost of college. Creating more savvy college shoppers would improve these numbers. Join us to learn easy-to-impart strategies for creating savvy, confident college shoppers so all students can enjoy an adulthood launched by a transformational college degree with minimal debt.

### **Education's Silent Opponent: Toxic Stress...Changing Everything!** Lakeshore 4

**Tanya McCoss-Yerigan**

Learn how toxic stress changes the brain and interferes with learning. This session is for every educator, within every discipline at every level. A broad array of toxic stress research will be presented and practical solutions/techniques will be explored. Most importantly, learn how YOU can help change everything.

## **Making Open Educational Resources Work for You**

### **Lakeshore 1**

**Jennifer Berkner, Jodee Lund**

Examine the power of the Minnesota Partnership for Collaborative Curriculum (MPCC) and other open educational resources (OERs) to enhance existing curriculum. Districts will identify potential resources and see how MPCC and other OERs can integrate with a variety of learning management systems and support multiple instructional strategies.

## **Minnesota Jobs: Data-Driven Decisions**

### **Lakeshore 3**

**Luke Greiner**

The tight job market of today requires the most effective utilization of labor possible. Educating the workforce is paramount and the complex dynamic of correctly matching education to employment is critical. Every student is important and the costs of misalignment will be increasingly shared by students and employers. Regardless of education level, students can find financial and employment success. Are you using the tools to find opportunities and guide students to success?

## **Breakout Sessions 1**

**10:05 AM Monday**

## **Career Expos Engage and Inform Students about Careers**

### **Lakeshore 3**

**Tom Hoff, Mary Mortier**

Students make career and college decisions based on sound information and personal experiences, but many are not aware of the tremendous career and educational opportunities in their community or region. See how the Southwest Minnesota Career Expo helps students connect with employers in the region to uncover career opportunities.

## **College and Career Readiness for ALL Students**

### **Lakeshore 1**

**Chip Rankin, Julie Sweitzer**

When students understand the connections from the classroom to their future, they are more engaged in school and make sound educational decisions. Hear how Pequot Lakes implemented a comprehensive program called Ramp-Up to Readiness. Explore data and resources to help you develop your district's college and career readiness strategy.

## **Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities**

### **Lakeshore 2**

**Cindi Koll, Lee Westrum, Students from Wadena-Deer Creek Schools**

Uncover how Greater Minnesota schools are using the Central Minnesota CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) to help juniors and seniors work side-by-side with successful business people from the community. The class meets at a different area business each quarter and then the students start their own business.

## **Determining Appropriate Interventions with Data and Standards**

**Paul Bunyan 1**

**Maureen Burke**

Is decision making at your school efficient and effective? Are teachers confident when making decisions with screening data? Learn about a systematic process to analyze elementary student screening data and guide the selection of appropriate interventions and gain practical tools to support data meetings at your site.

## **Early College: Concurrent Enrollment & Agreements for PSEO**

**Luxury 371**

**Fred Nolan**

Continuing concurrent enrollment past Sept. 1 2022 will require teachers to be fully credentialed. But concurrent enrollment is not the only way to have students earn college credits while attending high school. Explore alternatives to provide college credits, the differences between PSEO by default and by agreement and how to address new requirements.

## **Empower Students to Take Charge of Learning**

**Paul Bunyan 4**

**Katie Melgaard**

Teach students to take charge of their own learning and you'll see increased engagement, a greater potential for lifelong learning, and a reduced workload of the teacher. Explore strategies that are getting results – without a complete overhaul of your current curriculum.

## **Filling Minnesota's Skilled Worker Shortage**

**Paul Bunyan 3**

**Joe Brown**

Now is the time to maintain and expand vocational programs for students. See how Fairmont Area Schools has expanded its vocational programs by implementing an Agriculture Academy, Welding Academy, and Construction Trades Academy. Through innovative funding and community collaboration, Fairmount also maintains FACS and Small Engines Programs.

## **Get Ready: Preparing Students for the Future**

**Pioneer**

**Nina Englund, Sheila Nelson-Amado, Marcio Thompson**

Gain an overview of the Get Ready college and career readiness program serving populations traditionally underrepresented in college. This program focuses on helping students set and achieve their postsecondary goals, while helping schools and community organizations make structural shifts that support students.

## **How Service Cooperatives Are Supporting Concurrent Enrollment**

**South Dining Room**

**Julie Frame, Jeremy Kovash**

Due to June 2015 clarifications for minimum faculty qualifications from the Higher Learning Commission, many concurrent enrollment teachers may need to enroll in graduate-level coursework in their discipline. Learn how the Minnesota Service Cooperatives are assisting concurrent enrollment instructors in meeting the requirement for additional coursework.

## **Property Taxes: Levy Certification to Individual Tax Statements**

### **Paul Bunyan 2**

**Shelby McQuay, Jodie Zesbaugh**

Minnesota has one of the most complex property tax systems in the nation. Explaining it at a public meeting, understanding it as a School Board member or talking to an individual taxpayer can be daunting. Gain a foundation for understanding this complex system, including an overview of values and tax bases, the impact of taxing decisions on property owners and school district revenues, and the computation of school taxes for individual property owners.

## **RC3 – The Best Kept Secret**

### **Lakeshore 4**

**Carrie Bendix, Craig Nathan**

New legislation created Rural Career Counseling Coordination (RC3) for Greater Minnesota. Learn more about the tools, resources and collaborative models available to assist with career and college readiness activities, work based learning, addressing local workforce needs and other activities related to the World's Best Workforce legislation.

## **Tools of the Trade: A Data-Driven Adventure to Help Guide Students!**

### **Shoreline**

**Luke Greiner (Deep Dive Part 1 of 2)**

This hands-on session explores numerous labor market tools available at DEED for discovering in-demand occupations, how much they pay locally, what the future holds and how to assess college programs. Are you utilizing the right tools to effectively guide students to successful careers? Participants need bring laptops or tablets to access online data tools. Part 2 of this deep dive continues during Breakout Session 2 at 11:10 am.

## **Breakout Sessions 2**

### **11:10 AM Monday**

## **Concurrent Enrollment: Current Landscape & Paving the Way**

### **South Dining Room**

**Jessica Espinosa, Pakou Yang**

Learn about the current landscape of concurrent enrollment, how to address NACEP accreditation requirements and Minnesota State's work on faculty qualifications, including discipline coursework options and graduate-level credit for prior learning. Discuss how secondary and postsecondary can work collaboratively on concurrent enrollment.

## **Create More College Graduates**

### **Lakeshore 2**

**John Baylor, Betsy Bahn, Jim Sheehan**

Uncover how On To College (formerly John Baylor Prep) helps schools and families create two- and four-year college graduates with minimal debt through ACT Preparation and college counseling services. Learn the formula successfully employed by hundreds of school districts to increase scores, scholarships, and motivation.

## **Free Range Collaboration: Organic Experiences in Learning**

**Paul Bunyan 2**

**Chad Duwenhoegger, Rick Sansted**

Alexandria Area High School's Academy model provides students with opportunities to engage in the community and demonstrate 21st century skills, including collaboration, critical thinking, communication and creativity. Through local and national partnerships, students access local business to connect their passions to a variety of career options.

## **Great Jobs Without a Four-Year Degree**

**Lakeshore 3**

**Katherine Kersten**

Discover the Center of the American Experiment's exciting new project: "Great Jobs Without a Four-Year Degree." Learn about the opportunities and financial rewards that alternative paths can provide, the strengths rural students bring to the job market, and how rural communities' stake in providing students skills they need to stay.

## **Moving Away from Class Rank - Does Rank tell the Whole Story?**

**Paul Bunyan 3**

**Kim Kaukl**

Because class rank is misinterpreted, it can negatively impact students and taint the school atmosphere. Without reporting rank, colleges review other factors such as: rigor of the student's curriculum, student's activities, test scores and accomplishments. Learn why class rank is outdated and walk away with an outline of a model that encourages academic rigor.

## **Relational Leadership for Educational Leaders**

**Paul Bunyan 1**

**Tammy Berg-Beniak, Arthur Crusoe, Craig Paulson**

Relational leadership for educational leaders is focused on clarity, flexibility, and graciousness. In this session, we'll reflect on the importance of relational leadership and explore how to be open to change from diverse others while being true to personal core values.

## **The 411 on Personal Learning Plans**

**Lakeshore 4**

**Beth Barsness, April Schnell**

Personal Learning Plans (PLP) legislation, enacted in 2012, requires Minnesota high school students to have a "life plan." Learn how schools and districts are implementing this legislation and some resources Minnesota Department of Education can provide to schools. See a Greater Minnesota PLP implementation example and get answers to your PLP questions.

## **The ACT Toolkit for Student Success**

**Luxury 371**

**April Hansen**

ACT provides a wide variety of supports for teachers, administrators, students and parents (most of which are free) that can help students prepare for college and careers after high school. Learn about many of these supports such as counselor toolkits, eBooks, Test Prep and OpenEd resources, webinars, and new information on the ACT score reports.

## **TL21: A 21st Century Learning Environment in Rural MN**

**Paul Bunyan 4**

**Diane Cordes, Miriam Tobola**

Discover how Breckenridge Public Schools developed a teaching and learning framework encompassing their 21st-century learning initiative consisting of three key components: Inquiry for grades K-4; Inspire for grades 5-8; Ignite for grades 9-12. Explore how these components focus on skill development with a gradual release of responsibility.

## **Tools of the Trade: A Data-Driven Adventure to Help Guide Students!**

**Shoreline**

**Luke Greiner (Deep Dive Part 2 of 2)**

This hands-on session explores numerous labor market tools available at DEED for discovering in-demand occupations, how much they pay locally, what the future holds and how to assess college programs. Are you utilizing the right tools to effectively guide students to successful careers? Participants need bring laptops or tablets to access online data tools.

## **TRA: Addressing Pension Underfunding**

**Lakeshore 1**

**John Wicklund**

Lower investment performance. Retirees living longer. Fierce competition for state government funding. All these factors are placing strain on the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) and pension systems around the country. Learn what happened in the 2017 legislation and what may be proposed for 2018.

## **Why Good Referenda Fail**

**Pioneer**

**Arif Quraishi**

With the use of social media and consultants hired by Vote No groups, the chance of failing school referendums has increased. Learn about key mistakes made that lead to v failure and key strategies and approaches that significantly increase the chances of passing referenda.

## **Breakout Sessions 3** **1:30 PM Monday**

## **Homegrown Workforce: Expanding Awareness of Rural Career Pathways**

**Lakeshore 2**

**Dawnette Cigrand, Ann Langworthy**

School counselors play an integral role in nurturing students' interests and talents and preparing students to be future ready. Learn about current post-secondary options and creative strategies that expand students' awareness of career pathways leading to employment in rural Minnesota. (Designed for administrators, board members, and student support personnel).

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## **Building Rural CTE Programs Requires Cooperation**

**Paul Bunyan 1**

**Tom Hoff, Gail Polejewski**

Discover how a collaborative CTE model get results by pooling students from area high schools to support the types of CTE courses they could not offer on their own. Uncover the process used to encourage schools to share resources and how classes were offered in ways that helped to overcome scheduling, financial, and distance barriers.

## **Come Along for a SLEDS Ride: Data from K-12 to College & Career Pioneer**

**Sarah Brown, Danielle Dupuis, Lisa Gregoire, Megan Peterson**

What indicators predict high school graduates' success? How does your school compare to others? Learn about the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLED), available data as well as potential ways to use the data in school improvement efforts. Bring a laptop/iPad to access data.

## **Coaching School Boards to Increase Student Achievement Lakeshore 4**

**Mary Cecconi**

The research is clear: building capacities within boards of education is critical to realizing student success. Learn what the most effective boards do to improve student outcomes AND the necessary steps required to build this capacity in their own district's school board.

## **Equipping Educators for Social Emotional Learning**

**Paul Bunyan 2**

**Sarah Haugen, Tracy Lysne**

How might you be your best for your school? Explore approaches that aim to uncover, cultivate, and encourage you to intentionally apply your individual strengths, talents, and passions. Through active learning, dialogue, and reflection you will experience ways to both recognize and better leverage the unique gifts you and others bring to the world.

## **High School Faculty College Credentials NOT Required Lakeshore 1**

**Judith Anderson**

What if there was a way to keep ALL of your state allocation while offering college courses in your school without the worry of faculty credentials at a greatly reduced rate over traditional PSEO? There is. Online College in the High School is an award-winning program that has been recognized by the State Legislature as well as Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. It could be your missing link.

## **How Your Peers Are Increasing ACT Scores**

**Paul Bunyan 3**

**Panel facilitated by John Baylor**

Hear from a panel of Minnesota school administrators on the impact the On To College program (formally John Baylor Prep) has had on the test scores and scholarships of their students, and how the program has helped change the culture of their school. The panel will discuss specific best practices and answer questions.

## Minnesota Teacher Licensure Redefined

### Lakeshore 3

**Troy Haugen, Jeralyn Jargo**

The teacher shortage is on the mind of every facet of our Greater Minnesota schools, and the new system will impact everyone. Learn about the current state of licensure, the tiered licensure system, and how Career & Technical Education teachers fit in the big system.

## Rural Pulse 2016: Understanding the Rural Voice and Landscape

### South Dining Room

**Bernadine Joselyn**

A community's health is made up of many separate but inter-related dimensions. Rural Pulse 2016, a research study commissioned by the Blandin Foundation, breaks down rural Minnesotans' perceptions of a healthy community. Learn about the research and the study's nine dimensions, including Lifelong Learning, Community Leadership, and Inclusion.

## School Finance 101

### Shoreline

**Terri Yetter**

Learn the basics of funding schools, including the legal context, goals and mechanics of the school finance system, key data drivers, the revenue cycle, major funding formulas and revenue sources, and considerations for referenda. Leave with an understanding of school district funding issues, key data drivers and their relationship to good budgeting and fiscal health.

## Supporting Students on the Path to Graduation and Beyond!

### Paul Bunyan 4

**Cammy Lehr, Noam Wiggs**

Explore GradMinnesota's seven key recommendations to better engage and support students on the path to high school graduation and postsecondary success. Learn about statewide opportunities for young people to be decision-makers and take a virtual tour of GradMinnesota's resource library.





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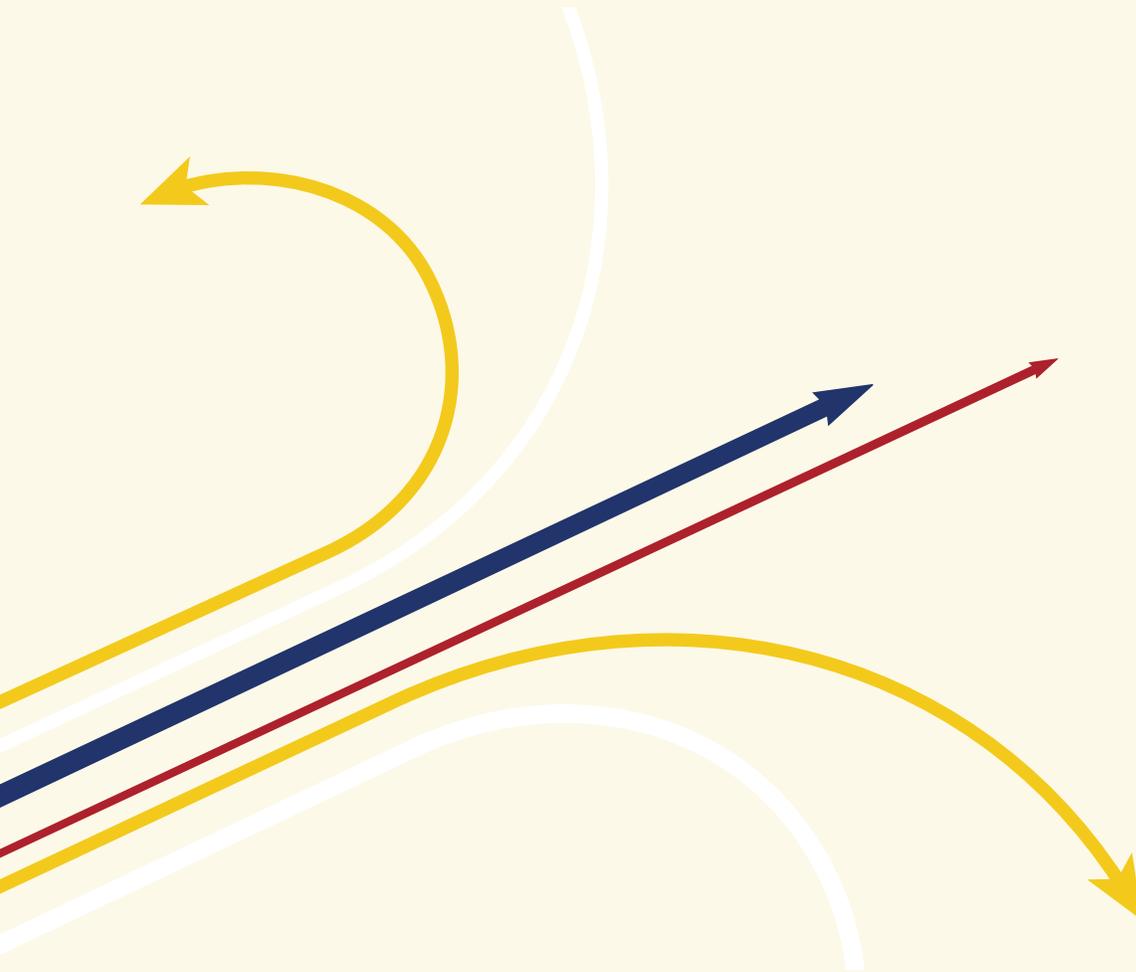
\*Ipreo MuniAnalytics as of September 21, 2015  
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# MINDSTORM

## 3:00 PM Monday Poolside

Engage in lively conversation with your peers about critical educational challenges confronting rural educators today. Take a deep dive into one of these complex problems or promising practices and identify actionable solutions:

- How can we recruit teachers to rural Minnesota or “grow our own”?
- How can mentoring of new teachers and other strategies work to retain teachers?
- How do we partner with community colleges and industries to enable both graduates and communities to thrive?
- What are issues and promising practices to improve college and career counseling? How can middle and high school advisories help?
- What long-term strategies and campaigns work to overcome challenges with building and operating dollars?
- How do you have difficult conversations with your community related to:
  - *Increasing student diversity?*
  - *Students who present as transgender?*
  - *Increasing academic and achievement expectations for students?*



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE & SOCIAL

**4:15 PM Monday**

Lakeshore 1-4

**Sam Waltheth**

**Legislative Lessons: What's Next for Rural Schools?**

Sam Waltheth has logged 17 legislative sessions lobbying at the Minnesota State Capitol and leading successful coalitions to improve equity in educational opportunities for rural students. He will provide an insider's perspective on the 2017 legislative activities and share what's next for rural schools. During this session, we also will present the 2017 Distinguished Service Award.

# DINNER & AWARDS BANQUET

**6:00 PM Monday**

Main Dining Room

Join us for dinner to recognize and celebrate the Profile of Excellence Award honorees and Educators of Excellence. Learn more about the honorees on the following pages. Music will be provided by the Pequot Lakes Symphonic Band. After the awards ceremony, join us for a reception with dessert and a cash bar with complimentary sodas and water in Lakeshore 1-4.

The Pequot Lakes Symphonic Band is a 32-member ensemble grades 9-12. One of two high school wind bands at Pequot Lakes, the symphonic band features students, having shown through audition, to have an excellent level of musicianship, allowing for in-depth study of high school and collegiate literature. Many students in the ensemble receive college credit for the class. The band has received straight superior ratings at Minnesota State High School League Contest since its inception in 2010. Students are under the direction of Michael Sommersness.

# AWARDS



2017

## Distinguished Service Award

### Rep. Sondra Erickson & Sen. Eric Pratt

Effectively staffing Greater Minnesota schools with teachers took a significant step forward this past year thanks to the hard work of two rural legislators.

Rep. Sondra Erickson and Sen. Eric Pratt helped forge a path for teacher licensure reform during the 2017 legislative session. They developed and led legislation that created a new licensure structure that provides much needed clarity and flexibility for school districts and makes it easier for them to attract teachers.



*“Teacher shortages are rampant and the new licensure structure provides avenues for non-traditional and out-of-state candidates to attain licensure in Minnesota,” said Sam Walseth, MREA Director of Legislative Affairs. “This legislation has a direct impact on our schools’ ability to attract quality teachers and it would not have been possible without the efforts of Rep. Erickson and Sen. Pratt.”*

Rep. Erickson of Princeton is serving her 10th non-consecutive term and was chief author of the bill in the House. As a retired English teacher, she understood the need for legislation such as this to continue to sufficiently staff the schools of Greater Minnesota. Senator Pratt of Prior Lake is serving in his 2nd term and has a special interest in the area of education. He was chief author of the bill in the Senate.

Throughout the process, Rep. Erickson and Sen. Pratt listened and took ideas from both MREA and others with rural education interest. They guided the bill through their respective processes and in the end their hard work paid off as they helped the bill make its way to the Governor’s desk, where it was signed into law.

It is MREA’s honor to recognize the work of Rep. Erickson and Sen. Pratt with the 2017 Distinguished Service Award.

2017  
Educators of Excellence

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**NORTH**

**Susan Akre**

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Coordinator,  
Deer River Public Schools

For over 35 years, Susan Akre has been a student of education while being an educator of students. Focused on data-driven approaches, she is getting results for students and helping teachers in northern Minnesota do the same. The teachers under her tutelage saw three grades increase in proficiency by nearly 20 percent each and four other grades improve by almost 30 percent per grade.



**NORTH CENTRAL**

**Angela Hartman**

Business Teacher and Academic Advisor, Underwood  
Public Schools

As a business teacher, Angela Hartman believes it is her job to equip students for the workforce. This has meant restructuring the courses available at the school and honing in on professional computer skills, career research and planning, and personal finance and economics. Along with two other teachers, she experimented with iPads as part of the college curriculum. The success led the school to implement a 1:1 iPad initiative for all 10th to 12th graders.



**SOUTH**

**Melissa Klapperich**

**Sixth-Grade Teacher, Cannon Falls Public Schools**

Melissa Klapperich enlivens the traditional junior high history and social study lessons with Interactive Notebooks, the making of parfleche bags, extensive fur exhibits to learn about the fur trade and other hands-on, tactile learning experiences. A writing project designed to give Afghanistan and American students access and insight into each other's lives has since been used by other school districts and received a Nobel Peace Prize nomination.



**SOUTH CENTRAL**

**Roger Ebnet**

**Second-Grade Teacher, Benson Public Schools**

For nearly 30 years Roger Ebnet has invested in the individual success of each of his second-grade students and the community they all live in. He gains funds to provide unforgettable experiences in the classroom and in his community. In one case, he led an effort, and secured funds, for celebrity visits by former NFL star Donald Driver, Gold Medalist Gabby Douglas and a concert by Country music superstar Luke Bryan.



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2017

## Profiles of Excellence

### Life Story Book Project

#### Fosston School District

An initial goal of improving both hard and soft skill sets at Fosston High School led to the production and gifting of two dozen memory books that will be cherished for years to come. This Life Story Book Project brought together the 10th Grade Language Arts students with residents of two of the town's nursing home and assisted living centers. School leaders matched each student with an elder resident to learn about a piece of history through the experience of a local resident and capture it in one-of-a-kind books.

### Fabrication Arts Lab

#### Kelliher School District

Fueled by the belief that students learn through creating, educators at Kelliher Public Schools established the school's Fabrication Arts Lab program. The program allows students to create cutting edge industry products that rival those produced in the commercial world. The program is a framework for classes and curricula that equip and empower students, staff, and even community members to come together and create. Some of the technology used in the program includes 3D printers, a vinyl cutter, and computer-assisted versions of a laser engraver, a plasma cutter and a mill.

### Chamber Classroom

#### Yellow Medicine School District

A desire for multi-disciplinary research and exploration resulted in the development of a unique three-chamber classroom in the school parking lot at Yellow Medicine East High School. Students in the school's trades and carpentry class built the state-of-the-art structure. Climate controlled through in-floor heating and hi-carbon mats in the greenhouse beds, each chamber is dedicated to the growth and study of plants and fish in different climate regions. This classroom serves as an extensive learning incubator for science, technology, engineering, art and math. It opens up a wide variety of career ideas for students.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE EFFORTS AND NOMINATE A PROGRAM AT  
[MREAVoice.org/ProfilesOfExcellence](http://MREAVoice.org/ProfilesOfExcellence)



## A BENCH FOR A PRINCESS

Jil Fiemeyer feels her daughter's presence when she sees kids playing near one of the orange Buddy Benches at Wadena-Deer Creek Elementary.

Eight-year-old Jane passed away in September 2012 after a courageous fight with cancer.

"Jane was kind and never liked to see kids playing alone," Fiemeyer said. "The Buddy Bench represents friendship in a way that I like to think Jane would have embraced - inclusive of anyone who wanted to play with others."

The Princess Warrior Organization, a nonprofit created in 2013 to honor Jane, worked with National Joint Powers Alliance® to purchase four Buddy Benches as tangible reminders of Jane's memory, spirit, and beliefs.

Learn what NJPA can do for your organization at **NJPAcoop.org**.

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# GALLERY WALK

7:30 AM Tuesday

After breakfast, grab your morning beverage and browse the tables and booths at our Gallery Walk vendor fair. Get your **Gallery Walk Passport** (in your conference folder) stamped by the exhibitors and drop it in the Drawing Box for chances to win additional prizes. Participating exhibitors include:

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SWWC Service Cooperative  
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NWEA  
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Kelliher School District  
Yellow Medicine East School District

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MREA members support expanding educational opportunities and closing achievement gaps in Minnesota in the following ways. MREA's membership includes about 225 school districts across Greater Minnesota, 11 education districts, special education and service cooperatives and additional associate members.

## Teacher Crisis

All Minnesota students need highly qualified licensed teachers, across all grade levels and specialties, guiding them every day. Student academic achievement is directly impacted by the quality of the teachers in their classrooms.

### KEY LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS NEEDED

- Maintain a stable, defined-benefit retirement plan through shared responsibility of the state, school districts, teachers and retirees.
- Secure adequate, ongoing funding for loan forgiveness/scholarships to attract and retain teachers in rural Minnesota.
- Expand Grow Your Own Teachers pilot programs to rural districts and cooperatives.
- Support equitable funding for Teacher Development & Evaluation activities across the state for all teachers and their students.

## Jump Start to School Readiness

While there is widespread understanding and support for the value of early learning, Minnesota's multiple categorical, competitive funding streams result in inequitable opportunities for children across the state and impede the ability of rural school districts to deliver high quality preschool education to all young children.

### KEY LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS NEEDED

- Streamline early learning revenues and ensure local coordination of early learning programs by consolidating Pathway I and II, Voluntary Pre-K, School Readiness Plus into the School Readiness account with consensus requirements.
- Consensus requirements should include a minimum of 350 hours of service, 3- and 4- star rated providers and a focus on serving FRE population.
- Ensure a viable mixed delivery system by requiring schools to reserve 40 percent for non-district providers with same program requirements, while holding harmless revenue for Voluntary Pre-K recipients. Release unused reserved funds to school districts annually on June 30.

## Strengthen Rural Communities

Robust economic development in rural Minnesota relies on affordable child care and Internet connectivity.

### KEY LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS NEEDED

- Enhance state funding to support quality childcare in underserved rural communities.
- Expand broadband development grants to underserved rural communities to provide home access to high-speed broadband Internet to maximize student success with school-based 1-to-1 initiatives.

## Facility Fallout

Rural schools balance a variety of critical facility needs, including instructional space for students with high needs, early learning environments and remodeling for 21st century learning. They all fall outside of Long Term Facility Maintenance (LTFM).

### KEY LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS NEEDED

- Enact Recommendation #4 of the School Facilities Financing Work Group to
  - Repurpose the current \$212 per pupil Lease Levy as School Facilities Improvement Revenue to expand the uses of these funds for facility renovation and improvements as well as lease payments, and
  - Provide Greater Minnesota school district members of cooperatives the authority to levy up to \$65 per pupil for cooperative facilities.
- Set a minimum allowable district lease levy authorization equal to that for 480 Adjusted Pupil Units.
- Allow districts to enter into joint powers agreements for cooperative facilities, use lease levy for cooperative facilities even if they once owned the facility, and use LTFM to enhance leased facilities from public and private owners.
- Equalize homeowner tax effort for school facility bonds by linking Debt Service Equalization to a fixed percentage of state average Adjusted Net Tax Capacity (ANTC) and maintain the 40 percent Ag2School Bond Credit for agricultural land for school bond taxes.

## Student Opportunity Gaps

Greater Minnesota schools are required to offer all required subjects, elective opportunities and services for students regardless of their size. They are facing increasingly diverse student bodies with more mental health needs and a pressing need to credential concurrent enrollment teachers by the new Higher Learning Commission deadline of Sept. 1, 2022.

### KEY LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS NEEDED

- **Concurrent Enrollment Credentialing Support:** Fully fund the statewide partnership authorized in 2017.
- **Cooperative Technical Assistance:** Support cooperative technical assistance for rural school districts and the ability to make improvements in curriculum, instruction and the effective use of data.
- **Telecommunications Equity Access (TEA):** Expand funding and Regional Library Telecom Aid (RLTA) programs to ensure cost-effective, high-speed broadband access to learners of all ages.
- **English Language Learners:** Raise both the minimum amount of funding each district receives for serving ELL students to \$32,000 and the amount per pupil with a minimum of \$17,000 per district increase.
- **Mental Health:** Restore funding for ongoing school-county collaborative efforts to provide mental health and related services.



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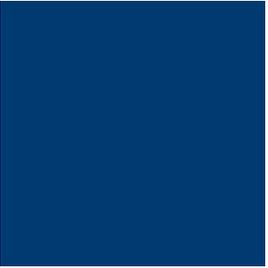
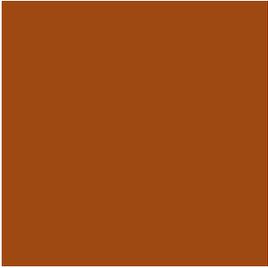
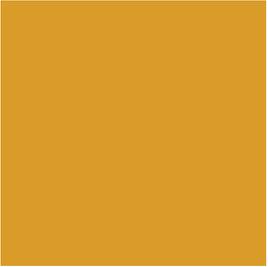
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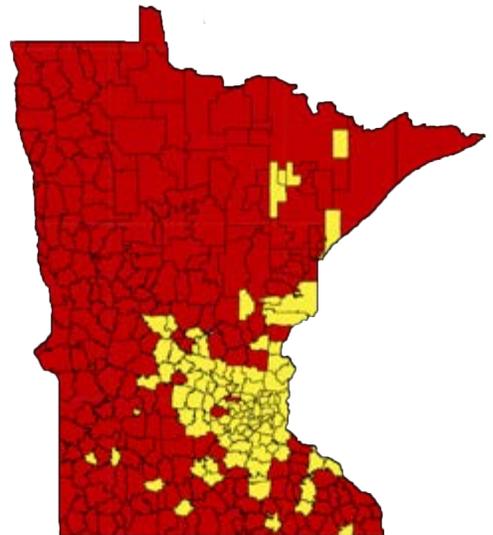
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## Member Districts

In addition to about 225 school districts in Greater Minnesota, MREA members include:

- Service Cooperatives
- Minnesota Education Districts Association
- Special Education Cooperatives
- Colleges & Universities
- Businesses & Nonprofits
- Individuals



**MREA**

Voice For Greater Minnesota Education