



News

Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs
Special Edition Newsletter
Steve Allen, Editor

Here is all the latest news from the world of alternative education in the state of Minnesota. This issue especially focuses on the February 2018 MAAP Conference. You can also check out our website at <http://www.maapmn.org/> for more information.

Who, What and Where?

By *Steve Allen*

Just in case you've been sleeping under a rock or not paying attention to all of your emails and text messages, here's a few details about our up-coming 35th Annual State Conference:

- When – February 7th, 8th and 9th
- Where – Verizon Wireless Center in Mankato
- Keynote Speakers – Wayne Jennings, Nikhil Goyal and Michael Veeck
- Conference theme – Lifelong Learning: We Inspire the Desire!

A link to the Conference Framework is included in the email.

**Please note, hotel rooms are filling up our special rate block of rooms have filled up at the Hilton Garden Inn. The last I checked, there were still rooms available at the Mankato City Center Hotel.

Conference Changes – Conference Materials and Resources

By *Chris Bodick*



This year MAAP has started going GREEN!

We are making efforts to reduce our use of paper at the MAAP State Conference this year.

Many of the conference printed materials will be linked to our MAAP website!

We will still hand out folders with the At-A-Glance conference schedule. It will include maps and directions on how to access the many of the online conference materials and resources.

Conference Changes – CEU Special Licensure Areas

By *Kristyn Martin*

Each year, MAAP sends out the MAAP Conference CEU's via email when the conference attendee completes the online conference evaluation. This year, additional Certificates of Completion will be handed out in specific breakout sessions that align with three of the special teacher re-licensure areas:

- Integration of Technology,
- Reading Preparation and
- Key Warning Signs of Early-Onset Mental Illness in Children and Adolescents.

The Certificate of Completion should be added to the overall conference CEU as an additional piece of vali-

ation for your Teacher Re-licensure Committees. Certificate(s) of Completion will contain the signature of the presenter and handed out at the end of the breakout session by the presenter. Certificate(s) of Completion breakout sessions will be noted in your conference materials. Please make sure to check the conference At-A-Glance, or

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the breakout session descriptions for more information.

If you have any questions about the CEU process, please contact Kristyn Martin at kristyn@jenningsclc.org.

Conference Changes: Registration and Shirt Distribution

By Steve Allen

This year, we will have our registration table set up in the Reception Hall (the old bank). Peter Lundin will once again be coordinating the registration table and Nate Christen will once again be coordinating the Presenter Hospitality Room (upstairs, room 279B).

Kristin Tuel has once again come up with another great t-shirt design for our conference. Here's what they will look like:



Conference Changes – Net- working Extravaganza

By Kristyn Martin

We have made a few changes to the Networking Extravaganza. First off, the Networking Extravaganza will be held in the larger dining room area (Banquet Hall). Secondly, the time has changed from 6:00-8:00 PM. Never been to the Networking Extravaganza? It's a great time to meet and network with alternative education advocates from across the state while enjoying the fun-filled atmosphere. Returning to the Networking Extravaganza this year will

be the photo booth (WITH A GREEN SCREEN!!), cash bar, games, snacks, raffle prizes and great company.

Quick Fun Facts:

What: Networking Extravaganza

When: 6-8:00 PM, Thursday February 8th

Where: Verizon Wireless Center Dining Area

Why: Network with Alternative Education Advocates and win PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE: GoPro Session HERO5 with Accessories (\$299.99 Value)

Regional Prizes: \$25 Amazon Gift Certificate

How Do I Win the GRAND PRIZE Go-Pro Session HERO5 and Accessories?

It's super easy. In your registration materials you will find a piece of paper labeled SCAVENGER HUNT containing 5 questions. Answer the questions correctly, and submit it to your Regional Director at the Thursday Evening Regional Meetings. Your completed scavenger hunt will then act as a raffle ticket in the grand prize drawing that takes place near the end of the Networking Extravaganza. You must be present to win! HINT: If you'd like assistance with the answers to the scavenger hunt, sign up for text alerts by texting @bha33c to 81010.

Join us at the 2018 Networking Extravaganza...See you in Mankato!

Conference Changes – Breakout Session Evaluations

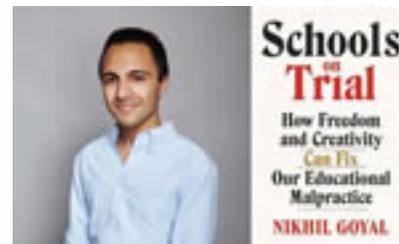
By Kristyn Martin

We are trying a new, more cost efficient way to gather data on our breakout sessions. The individual speaker/presenter evaluation system will be different this

year. If the presenter wants to receive individualized feedback on their breakout presentation, they will need to pick up evaluation forms in the Hospitality Room at the Conference. Presenters can distribute these evaluations out to conference attendees at the beginning of their breakout session and collect the evaluations at the end. After the presenter has reviewed the data, and if they are willing to part with their evaluations, they can drop them off in the Hospitality Room. A breakout session evaluation component will also be added to our full conference evaluation.

Keynote Speaker, Nikhil Goyal Book Review – Schools on Trial

By Peter Wiczorek



Nikhil Goyal lays out a strong case against the modern, traditional education system in his book, *Schools on Trial - How Freedom and Creativity Can Fix Our Educational Malpractice*. Goyal is both provocative and well informed as he takes apart the traditional school system. From the very first chapter entitled "The Radical Notion That Children Are People", Goyal outlines the monotonous, anxiety producing and mind numbing structure that we call high school. Goyal describes how students are herded from class to class every 50 minutes, forced into unnatural groupings, denied access to basic human needs like bathroom and food breaks, and have less rights than prisoners or those available through the Geneva Convention. As adults we

would never tolerate such conditions, but everyday in America we expect our youth to endure this treatment and get an “education”.

Goyal goes on to outline the history of education in America and how it was designed for creating future workers and modeled after factories, not for graduating a well educated populace and certainly not for creating lifelong learners. He demonstrates the folly of education reform in the forms of No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, while exposing the profit motives of testing companies, the technology industry and so call educational philanthropists.

In the second half of the book Goyal documents successful school models and details ways in which teachers, parents and communities can help lead real educational transformation. Goyal emphasizes the need to provide students with choices, not the contrived choices that are typically provide by adults, but true choices where the student takes the lead in their own education. He recommends an abundance of play options, an elimination of compulsory testing and move from teaching to celebration of learning.

I found myself cheering out loud as Goyal picked apart the current education system while at the same time providing alternatives that make sense, respect youth and address the needs of 21st century learners. As a long time educator the thing I found most exciting and affirming about Nikhil Goyal is that he wrote *Schools on Trial* only three years after graduating high school. Who better for us as educators to listen to on how to improve education than someone who has so recently been apart of the failing system.

Keynote Speaker, Wayne Jennings Book Review - School Transformation

Edited by Steve Allen



The present system of schooling came from Prussia by way of Horace Mann in the mid-1800s. Teachers and principals didn't invent it and would likely change it if given the freedom and authorization. Jennings saw billions of dollars spent in recent years on “reform” only to produce weak results. During a sixty year career, Jennings, early, saw the need to update or replace an outmoded system and collected 3,500 supportive items over the years. He practiced innovation in the seven schools he started and in the conventional schools where he worked.

Many books on school reform end with weak suggestions. Jennings tells exactly how educators, with parents and students, can transform schooling. He begins with the ultimate purpose of education (active citizenship, productive satisfying careers, lifelong learners and personal fulfillment), and continues with current challenges, recent reform attempts, the new era we occupy, how students learn and several chapters on how to begin and transform schools. Many quotations, rare stories and lively examples plus some 500 footnotes document and vitalize his findings and recommendations. The book avoids jargon and tedious content by writing for the public, policy makers and educators. Jennings, as a long-time member of MAAP, has contributed keynotes

and sessions for our conferences. This stunning book will be a best seller!

Over 80 Breakout Sessions!

By Steve Allen

I always say “Practitioner’s Make the Best Presenters”! Let me share with you a few of the conference breakout sessions occurring this year. This should give you a taste of some of the very interesting breakout sessions that we will be having . . . and this isn’t all of them! There’s a reason that our conference is often called, “the best three day educational conference in Minnesota!”

- ATTENDANCE! THE Golden Question – How do we get student to attend consistently?
- Teach Anything (including math) Using Success and Independence
- Victim No More
- Getting Lost In The Woods
- College Credit Courses for Math
- The Hero’s Journey
- Project Based Learning
- Q & A on Drug Trends, Prevention and Recovery
- Stewards of Children
- Science and Engineering Practices in Action
- ACES and How to Incorporate into the Classroom
- Options, Options, Options
- How to Think, Not What to Think: Fostering A Growth Mindset
- Using Nearpod in Alternative Learning Settings
- A Beautiful Mess: Art in the Alternative Classroom
- The Alternative Red Carpet
- Teaching Consumer Math / Real World Application
- Be Curious, not Judgmental
- Minnesota Recovery Schools; Updates and How To’s

- Early Warning Signs of Mental Illness
- Student Choices in Designing High Interest Courses
- Positive Behavior Intervention Supports
- Community Partnerships
- Battles of History: The Emerging Practice of Simulating War
- Who is an English Learner
- Starting and Maintaining Work Based Learning
- Using Technology to Develop a School Culture
- Measure What Matters
- Using Games and Simulations to Teach Transition Skills
- How a Music Class Happened
- The Sacred Circle – The Oldest Classroom in the World
- Continuous Improvement: What it Takes, How it Works
- DIY Home Essentials For Kids
- Circle of Healing
- Changing our Schools Focus and Culture
- Online Student Services
- NKOTB: We are the New Kids on the Block
- Delivery Options and Management in Independent Study
- Mic Check 1 . . . 2 . . . A Sound-check for Soundtrap
- Student Engagement: A 2nd Year Counselor's Perspective
- Using Our Unique Assessment Tool with Students with Special Needs
- Experiential Ed: Inside the Box
- The Brilliance of Neotindigenous Students Celebration
- Suicide Prevention and Early Warning Signs
- Blue Collar Yoga
- Credit Recovery 2.0
- Normalizing Restorative Practices
- What the Heck is MAAP STARS

MDE Sessions By Sally Reynolds

MDE ESSA Sessions

The Minnesota Department of Education's ESSA Specialist, Michael Diedrich, and other MDE Team members will facilitate two (2) special sessions on the implementation of ESSA.

- SSA interactive discussion with district and program administrators. He will preview how programs will be identified for support, how data will be collected, and the how these impact the planning and management of alternative programs.
- ESSA Work Session – MDE needs your feedback! How can we best support alternative programs in general, and what specific focus will be needed by programs that may be identified under ESSA? Join us for small group discussions, focused on defining indicators of student success that are specific to their unique needs and resources.

MDE Diplomas through Adult Basic Education: Connecting with ABE's 3 Options

Adult Basic Education (ABE) has three options available for adults to earn their diploma: credits, tests and competencies. A common option is GED, but 2017 state statute language changed approved high school equivalency testing. See what is happening to explore high school equivalency testing and how Minnesota will select one or more tests. Join Brad Hasskamp from the Minnesota Department of Education to explore adult (21+) graduation options.

MDE Career and College Readiness

How can MAAP teachers and admin-

istrators create a fertile environment at the roots of student career development? How do we engage students to become intentional contributors to the world, and connect to a passion and profession? MDE's April Schnell will facilitate exploring the legislative underpinnings, and innovative practices of career development in K12 education.

MDE Digital Curriculum in an Alternative Setting: Potential, Possibilities, and Pitfalls

This session will explore how best to leverage digital curriculum to improve student access and outcomes. Jeff Plaman, MDE's Digital and Online Learning Specialist, will lead this discussion on options for credit recovery, independent study, blended, and hybrid learning.

MDE Educational Opportunity for All: What Minnesota Libraries Do

MDE's Leah Larson will share how Minnesota's libraries can be your partners in alternative learning. Libraries offer education and information resources - from sample GED tests, eBooks published by Minnesota independent publishers, to maker-spaces, and beyond. Learn more about these resources and how you--and your students--can access them.

MDE Student Reporting and School Finance

MDE's Kelly Wosika will provide guidance on how students enrolled in SAAP are reported to the state, and how it impacts the school's finance.

MDE Early Middle College - where is the opportunity for our struggling students?

MDE's Beth Barsness will guide partic-



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ipants towards thinking more deeply about the students that could benefit from the EMC opportunity. Goal of session will be to create an action plan to increase student access to this awesome approach to finishing high school and moving on towards a post-secondary plan.

MDE Minnesota School Choice Overview

Minnesota was first in the nation with inter-district open enrollment and charter schools. Yet our most popular choice option remains a traditional bricks-and-mortar private school. Minnesota also has nearly 20,000 homeschooled schoolers. Each school option is different and those differences can cause confusion when conflicts arise, students switch schools or families seek validation of private and homeschooled options or public options sort through credit transfer dilemmas. Come to this breakout for a fast overview of Minnesota school choice options from the MDE's school choice ombudsperson, Cindy Jackson.

MDE Expanding School Capacity to Serve English Learners in Alternative Programs

MDE's EL Department Specialists will lead this session to explore best practices in serving students in alternative school programs.

1. Review of Requirements
2. Strategies for Planning and Review
3. Best Practices for Instructional Strategies

MDE Healthy Out of School Time (HOST):

A Framework for Implementing the National Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards in your After School and Summer Programs

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation are working with each other to meet the goal of childhood obesity prevention and reduction through organization policy and practice change. MDE is supporting the local use of the Alliance's resources and services to implement the national standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) and promote positive nutritional and physical activity changes in after school and summer environments to empower students to develop lifelong healthy habits.

MDE Restorative Practices Implementation: stages and steps

Restorative Practices are most useful if adults implement them fully--affective statements, empathetic listening, circles to build community or repair harm, restorative conversations. MDE's Nancy Riestenberg will facilitate this session to explore recommendations for training and coaching for each practice, as well as the stages and steps for exploration to full implementation.

MDE Regional Centers of Excellence Services

Graduation Support Specialists with the Regional Centers of Excellence will provide an overview of the Regional Centers and the support they can provide to schools identified under ESSA. Participants will also provide feedback regarding unique concerns in alternative settings.

Technology at the Conference

By Krissy Wright

There is free wifi available with conference materials available online, so bring your devices and fire them up to save paper!

Presenters: Please bring your own projectors if needed as there will be a very limited amount available. There is audio hookups in most rooms, but it wouldn't hurt to bring your own speakers if your presentation requires audio. There will also be a limited amount of dongles and converters available for Mac and PC users.

Text Alerts: Stay in the know! Sign up for text alerts now by texting @bha33c to 81010. It's a very efficient way to keep up on breakout additions, room assignments, RAFFLE PRIZE opportunities, and getting live information first. This will be a main platform to inform Conference attendees about changes in the conference schedules, or important links for online conference materials. Do yourself a favor and sign up today! See the picture below for more directions on how to sign up for text alerts.

If you have any questions about technology availability for the conference, contact Krissy Wright at krissy.wright33@gmail.com.

Conference Awards *By Steve Allen*

It's really important that we celebrate and recognize our colleagues and our schools and programs. Please join us on Thursday afternoon over lunch in recognizing our Staff Member of the Year, our School and/or Program of the Year and our latest Exemplary Award recipient. This is a very special time of our conference.

This year's MAAP Staff Member of the Year is: Martha Airhart from Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School!

By Tracy Quarnstrom



Wolf Creek Online High School whose legal name is TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School is a 9-12 Online hybrid public charter school option located in Chisago City MN. The school opened in 2002 and is a noted online program at MDE for both full time and supplemental students. The charter school enrolls students who are mostly at-risk by legal definition. Martha works as a Lead Special Education teacher and the 504 Coordinator. She plays so many roles in the charter school that creating a job description would be impossible but she is among others things the chief cheerleader and amazing educator. Martha's impact on the school goes beyond her amazing abilities to complete due process paperwork and care for students, she motivates all the staff to be better educators.

Martha Airhart is a truly amazing educator. She works in a small charter school setting with Special Education students and as the 504 Coordinator. She is always willing to ensure that all students have the interventions they need to be successful, even if that means she works long hours to get them in place. She is dedicated to her students and wants to ensure they have

their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met. She has worked on many school initiatives to provide students with executive functioning skills, social skills, and life skills. She is always the first one to come up with an innovative or creative idea to assist student progress and success.

Martha founded the Online Learning Program in Chisago Lakes in 1997. She worked in online options at Spring Lake Park ALC for many years before coming to Wolf Creek in 2012. She founded the MN K12 Online Learning Alliance organization which brought quality online programs together to discuss common needs. She worked tirelessly to form collaborative efforts within this organization to support educators. She has spent her life as an educator in alternative settings and expanding online options for students in Minnesota. Online options are a new and expanding alternative and one that should be noted for the years of service she has dedicated to this endeavor.

Martha fills many roles in the charter school but it is amazing that her first role is that of special educator. This position involves due process paper work that can take 100% of the day for most educators. Martha shows that she can do this work with excellence and is willing to take on other roles to serve the needs of all students in the charter school.

This year's MAAP School/Program of the Year is: Cloquet Area Alternative Education Programs!

By Brad Jensen

The CAAEP exemplifies the MAAP Vision of To leading, promoting, and supporting innovative learning experiences for students in a non-traditional setting by taking into account the unique needs of each of their learners and finding ways to meet those needs, allowing for the learning potential to be

reached. Building community within their program using a restorative practices framework CAAEP has seen an increase of 10% in the school graduation rate just in the first year of implementation. -- Implementing a program wide Restorative Practices program that has built a sense of program pride among students and staff, resulting in a 58% decrease in behavior related incidents. Over 60% of the student body at CAAEP returned for the 2017-18 school year, an increased retention rate of 10% over prior years. -- CAAEP students have taken ownership of the restorative practice approach; completing Student Ambassador training and providing a peer level welcoming face to new students, explaining the circle process and offering peer support. Instilling the sense of community that new students have not experienced in previous educational environments.

The CAAEP mission is to assist our students in achieving their greatest potential. We believe that our student's diversity of gender, mental ability, culture and background are strengths to be respected and nurtured in an educational environment. We believe education is the shared responsibility of the student, home, school and community. The Secondary CAAEP site serves youth grades 5-12; enrollment has typically been about 60 students per year. Deriving the most preventative impact from restorative practices for juveniles relies on access to populations of youth at higher risk for involvement in the court system before they get there. Within Carlton County, the CAAEP has the most concentrated population of such students. CAAEP serves youth who have not succeeded within the traditional educational system, and many students there have had court involvement. In 2016, a coordinated effort between the Carlton County Collaborative and CAAEP brought an intensive Restorative Justice Practices focus to the CAAEP school sites.



CAAEP stakeholders have embraced restorative practices, to assist in repairing relationships or harm ceased, as opposed to traditional practices that invoke a hierarchical discipline model with punitive consequences. The use of restorative conferences or restorative conversations at CAAEP are now common as strategies for building responsibility, accountability, empathy and self-esteem among students.

Measuring the impact of restorative justice practices is a challenge, given that many of the possible outcomes for participating youth may not manifest themselves for many years. Then show up only as successful maturation and integration into society rather than failures which draw attention. With the introduction of restorative justice practices at CAAEP has captured process as well as outcome information of those involved. Student data and direct feedback show over 60% of all students believe the schools new discipline policy is fair, there is a reduction in school problems, and they are building skills that will serve them well later in life. CAAEP has 14 staff members and they are considered the "Circle Keepers" in the program. The vast majority of staff used circle at least once a week and found an overall improvement in relationship building with the students and a reduction in classroom disruptions. Overall with the introduction of restorative practices CAAEP was able to meet or surpass all critical success factors. There was an increase in pro-social relationships within the school community. A conflict-competent school culture has been developed. As stated a significant reduction in suspensions, expulsions and behavior referrals. Finally, student attendance has increased with an increase in community in the school. All of these factors combined reflect greatly on the dedication of the students and staff of CAAEP to develop

an innovative learning experience for their unique learners using the restorative practices model. By successfully modeling a restorative practices program they are taking a leading role as change agents of traditional educational systems for their school district. It is with this hard work and dedication that I nominate the Cloquet Area Alternative Education Program as the MAAP Program of the Year.

This year's MAAP Exemplary Award Recipient is: ! You'll have to come to this year's conference to find out!

Conference Annual Meeting and Regional Meetings

By Steve Allen

At the Conference Annual Meeting, we have a couple of items that will be voted on.

There will be a proposed By-Law change as indicated below:

The MAAP Board has been working on a possible change in the MAAP membership process. This change would occur in Article 4 – MAAP Membership and in the MAAP Standing Rules Guidelines, Section 4. These changes would eliminate the current membership fee for our organization. The Board is also proposing an additional change in the MAAP Standing Rules Guidelines, Section 1. Below are the proposed revisions of the MAAP Bylaws that would be necessary:

ARTICLE 4 – MAAP MEMBERSHIP [13]

Section 1. Any person involved or interested in alternative education shall become a voting member upon ~~payment of dues~~ **completion of the MAAP**

member registration form that is available on MAAP website (www.maapmn.org) of MAAP. MAAP members are eligible to vote, hold office and attend meetings.

MAAP STANDING RULES

6. Guidelines

Section 1. Attendance at National Conferences: MAAP may send two representatives to ~~the a~~ National Alternative Education Conference upon Board approval. [15]

Section 4. Financial Support - The MAAP Board of Directors shall determine how money collected ~~through MAAP membership dues~~ shall be distributed to Regional Organizations, to MAAP STARS, MAAP expenses, professional development, and any additional expenditures. ~~Otherwise, each region may determine the more specific use of money. Moneys will be distributed equally to regions regardless of how much money each region previously spent. However if it is determined that the Region has not implemented a plan for using the funds~~ The MAAP Board of Directors may recall the unspent funds to make available for uses it determines beneficial to the mission of the MAAP Organization. [15]

There will be an election of new officers. This includes the following positions on the MAAP Board:

- President Elect
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Director At-Large

Please don't forget to attend your Regional Meetings! This is a great opportunity to meet colleagues from other schools and programs in your region. It's also a great opportunity to plan regional events and initiatives. Each Region also has a Regional Director. Regional Directors are also voting members of the MAAP Board. Most Regional Directors say that this is a great opportunity to get involved and to professionally learn and grow!