



News

Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs Newsletter
Steve Allen, Editor

Here is all the latest news from the world of alternative education in the state of Minnesota. You can also check out our [website](#) for more information.

President's Message

By *Peter Lundin*

The end of 2018 brings opportunity for reflection. Yet issues, successes, and concerns continue to flood our inbox, phone, and appointment books. Little time is available for all the demands our profession provides and how we work as teams to impact students. If you have a chance, pick up *School Transformation* by Wayne Jennings, PhD. It brought me back to what's important in education.

Revisiting elements in his work at this time of year was revealing, useful, and refreshing. Jennings reminds us of the importance of being on the same page. Phrases such as "mutually supportive", "imaginatively thinking", and "trusting team of diverse people" pepper his writing. Even at this moment, "The time is ripe for school transformation." This is a mindset that can be very useful to maintain at the end of 2018, and for the days to come.

MAAP 101

By *Greg Zimmerman*

MAAP 101 is a one day conference designed to support new and relatively new teachers to alternative education. The goal is to provide tools that can be quickly add to their toolbox in order to support their growth as alternative educators. This year's MAAP 101 Con-

ference was held on October 5 at the Ivan Sand Community High School in Elk River.



We had an exceptional slate of presenters once again this year. Sally Reynolds provided a welcome and discussed MDE resources. Breakout sessions included curriculum ideas such as robotics, language arts, and MAAP STARS. Sessions on classroom management, school discipline, chemical dependency, risk factors, special education, and social worker perspectives were valuable experiences for teachers who are new to dealing with at-risk student populations. Jane Goodall and Ivan Sand students held a discussion panel to give attendees a chance to ask questions about other schools and student perspectives. There were also sessions that focused on building relationships and taking care of ourselves in a high stress profession. These sessions included how to deal with burnout, sacred circle, yoga, and student voice and choice. Kelly Holstine helped welcome everyone and get the day started on the right note by facilitating a large group

discussion in which attendees got to know each other by opening up about strengths, weaknesses, and fears. It was a very valuable session to start the day by all accounts.

Attendees also had time built into the day to simply network. Connecting with others who share similar roles in

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their schools is often the most valuable thing we can do during conferences such as MAAP 101.



Based on evaluation feedback, the 2018 version of MAAP 101 was a huge success. Special thanks goes out to all those who attended or presented. A couple presenters stepped in on very short notice and did an amazing job! I would also like to thank the staff and students of Ivan Sand for their assistance and accommodations that made this day possible. Please spread the word and encourage new staff from your programs to attend MAAP 101 next fall.

MAAP STARS Fall Leadership Conference

By Patti Haasch



The 25th Annual Fall Leadership Conference took place October 10 & 11 at Lake Beauty Camp in Long Prairie. We had 27 programs registered and over 200 in attendance from around the state. Michael Myers-Schleif and Konie Brudwick, teachers from McKinley St. Cloud ALC, worked closely with the Lake Beauty Camp staff planning our conference. This year's pre-conference

activities had to be canceled due to weather, but still came early and enjoyed other things at the camp. We had more team planning time so programs could design how their MAAP STARS Chapter will look like this school year. There was a session on what MAAP STARS is that offered resources on how to start and/or improve on a STARS Chapter. Derek Greenfield, who has been at the conference 23 of the 25 years, and Carl Olson were the main presenters doing team building and motivational activities with the students and advisors.

Students running for the State Officer Leadership Team gave speeches and campaigned the first night. Schools turned in their ballots the next day, voting for who they felt would represent them and alternative education. Students and advisors stayed in dorms and cabins which also offered bonding time as a school team. Each school received their framed MAAP STARS membership certificate and were encouraged to download the STARS Chapter and Events Manuals that are on the MAAP website for resources to enhance their school's chapter.

Coming together for the conference enables students and advisors to network with other programs throughout Minnesota. Some schools have had a MAAP STARS Chapter for many, many years and others were first timers. Each provides its own uniqueness and offers students opportunities to grow and learn in different ways.

Be sure to check out the STARS section on the MAAP website for various videos such as "What Is MAAP STARS", "How To Start A MAAP STARS Chapter", the Animoto of the Fall Conference, and watch the video which has various schools talking about how they do STARS at their schools. You can read previous student speeches, get details about the three STARS state-wide events, and learn much more about

STARS.

Our hope is that all nine regions will encourage more schools to become involved in MAAP STARS and even offer regional events throughout this school year. MAAP STARS makes a difference!



MAAP STARS State Leadership Team 2018 – 2019

By Patti Haasch

Eight students campaigned to be a MAAP STARS Officer at the 25th Annual MAAP STARS Fall Leadership Conference. The candidates had to give a speech in front of the whole group explaining why they wanted to be an officer. Five were elected. They are:

- **Breanna Kissel**
Ivan Sand Community High School
NW Metro
- **Fardowsa Abdi**
Paladin Career & Technical High School
NE Metro
- **Katelyn Dorry**
Northern Lights Community School
Northeast
- **Robert Johnson**
Voyageurs Expeditionary School
Northwest
- **Victoria Rivera**
MN Valley Area Learning Center
Southwest



Liza Kelly (Austin ALC) and Patti Haasch (MAAP STARS Chair) provided the officer training November 8 & 9 at the Radisson Hotel in Roseville. Two guests came by: Kip Sackett, co-founder of MAAP STARS, and Wayne Jennings, to talk to the officers about leadership and the legislative process. Part of the training involves buying matching outfits to wear when they are presenting about STARS. At the end of the training, we all went to the MN Department of Education in their new outfits to talk to Alternative Programs Specialist, Sally Reynolds; sharing about what MAAP STARS is and the impact it has had on their lives so far, plus tour MDE.

These MAAP STARS Officers will be on hand to lead Legislative Day At The State Capitol (February 20), conduct our STARS Spring Events Conference (May 9 & 10, 2019), and guide next Fall's Leadership Conference in October. They also will present at other conferences such as MSBA Convention in January at the Minneapolis Convention Center and the MAAP State Conference in Duluth. They are available to come to your school to talk about MAAP STARS with your students and staff. Feel free to reach out to them.

Being a MAAP STARS Officer

*By Katelyn Dorry,
Student from Northern Lights
Community School*

I've always been drawn to leadership roles; I love the idea of accomplishing something that matters and making a difference in this world. I've also been passionate about education — more specifically alternative education — ever since I enrolled in my charter school I saw the power and impact alternative programs can have on students from all different backgrounds. When I heard about MAAP STARS and the MAAP STARS Officer program, I practically jumped up in my seat.

My name is Katelyn Dorry. I'm a ninth great student at Northern Lights Community School (NLCS). NLCS is a project-based charter school in Warba, Minnesota that I enrolled in during my seventh grade year. Being in this school the last few years, I have received more opportunities than I can count. This includes MAAP STARS.

Last year I attended Fall Leadership conference while a friend of mine ran for office, which was my way of helping me prepare for this year. I was a bit shy than I am now, but I learned a lot about MAAP STARS and I couldn't wait for my opportunity to run especially after attending Spring Conference in May that school year.

This Fall was my time to shine. My advisor, Donna, had approached me with permission slips and instructions on what to do to run for Officer. I typed up a short biography of myself to submit for my campaign, and it was about a week later, I realized oh my God, I'm actually running, there's no going back now! So off I was, toiling over my campaign speech, steadily getting more and more scared as Fall Conference approached. Eventually, I found myself on stage, telling over a hundred kids why I think I should be one of their next MAAP STARS Officers. Would you believe it, I won.

I suppose you could say I didn't "feel" like an officer until a month later, when I attended Officer Training. Looking around the table in the Radisson Hotel, I saw my peers. I saw four other students with the same ambition, the same drive to make a difference in our world. We bonded very quickly, and instead of bringing each other down while fighting to be the best, we all lifted each other up. I really am proud to be in this group.

One of the many things we did during training was developing our goals for the future. A common theme among all of us was that we wanted to make a difference. Our goals involve being an active resource for people to learn more about us and what we represent. We want more people to know about MAAP STARS. We want people to know about alternative education in general.

I can't stress enough what an amazing experience being an Officer has been, even in this short time that I've been involved. The leadership skills and the public speaking skills are going to stay with me my whole life. What's impacted me even more though, has also been the ability to work as a team. To work not just to better myself but to better the group; to really work together to make an impact. I'm excited for the future and to see what all we will do in the next year as a MAAP STARS Officer.

Administrative Workshop By Steve Allen

I would like to thank everyone for participating in the 2018 MAAP Administrative Workshop. This has been a partnership between MAAP and MDE that gets better each year.



Here is some feedback that we received from participants.

- Overall, presenters scored a 3.17 on a 4 point scale.
- The Department facility scored a 3.28 on a 4 point scale.
- The food and service scored a 3.52 on a 4 point scale.
- Did this workshop present current issues and concerns and allow time for networking scored a 3.76 on a 4 point scale. (Although, you will notice in the comments that a couple individuals stated that they would like to see more networking time.)

Some suggested topics for next year were:

- Care giving for the leaders of the schools.
- Project-Based Learning.
- Working with students in chemical addiction and recovery
- How to improve student attendance.
- Alternative ways to earn required credits for graduation.
- Coaching teachers.
- Issues facing large school districts.
- Social-emotional strategies.
- Motivation strategies and interventions.
- Parent engagement.
- Middle School programing.
- Check and Connect.
- Time to meet and share with MAAP Regional Directors.

At the Administrative Workshop, Brad Jensen attended a session a session that Brad Hasskamp, MDE ABE/Adult Diploma Specialist lead on the new GED. Here's Brad's summary of that session:

The term GED has been trademarked by Pearson, so the State or anyone for that matter, cannot use the term GED anymore unless they are referring specifically to the Pearson GED test. (Yes, everyone has been using the term GED since 1947 so the change in terminology throughout the nation will be hard.) . The new general term that should be used is HSEA, High School Equivalency Assessment(s).



For the next 8 months, MDE and the Minnesota Department of Administration will be releasing a request for proposal to evaluate any vendor interested having their HSEA approved for Minnesota. Nationally, there are three HSEA tests: Pearson's GED; HSET by ETS, and TASC by Data Recognition Corp. This summer the state may pick one test, two tests, or all three test for future High School Equivalency Assessments in Minnesota. The schedule right now is for MDE to have the selection done by July 2019 and then a 6-month transition to the new system.

At the Administrative Workshop, Kari Hasz and Bill Zimmewicz received copies of Wayne Jennings' new book, *School Transformation*. Below are their reviews of Wayne's book.



School Transformation

By Kari Hasz

School Transformation, by Wayne Jennings, PhD, represents the culmination of over 60 years of experience of an educational innovator. Dr. Jennings is certainly no stranger to the MAAP community--he is a steadfast fixture at MAAP events and has generously shared his time and knowledge with the MAAP community throughout the years. *School Transformation* gifts the reader Jennings's depth of knowledge and breadth of experience in school leadership. Dr. Jennings begins the book with a call to refocus the purpose of education on the areas of citizenship, careers, lifelong learning and personal achievement. From there, Jennings examines the current educational system and respectfully, but honestly, discusses its shortcomings in meeting the educational needs of the modern student. While many authors have discussed the need for school reform, few authors provide solutions. What elevates *School Transformation* is the care Wayne Jennings takes to provide the reader with a solid, practical foundation for change. Many innovative programs, both past and present, within Minnesota, across the nation, and internationally located are highlighted as models. While Jennings provides the outline for successful school transformation, he honors the many paths that exist to transform schools. Drawing from his wealth of experience, he shares his insights for transforming schools, advises how to garner stakeholder engagement, and



even provides guidance on the financial aspects of school transformation.

Both a historical perspective on educational reform and a how-to guide for transforming schools, *School Transformation* is a must-read for any person invested in the educational system.

Editor's Note: Kari informed me that the Pine City ALC will also be using Wayne's book in their professional development activities.

School Transformation

A Review

By *Bill Zimmewicz*

In the summer of 2000, MAAP sponsored an international conference where we invited Alfie Kohn to give a keynote address. His book, *The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms and "Tougher Standards,"* destroyed the conventional thinking that was poisoning state legislatures and media spokespersons who were promoting standardization and high stakes testing. Kohn wasn't alone, of course, but his great book, in my opinion, stood alone as the only one of note that was comprehensive and universal. There was no book equal to Kohn's until Wayne Jennings published *School Transformation* earlier this year.

School Transformation is Wayne Jennings' opus. His wealth of experience and scholarly work for almost seven decades brings together his view on what is happening in traditional schools now and what possibilities there could be if educators and others understand factors that go into how children learn. Wayne skillfully weaves his multiple experiences with many resources throughout the book defending his thesis of school transformation.

It is important to recognize that both

Kohn's and Jennings' books are comparable, in that the two books cite a vast number of resources from both scholarly research and popular literature.

In the earlier chapters, *School Transformation* shows how, historically, our traditional schools have failed many youth. The school system has remained pretty much the same as it did during the Industrial Age. As technology and our nation have advanced, the schools have not. Wayne points that there have been multiple attempts at creating new and exciting schools but he for countless reasons, very little has changed. A lot of money has been spent and still no change. Much of this, Wayne points out, is that most of us—parents, teachers, and others—see schools from the lenses of our own experiences. Sadly, most don't know of any another way.

One of the most eye-opening chapters in *School Transformation* is Chapter V, titled "How Students Learn." In this section of the book, Wayne looks at much of the research that has been published over the years and dives deeply into how the brain functions and that humans, even as infants, are using their brains learning all the time. Schools, the book clearly states, are "largely brain antagonistic by design."

He doesn't let up on the negative effects of the testing agenda we find ourselves working under either. "Conventional testing is a misguided, foolish, and harmful practice because it ignores human uniqueness and characteristics essential for life success,"

There is reason for hope as *School Transformation* gives readers many examples of how educators can do better for their students. The book includes an essay written by Jennings Community School graduate, R'Elle Robinson. Her piece gives an example of one of Wayne's major themes that

young people already have insight and intelligence. He declares that students are untapped resources.

There is so much in this book to admire. This book is a masterpiece and as his wife, eminent educator Joan Sorenson said, only he [Wayne Jennings] could have written it.

2019 MAAP State Conference

By *Kristyn Martin*



- Conference theme: **We All Do Better When We All Do Better!**
- Conference dates: February 6-8th, 2019
- Conference location: DECC in Duluth, MN

Important Dates:

- December 14th: Early Bird Discount Expires...make sure to register for the conference today at <http://www.maapmn.org/conference/>
- January 15th: Hotel Room Discount Cutoff Date. Hotel rooms are going for \$92 if you book them by the deadline. Follow this link for the Holiday Inn to make your reservation: [Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs MAAP](http://www.minnstateinn.com/)
- February 6-8: 37th Annual State MAAP Conference!

Our 2019 MAAP Conference will be

here before you know it. The Conference Committee is hard at work putting together the final touches on what is bound to be a fantastic conference. The list of breakout presenters and topics is impressive! The breakout topics presented by practitioners, MDE Staff, and Community Members range from hands on activities/lessons to engaging discussions about how to build resilience in our students who have experienced trauma. There is no doubt that this year's conference will have a variety of new breakout sessions for everyone to enjoy.

What's new this year? Thursday is taking on a new schedule than in previous years. There will be no keynote speaker on Thursday. Instead there will be a combination of Large Group presentations that address the concerns and interests of our MAAP Members. Stay tuned, the breakout session descriptions and schedules will be posted to our website in January! We are still in need of presenters...so if your program is doing something that works, fill out an RFP and share your experiences with other alternative educators from across the state. Make sure to check your email from regional directors, as they are sending out presentation idea stimulators that can help you and your staff come up with ideas to present on at the MAAP Conference. Please consider presenting at the conference, you will receive a discount if you are approved. Want to present? Fill out this RFP: [MAAP Conference Presenter Link](#)

Also new to the MAAP conference this year are MDE Share Tables. This time is dedicated for MAAP members to have individual discussion, or round table discussions with various staff from MDE. Have questions about Finance, ESSA, Work Based Learning or more? Make sure to come to the informal, MDE Share Tables on Thursday, February 7th!

Keynote Speakers:

The 2019 Keynote Speakers are Elliot Washor (February 6th at 5:00 PM) and Dr. Ross Greene (February 8th at 8:40 AM). Please see the additional article on our keynote speakers, they are highly sought after and we are excited to have them at our conference in February!

On Thursday evening, the Networking Extravaganza will be in full swing. This is an opportunity to meet new people and network with friends and colleagues from all over the state of MN. The Networking Extravaganza will also have a photobooth, raffle drawings (\$25 Amazon Gift Cards), a grand prize drawing (ECHO SPOT), cash bar, games and MORE! Make sure to kickback, meet new people and join us at the 7th Annual Networking Extravaganza.

If you haven't registered for the conference, please make sure to do so ASAP so you can partake in the early bird pricing. See you all in Duluth!



State Conference Keynote Speakers

By Bill Zimmewicz

Elliot Washor: Mr. Elliot Washor is a Co-Founder of Big Picture Learning Inc. and serves as its Co-Director. Mr. Washor is also the co-founder of The

Met Center. He has been involved in school reform for more than 30 years as a teacher, principal, administrator, video producer, and writer. He has taught and is interested in all levels of school from kindergarten through college, in urban and rural settings, across all disciplines. His work has spanned across school design, pedagogy, learning environments, and education reform and is supporting others doing similar work throughout the world. His interests lie in the field of how schools can connect with communities to understand tacit and disciplinary learning both in and outside of school. He is deeply committed to imagining Big Picture Learning as a 'do-think-do' organization, and persistently pushes the boundaries of its design in order to continually innovate practice and influence in the world of education. He has been selected as an educator to watch in Rhode Island and has recently been selected as one of the Daring Dozen – the Twelve Most Daring Educators in the World by the George Lucas Educational Foundation.

Ross W. Greene: Ross W. Greene, PhD, is the author of the influential, best-selling books *The Explosive Child* and *Lost at School* and a fierce and articulate advocate for the compassionate understanding and treatment of behaviorally challenging kids and their caregivers. Drawing upon vast clinical and consultation experience and research in the neurosciences, his innovative, research-based Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS) approach – which posits that challenging behavior is the result of lagging skills (rather than lagging motivation) and emphasizes solving problems collaboratively (rather than use of motivational procedures) – has been implemented in countless thousands of families and hundreds of general and special education schools, inpatient units, and residential and juvenile detention facilities.

Many Voices of Wisdom Over Many Years

By *Bill Zimmewicz*

On October 25, 2018 it was announced in the press that renowned teacher and author John Taylor Gatto had died at the age of 82. I remembered him very well. At the MAAP Conference in 2002 in Duluth, Gatto addressed the MAAP members seated in the auditorium of the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center (the DECC) by reading from a prepared speech he said he had crafted in his hotel room in the previous night. Duluth ALC students sat in three front rows to the speaker's left. And although the speech was quite long and philosophically challenging, the Duluth students were well engaged; when Gatto finished, his speech, the students leaped up from their seats giving him a well-earned applause.

Our annual MAAP conferences have had many guests over the years that have inspired and enlightened us. Some have challenged conventional thinking that often constrains our work in alternative education. Alfie Kohn has attended the conference three times as a conference keynote speaker, and although some have expressed that they don't agree with him at all, they respect that he had a perspective that must be regarded.

Over the past several decades, MAAP members have had the pleasure of many keynote speakers: from the world-renowned poet, Robert Bly to the legendary alternative educator Deborah Meier. Some have been educators: Bill Cala, Fairport, New York's Superintendent of Schools); Ananth Pai, a third grade teacher from White Bear Lake Public Schools; and Dr. David Berliner, Professor Emeritus of Arizona State University come to mind. Others have led large social service organizations like Chanda Smith Baker.

Great thinkers and practical innovators like Wayne Jennings and Don Glines have given keynote addresses too. Some have arrived from Louisiana (Mercedes Schneider); from Florida (Marion Brady); Vermont (Susan O'hanian); and as far as Oxford, England; (Nikhil Goyal). Yong Zhou, originally from China, came to the conference to speak via Oregon and Kansas. Pasi Sahlberg, Finland's celebrated educator traveled the farthest to attend the MAAP Conference. Goyal, Zhou and Sahlberg all demonstrate that our conference has become a global event.

Other speakers have struggled in school or at least challenged their own education: Kimberly Marciniak (Texas), Erica Goldson (upstate New York) and Craig Boykin (Alabama). And although he is not an educator, the St. Paul Saints owner, Mike Veeck, who some questioned what he had to do with alternative education, was well received by MAAP members last year in Mankato. Veeck was one of the kids, once upon a time, who we all work with. Patty Wetterling, Minnesota's own courageous icon, addressed our group too. She definitely has had an impact in our state and nationally as well.

There are many I haven't mentioned. It's difficult because we have held state conferences for over thirty-five straight years. We should continue seeking wise people like John Taylor Gatto, individuals who can challenge our conventional wisdom and show us a different perspective, to help us open our minds some and explore how we can become more effective and humane educators for those we serve.

Editor's Note: Wayne Jennings told me that he also remembered John Taylor Gatto's speech. He I remember seeing the students sitting in front row and giving him a standing ovation. Wayne

said, "I thought the rest of us were somewhat baffled and slowly rose either out of understanding his message or to support the students. I asked about the students' reaction. What they heard was his message of TRUST students, and that trust was a missing element in most classrooms."

State Conference Vendors and Exhibitor

By *Deanna Chiodo*



calling all
Vendors



The MAAP organization still has vendor openings available for our upcoming conference in February. If you know of any organizations that are interested in an opportunity to highlight their company and its products to large number of educators from throughout Minnesota all in one place, the DECC is the place to do it. Why travel throughout Minnesota when you can get your latest products in front of hundreds of educators at the MAAP Conference? We would be excited for others join us. For more information please contact Deanna Chiodo at deanna.chiodo@isd728.org or Patti Haasch pjhaasch@yahoo.com.

State Conference Awards

By *Laura Freer and Steve Allen*

The Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs has been seeking nominations for the 2019 Staff of the Year and School of the Year. We want to recognize the contribution of ex-

ceptional individuals and programs to the mission and vitality of MAAP and to the overall well-being of Minnesota Education. At the State Conference luncheon, please come and recognize this year's recipients.

Also at the conference again this year, we will be recognizing this year's Exemplary Award recipients. This is also a very prestigious award. The criteria are as follows:

- The recipient must have demonstrated outstanding dedication, service and or commitment to alternative education.
- The recipient must have made a significant contribution to their students, their program, MAAP and / or their communities.
- The recipient cannot be a current MAAP Executive Committee member.

Past recipients are:

1998

- Wayne Jennings
- Bob Jibben
- Gene Johnson

1999

- Steve Allen
- Roger Klimpel

2000

- Arlo Renschler
- Governor Rudy Perpich (posthumously)
- Lydell Taylor

2001

- Dan Daly
- Patti Haasch
- Peggy Hunter

2002

- Wally Campbell

- State Senator Jim Pehler

2003

- David Bly
- Senator Paul Wellstone (posthumously)

2004

- Don Glines

2008

- Mike Luger
- John Sedey

2009

- Joan Sorenson
- Bob Wiltsey

2010

- Mary K. Boyd

2011

- Bob Wedl

2012

- Julie Johnson-Willborg
- Lorin Ellertson

2013

- Julia Jilek
- Bill Zimmewicz

2014

- June Long
- Dee Thomas

2015

- Kip Sackett
- Scott Neiman

2016

- Sue Boehland
- Katy Mohabir

2017

- Dave Hagman
- Ted Kolderie

2018

- Lea Dahl

MDE Update

By Sally Reynolds

Greetings from the MN Department of Education – Thanks to alternative programs that have responded to requests for information. This information will be analyzed, summarized, and presented in the 2019 Learning Year Program Annual Legislative Report. Questions on this report, or program credit data, should be sent to sally.reynolds@state.mn.us.

In an effort to increase understanding of State Approved Alternative Program guidelines we have increased the number of webinars, in-person trainings, and site visits. There have been 23 sessions offered since the end of August, and over 312 registering to participate and share their experiences and practices that improve learning for students. Be sure to check out the MDE Calendar for more webinar sessions around Continual Learning Plans (CLPs), Targeted Services (TS), Summer Program planning, Credit Recovery, and more!

Wishes to all for a restful and rejuvenating Holiday Season & best for the New Year.

MAAP STARS News

By Patti Haasch

MAAP STARS Legislative Day – The STARS Come Out At The Capitol! The date for Legislative Day this year is WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH, 2019. Through the years, MAAP has been pro-active and successful in promoting legislation favorable to a variety of learning alternatives. The goal is for the students to visit with their legislators and “tell their stories.” By students meeting with their legislators, they will not only have the opportunity to promote their schools/programs, but also get a better understanding of the legislative process.



The Alchemist

The Alchemist is a literary publication that is put together each year by MAAP. The Alchemist contains student artwork and writings. We encourage students and staff to submit student work throughout the school year to our Alchemist Editor: Deb Nelson. You can send things to this email address: alchemisteditor@gmail.com. The deadline for the 2019 edition is April 12, 2019 and will be available for distribution at the 2019 Spring MAAP STARS Events Conference, May 9 & 10, 2019 at the Double Tree Hotel in Bloomington. You can find the previous Alchemist publications on the MAAP website.

MAAP STARS Gives Awards

At the STARS Spring Events Conference in May, we give out two yearly awards: MAAP Student of the Year and MAAP STARS Advisor of the Year. Alternative Education staff nominate a deserving student while the students nominate a STARS Advisor. Nominations for these two awards are due April 8, 2019. Forms and the criteria for nominating for both of these awards can be found on the MAAP website.

Legislative Update

By Wayne Jennings and Steve Allen

Two things I thought could be added are:

Names of people in attendance. People like to see their names.

Date, time, place of next mtg.
Wayne

Conceivable Legislative Planks
Steve Allen and Wayne Jennings

The MAAP Legislative Committee of

about 10 individuals has had a couple of meetings already this year in preparation for the upcoming legislative session (which convenes January 8th and ends May 20th).

Our meetings are open to all; we urge your participation. Steve Anderson (mathjarl@gmail.com) is working on remote participation via Google Hangout for those unable to attend. Our biggest task has been identifying current issues and concerns and then prioritizing them for our MAAP Legislative Platform.

Several issues emerged as potential planks:

- Extended time revenue. Funding is inadequate and based on an old multiplier. Funding would support a variety of programs including late entry to our programs for at-risk students, students with emotional and mental health issues, over-age under-credited student (and possibly adults to age 25). We support restoring the 1.2 multiplier to 1.4.
- Support for homeless students, a growing population and strain on existing programs.
- Repeal of algebra II requirement for graduation. There was not total agreement on this. Wayne Jennings and Steve Anderson will prepare position papers for the committee. There is an adopted position paper on algebra II on the MAAP website, dated 2008.
- Enrollment of students not in at-risk categories. We know of students in the traditional program who would like an alternative but don't qualify for an ALC, ALP or contracted program. In other words, choice for all.

- Competency-based learning could replace "seat time," credits and Carnegie Units with actual performance as measures of student progress, much as the Scouts award badges earned for specific skills or knowledge.
- Alternative assessments to replace or augment the present system of high stakes testing.

We welcome your views on any of these. Attend or send your comments to Steve Allen (sallen958@gmail.com). Lobbyists recommend that we limit our platform to about three items. Tough choices here!

One approach might be pilot programs. It's usually easier for legislators to accept limited change that system change.

We usually find Legislators sympathetic with our needs if they know about us and accept that all students need to complete schooling. We're sure some of this comes from visits or contacts with our programs around the state. There will be newly elected legislators (1/3 turnover in the House of Representatives!). Keep up with your contacts! Set a goal for your school and/or region. Please let your Regional Director and Steve Allen know when you have connected with your legislator or had them out to visit your school or program.

On another note, Representative David Bly, a former president of MAAP, is not serving an additional term. We thank him for his valuable service in pursuit of a better education for all students. We're going to really miss him at the Capitol. Thanks David for all that you have done for education in Minnesota! Below is an article that Wayne Jennings wrote to help our members communicate with their legislators.



HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH LEGISLATORS

SOME GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

Most legislators are generalists on issues. They are people from a variety of occupations. They are not experts in your specific interest. Most legislators are friendly and willing to listen to your concerns. When meeting with a legislator, use the time wisely and effectively. Legislators have extremely busy schedules. Rambling on will only confuse the subject. Know exactly what it is you want and if you can put these issues into a one-page summary helps a lot. Never argue or get angry at legislators. Remember they will eventually be voting on your issue. If they strongly oppose what you want, thank them for their time and move on. If they ask a question you perceive to be naïve or ridiculous, answer it anyway. They are only trying to understand your point. Try to appreciate how much the legislator knows about your issue by the questions she or he asks. If they know a lot about our issue, move quickly to your next point. If they seem to know little about your issue, then spend time on background information. Always be polite and courteous. Despite public perception about politicians, most legislators want to understand what we want and to make intelligent decisions on issues.

METHODS OF COMMUNICATION:

- **FACE TO FACE CONTACT**
Face to face talking is by far the most effective way to get our message across. It is also the most difficult to arrange. You need to make an appointment and go to their office and wait to see them. At times, especially late in the session, this becomes difficult, and you may find your appointment being changed or canceled. To make an appoint-

ment, call their office. You will talk to the legislative assistant for the legislator. That person's job is the gatekeeper for the legislator. Do not ask for more than 15 minutes of time. Get your message across in that time.

- **LETTER OR EMAIL**
An email is an alternative but the least effective step. Legislators get many emails over many topics and seldom pay much attention. If you chose this method make sure you get quickly to the point (only 1-2 short paragraphs and mention you are a student). Ask the legislator to reply. A letter is better than email, but individualize it. Know the legislative bill number if available.
- **PHONE CONVERSATION**
If you are unable to visit the legislator's office, a phone conversation is the next best thing. You will talk first to the legislative assistant. Ask for the legislator to call you and give a time when you know she or he can reach you. Returning your call costs the legislator time and effort, so don't expect that avenue of communication to work. Again, keep your message short and to the point.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

It really helps if the legislator you are contacting is the person who represents your district or knows your school. If you are a constituent, be sure you make that known. Also, always ASK for their vote. Most legislators will be personable and friendly. But do not mistake friendliness for support. Aim for legislator becoming knowledgeable about your alternative program or school and MAAP's legislative platform.

Share program operations, statistics, successes, and concerns. If they come to know you, periodically you can send them information, news articles; and any good P.R. about your school. Invite them to your school for a visit, maybe to the annual MAAP State Conference, any special events you have at your school (example: graduation ceremony) and have them meet your students and parents. Maybe they can even be on your governing board. Legislators like to be active in their community. They like to show up if told the press and photographers will be present. Teachers: Legislators will often listen to students more than the adults. Prepare students to talk with legislators. That preparation can include learning to share some personal struggles they've experienced and tell how their alternative school is making a difference. Legislators want to know that programs work for students.

E-lympic Results

By Tom Wendt

On December 5th, thirty teams from alternative programs around the state of Minnesota participated in the E-lympics. During the course of the day, teams from these programs answered 46 different knowledge bowl-type questions. The 100 points awarded for each question were evenly divided among all teams submitting a correct answer within the allotted 30 minutes. Getting the hard problems right was thus very important. With a new question being released every 5 minutes, organization was an important aspect of the day. One of the St. Croix Valley teams had a significant lead at the intermission and held on to win by less than 1 point.



Schoology	Score	Rank
St. Croix Valley ALC	225.38	1
Big W A (Apple Valley)	224.59	2
Paladin Knights	200.03	3
Fridley ALC	198.12	4
EdVisions Campus Surfing Penguins	184.78	5
Riverside Muskrats	173.79	6
SWMetro Cyborg Dolphins	163.91	7
Red River ALC Group B	160.77	8
Red River ALC Group E	154.39	9
JGESA Team 2 (Brod- erick Aspling)	144.72	10
McKinley Knownoth- ings	143.04	11
Mid Level Angels (Cass Lake)	142.99	12
ALC St. Croix Valley	137.80	13
Long Prairie ALC Team 1	127.69	14
DCALS Minions	121.30	15
River Bluff Pathways (Adam Walther)	119.26	16

Schoology	Score	Rank
YES Parrots	107.88	17
Cass Lake ALC 17Squad	97.10	18
ZED ALC (Garret Bitker)	92.74	19
Red River ALC Group D	91.,74	20
JGESA Team 1	91.32	21
Brainerd Bees	90.72	22
AFSA Middle School	85.94	23
Brainerd BLT's	82.70	24
Hermantown Focus	79.72	25
Freshwater-Staples (Jeff Foss)	75.45	26
Brainerd Goblins	71.41	27
Red River ALC Group A	53.46	28
PYC Team 1	48.82	29
Red River ALC Group C	46.30	30