



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.

MAAP President

By Peter Lundin



Every year, the start of school is the blending of old and new. New initiatives and old routines! New staff and old students! Veteran teachers and new student orientations. Here's wishing all of you a successful 2019-2020 school year!

Southwest Regional Director's Welcome

By Emily Dirksen



Hello! My name is Emily Dirksen, and I am the Southwest Regional Director on the MAAP Board. I have spent my 14 year teaching career solely in alternative education, teaching language arts at Minnesota Valley Area Learning

Center in Montevideo. MN Valley is part of the Minnesota River Valley Education District, servicing 9 area school districts. Our seat based program is composed of 4 school districts and runs on an 8 class period day. We average around 50 students in our program with our Independent Learning Program (formerly our Independent Study Program) servicing around 475 students each year. At MN Valley I am also the technology coordinator in our building and our MAAP STARS advisor. Approximately 10 years ago I started the MAAP STARS program at our school, and it has since become a class within my day. STARS somewhat functions as a student council in our building, planning fun, community building activities, community service projects and partners with a local kindergarten class on an annual basis, as well as participating in the 3 statewide events STARS offers each year.

I became the SW Regional Director on the MAAP Board 3 years ago. I wanted to find out more about this organization and grow myself as an alternative educator. My role on the board is to help my region stay in contact with things that are happening in alternative education around the state. If we have a regional conference, this is something that I would also help to organize. Of course, the State MAAP Conference held each February is an event that I also assist with and attend each year

too. I am hopeful that more schools in the region this year will consider starting or participating in STARS, so we could possibly bring back our regional STARS competition this year as well!

My life outside of school and MAAP is quite busy. I have been married to my husband, Mitch, for 14 years. He is a farmer, and we have 2 boys: Jaden is in

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6th grade, and Graysen is in 3rd grade. My boys are active in football, basketball, baseball, karate, as well as piano and church activities, so they definitely keep me busy. During the winter sports season the last 8 years, I have been a dance team judge and a member of JAM (the Judges Association of Minnesota Dance Teams), where I go to dance team competitions around the state, including the section and state meets, as an official through the Minnesota State High School League. Just this spring I was voted in as Vice President of this organization. I also enjoy crafting (I'm usually working on some type of project) and work as a waitress on weekends at a local winery, Hinterland Vineyards. If you have questions regarding Southwest Region, please feel free to contact me at Emilyd@montevideoschools.org.

Central Metro Regional Director's Welcome

By Andrew Ng



Welcome back! The 2019-2020 school year is shaping up to be an exciting time to be in the education field. My name is Andrew Ng, and I am the MAAP Regional Director for the Central Metro region. While my role with MAAP is new, I have been a member of MAAP for several years. When I was newer to teaching and education, this would have been my third or fourth year, I was introduced to MAAP by a colleague that had brought up wanting to attend that year's conference at a staff meeting. As I did not know much about MAAP, I kept quiet and would

go along with whatever conversation would stem from there, but it wasn't long before our small staff decided to send everyone on staff to the conference. That first year, I was a small fish in a big pool of other teachers, administrators, and others in the education world from across Minnesota. I went to as many sessions as I could, and I honestly learned more about teaching and how to teach than any other conference or single experience. I absolutely enjoyed the sessions, discussions, and networking over the short few days. Since that first conference, I was hooked. The school I was with, at the time, began a dedicated MAAP STARS course that our students jumped to enroll into, and over the next few years, I began to develop new curriculum that I would begin to present and share at the following conferences. I would meet with other schools to exchange stories (both accomplishments and woes) and discuss possible solutions, if necessary. Soon enough, a director position became available, and I leaped at the opportunity to better connect with my region and help the rest of the MAAP organization as best I could.

In addition to being the Central Metro Regional Director, I am now a high school math teacher at Twin Cities Academy. I primarily teach Algebra Two and Pre-Calculus, but dabble in other courses, such as Financial Literacy. TCA is a charter school with a college preparatory emphasis and is authorized by St. Thomas University. I love working with the students I have, and I would not trade it for the world! This year, I really want to work on bringing the Central Metro region closer together. I want to share success stories of what is going on in our schools, I want to brainstorm ideas for solving problems, and I want to hold meaningful meetings that are worth the time to attend. If your school is in the region, be on the lookout for the emails. If you attend the conference this year, be sure to say hello, and of course, thank you

for being a part of the MAAP family! If you have questions regarding Central Metro Region, please feel free to contact me at ang@twincitiesacademy.org.

Northeast Metro Regional Director's Welcome

By Brandon Wait



Hello MAAP Members,
I hope this summer has brought you a healthy dose of sunshine, outdoor adventures, and positive vibes.

I've been in alternative education since 2008 and couldn't be happier finding a home at Paladin Career & Technical High School. My passion runs deep for innovation in education and how social and emotional learning can create positive impacts on student learning. I am equally passionate about trauma-responsive schools and the use of restorative practices to build community and repair harm and I love talking about these practices. Once I found the MAAP organization I haven't looked back and continue to find ways to become more involved. I encourage you to do the same.

I know I am not alone in feeling that alternative education can at times feel isolating. I see MAAP as a supportive community full of great minds, great ideas, and great people with a common vision.

As the Director of the NE Metro Region, it's my hope to bring the voices of our schools to the MAAP Board and



continue to be mindful for all of us all make decisions through an equity and trauma-responsive lens. If you are in the NE Metro Region and want to know more about MAAP or have ideas for our region, please reach out as I'm all about collaboration, especially when it's over a cup of coffee. If you are not on my Regional Director's mailing list, please see information on becoming a MAAP member below.

Enjoy these last days of summer, get outside, and I hope to cross paths with many of you for a hike or bike ride!

Brandon Wait
brandon.wait@paladincareertech.com

Northwest Metro Regional Director's Welcome

By Sue Yankowiak



My name is Sue Yankowiak, MAAP NW Metro Regional Director, work experience and art teacher at Ivan Sand CHS. I have been teaching in alternative education for 23 years. I have chosen this path and enjoy every fall as I begin a new year with our bright, creative and hesitant learners. It is my mission to assist with bringing out the best from each learner. I have been involved with MAAP since the beginning of my career as a member and a MAAP STARS Advisor (student organization) and recently the last 4 years I have been the Northwest Regional Director. Being the Director of my region has given me multiple opportunities to

meet new members and connect others with needed resources. Our region has active members and we plan and implement a regional event for students each year. All members are welcome. Ivan Sand CHS is located in Elk River and is a school that meets students where they are at when they enroll. Offerings include seat based classes, independent study, project-based, work-based learning along with mental health counseling. We are relationally driven. Each teacher is assigned an advisory so students will have at least one advocate during their educational journey at Ivan Sand. Personally, I enjoy creative outlets such as photography, upscaling furniture and am currently designing the interior and exterior of our cabin located north of our home in Zimmerman. If you have questions regarding NW Metro Region, please feel free to contact me at susan.yankowiak@isd728.org. If you are not on my Regional Director's mailing list, please see information on becoming a MAAP member below.

West Central Regional Director's Welcome

By Jolene Parks and Steve Allen



Hello! I'm Jolene Parks, your West Central Regional Director. I'm about to start my 7th year as a special education teacher at Brainerd Learning Center. I'm a mom to two girls, ages 5 and 10. Both are dancers and quite active. When I'm not working my "side-hustle" as a personal chauffeur for my children,

I enjoy spending time on the lakes in the summer, reading, and I'm always on the hunt for the next binge-worthy show on Hulu or Netflix. I have been a passive MAAP member since I began teaching in alternative education until I was approached to be a regional director. I secretly wanted to become more involved, I just needed a little push from my colleagues. I'm so grateful that push came along because I found my people. I've never found a more caring, problem-solving, and real group of educators. One of the things I love the most about the MAAP organization is that I've never felt alone in a struggle. Someone has always been able to help me problem solve. There's a belief in the group that the students we serve are "everyone's students" and there's always someone available with advice or strategies.

Editor's note: Since this article was written, Jolene has announced that she has taken a new position in the Brainerd School District and she has resigned from the MAAP Board. On behalf of the MAAP Board, I would like to thank Jolene for her leadership over the past couple of years and wish her nothing but the best of luck in the future. I am also pleased to announce that former West Central Regional Director, Greg Zimmerman has been appointed by President Peter Lundin to be the Interim West Central Regional Director. If you have any questions regarding the West Central Region, please feel free to contact Greg Zimmerman at gzimmerman@pillagercharter.org. If you are not on my Regional Director's mailing list, please see information on becoming a MAAP member below.

Northeast Regional Director's Welcome

By *Shelley Skarie*



My name is Shelley Skarie and I live in Detroit Lakes. My husband and I were raised here and we have been married 30 years. We have three children (2 are married) and 5 adorable grandchildren!

I am currently the Northwest Regional Director for MAAP and started teaching at the Detroit Lakes ALC when it opened in 2000. I coordinate the Parent Education program and have worked with adolescent/young parents for the past 21 years. I really enjoy being a part of the MAAP team and helping our state be more aware and supportive of alternative education. My favorite part is getting to know the people on the MAAP board and planning and attending the annual state conference. I love to see the passion and dedication the people in this organization have in striving to make a difference with the students in our programs. The Northwest Region will have a one day workshop this Fall with curriculum sharing, CD and mental health tips and more.

The DLALC has 72 students and we are located at the MState college campus. We have a great team here in DL. They are compassionate and dedicated to working with at-risk learners and making our school a fun educational environment. Our student population is better because of the work we do while connecting with students and creating long-lasting relationships.

I love music, concerts, traveling and spending time at the lake and on the pontoon with family. Summer is my favorite season and Christmas is my favorite holiday! If you have questions regarding Northwest Region, please feel free to contact me at sskarie@detlakes.k12.mn.us. If you are not on my Regional Director's mailing list, please see information on becoming a MAAP member below.

Northeast Regional Director's Welcome

By *Tom Kloeckl*



My name is Tom Kloeckl (rhymes with freckle) your new MAAP Northeast Regional Director!. I'm looking forward to my fourth year as a full time teacher at the Pine City Area Learning Center. I've been on a steep learning curve when it comes to understanding the workings and politics of the wonderful world of alternative education... after serving as a science teacher in the traditional school for my first 25 years. Spending more time with my colleagues in alternative programming has rejuvenated the "teacher" in me! The MAAP conferences and the caring and passionate presenters have been inspiring. I love the modesty in the room when you gather with other MAAP members as there seems to be a shared ideology that we're always learning and working to get better; ... nobody pretends to have all the answers.

Hope you've all had a wonderful sum-

mer with time to relax and recharge your "teacher"! Remember...all you women are strong, all you men are good-looking, and all the students are above average. If you have questions regarding Northeast Region, please feel free to contact me at tkloeckl@isd578.org. If you are not on my Regional Director's mailing list, please see information on becoming a MAAP member below.

South Metro Regional Director's Welcome

By *Eric Serbus*



Greetings South Metro MAAP Members!

I'm looking forward to serving another year as the South Metro MAAP Regional Director. When I entered the world of alternative education 8 years ago, the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programming helped ground me in effective alternative practices and connected me with other like-minded educators. The helpful and supportive approach with which MAAP serves its members made it very easy for me to connect and grow with others professionals. The work is hard. It involves endless patience, compassion, creativity, problem solving, and persistence. MAAP helps make the work easier by providing a network of professionals who are willing to share their ideas, experience, and support because "We all do better when we all do better (Paul Wellstone)."

In this spirit, I hope to promote on-going collaboration amongst MAAP members in the South Metro Region. My role as South Metro Regional Director is to promote MAAP information/involvement and South Metro member collaboration. I represent the voice of the South Metro Region to the MAAP Board, so if you have any questions or feedback for anything MAAP related, don't hesitate to contact me.

South Metro MAAP administrators are invited to continue collaborating through our quarterly Professional Learning Community meetings. This past year South Metro MAAP administrators recognized the value of cross program teacher/staff networking. As a result, administrators will be looking for opportunities during scheduled professional development days to engage in program site visits and learning conversations. If you are a South Metro administrator and would like more information about our quarterly PLC meetings please email me at eserbus@shakopee.k12.mn.us. If you are not on my Regional Director's mailing list, please see information on becoming a MAAP member below.

SOUTH METRO MAAP REGIONAL DIRECTOR PROFILE:

Name: Eric Serbus
Position: Principal

Contact Information:

- Email: eserbus@shakopee.k12.mn.us
- Phone: 952-496-5980
- School: Tokata Learning Center – Shakopee, MN

Program Highlights:

- Personalized learning through flexibly paced courses
- Inclusive learning environment founded upon trauma responsive and restorative

practices

- Flexible scheduling
- Variety of credit learning opportunities including independent study, project based learning and experiential learning

Personal Interests:

- I enjoy spending time with my family – my wife and I have three girls (ages 6,5, and 4) and 1 year old Weimaraner puppy/dog
- Fly fishing is my Zen

Favorite Quote to Share with Students:

- “Sometimes you do what you have to do today in order to do what you want to do tomorrow.”

~ Denzel Washington

Southeast Regional Director's Welcome By Steve Allen



On behalf of the MAAP Board, I would like to welcome our Southeast Region members back for the 2019-20 school year. Our Regional Directors do an excellent job of keeping our members informed. They also serve as voting members and represent their Regional members on our State Board. I regret to inform you that Scott Tryggeseth has resigned from his position as the MAAP Southeast Regional Director. We would like to thank Scott for his leadership over the past couple of years

and wish him nothing but the best of luck in the future. I have posted the Regional Director's job description below. I am also pleased to announce that Brian Cashman from the Goodhue County Education District has been appointed by President Peter Lundin to be the Interim Southeast Regional Director. If you have any questions regarding the Southeast Region, please feel free to contact Brian at bcashman@gced.k12.mn.us. If you are not on my Regional Director's mailing list, please see information on becoming a MAAP member below.

MAAP STARS Chair Welcome By Patti Haasch

Hello, my name is Patti Haasch. I'm a retired Principal from the Cass Lake-Bena School District. My family lived on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation for 35 years, but since retiring, we've relocated to Little Canada to be closer to our children and grandchildren.

I started the Cass Lake Area Learning Center in the fall of 1987 and quickly became involved with MAAP. MAAP helped us grow our ALC in so many ways and we built a network within our region as well as state-wide. I was MAAP's President-elect when MAAP STARS was brought to the MAAP Board in 1993 and immediately became involved with STARS (first called MAAP-YO).

MAAP STARS organizes three state-wide events: Fall Leadership, STARS Legislative Day At The State Capitol, and the Spring Events Conference. Students elect officers in the Fall who serve as representatives for MAAP & MAAP STARS.

You can find out more details about MAAP STARS under the STUDENT tab on the MAAP website. STARS Updates are posted on the MAAP Face-

book page too. Please take some time getting familiar with STARS because it really is a GREAT program for your students and enjoyable for the Advisors too! STARS Makes A Difference!!

Fall Leadership Conference:
October 9 & 10, 2019
Lake Beauty Camp, Long
Prairie

STARS Capitol For A Day:
February 19, 2020
State Capitol, St. Paul

Spring Events Conference:
May 7 & 8, 2020
Double Tree Hotel,
Bloomington

MAAP 101

By Greg Zimmerman

The Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs is once again proud to present, MAAP 101. MAAP 101 is a one day conference designed to support new and relatively new teachers to alternative education. The goal is to provide tools they can quickly add to their toolbox as well as providing training on what teaching in an alternative setting is all about. If you have new staff in your program, we highly encourage them to attend. On the other hand, MAAP 101 is not exclusively for new teachers! We know that veteran teachers could use an opportunity to sharpen their horns and remind themselves why they got into alternative education. We would love to see you at MAAP 101 as well.

We have already have an incredible slate of presenters who have committed to helping out this year. We are very excited to have Tom Cody from Top 20 Teachers on hand to get our day started! Registration forms and conference details are available on the MAAP website but if you would like to reserve your spot, or have further questions, feel free to contact Greg Zimmerman at gzimmerman@pillagercharter.org. You will

be hard pressed to find a more valuable one day conference. Please join us for a great day of sharing at Jane Goodall Environmental Sciences Academy in Maple Lake, on Friday, October 4.

- [MAAP 101 Schedule](#)
- [Breakout Sessions At-A-Glance](#)
- [MAAP 101 Registration Form](#)

Annual State Conference

By Kristyn Martin



- Save-the-Dates, February 5th, 6th and 7th, 2020 in Duluth!
- This year's conference theme will be released in the very near future.
- Consider being a presenter, practitioners make the best presenters! The presenter RFP will be posted on our website, www.maapmn.org.
- We need your help recruiting vendors and exhibitors. Send contact information to Deanna Chiodo at deanna.chiodo@isd728.org.
- Registration information will also be posted on our website this fall.
- Do you want to help with the planning? Contact me at kristyn@jenningsclc.org.

MAAP Membership

By Steve Allen

If you received this newsletter, you are currently a MAAP member. Please encourage any new colleagues or individuals who are not currently a member to become a MAAP member (there are no membership dues to be a MAAP member!) Just have them complete the attached form.

[MAAP Membership Form](#)

Goals for the Upcoming Year

by Steve Anderson

We would like you to submit a one sentence statement of what your goals are for the upcoming school year. We will take the responses and make a word cloud to see what MAAP teachers are planning for this year.

[Goals for the Upcoming Year](#)