

The Reinvention of Michigan...

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Jan](#) • [2013](#)

By: Angie McArthur, CFO, MSBO President, Superintendent, Engadine Consolidated Schools

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By: Cheryl S. Wald, CPA, CFO, MSBO Board, Financial Services Supervisor, Howell Public Schools

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MSBO Update

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Jan](#) • [2013](#)

[MSBO](#) Executive Director David Martell talks about a board resignation and the upcoming board election as well as provides an update on what [MSBO](#) is working on in preparation for the 75th [MSBO](#) Annual Conference.

Take Advantage of MSBO's Annual Conference Early Bird Registration

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Weeks before Michigan's State of the State, the political pundits speculate about the content of the speech and what the Governor's priorities may be for the upcoming year. Many times that speculation is wishful thinking and says more about the writer's priority. It's the post-event reporting and the political spinning that sometimes proves to be even more interesting.

According to Governor's "official" post SOS press release - one of his priorities this year will be to, "Help students who need it the most by encouraging and expanding the success of the Education Achievement Authority. The governor will work with the Legislature to codify the EAA into law and pass legislation that enables student-centered learning across the state in our most challenged school districts. The EAA was established to overcome the lack of improvement in the state's lowest performing 5 percent of schools."

Here we go again. It was a sigh of relief from many educators when the EAA legislation died during the Lame Duck session last year. Now, our work begins again. It is up to us as educators to help craft this legislation – because it's not going away – and make it a tool that will truly help school districts. We must retain the "local" control of local school districts.

The Governor also talked about increasing funding for:

The successful Healthy Kids Dental program, which serves 440,000 Medicaid-enrolled children.

The Office of Great Start, which promotes early childhood education.

Demonstration projects to improve mental health services, particularly with regard to early intervention for children.

I've seen reports from Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan saying that this investment is critical. As a Superintendent in a small Upper Peninsula district, I welcome this initiative. I also agree with my colleagues at Michigan Association of School Administrators ([MASA](#)) who echo the need for any plan coming from different revenues and not at the expense of the School Aid Fund (SAF).

Engadine Schools, as well as many districts "up north" faces many challenges. We are at the end of an era of healthy fund balance, skirting the cliff of deficit spending. Some unanticipated health pool costs have brought us here about a year earlier than projected. I have a new-found respect for other districts who have continued to educate children under the stresses of no funds! Over the last ten years, our per-pupil foundation has increased a whopping \$92. Unfortunately, costs have not remained as stagnant.

All in all, however, I am optimistic. My rose-colored glasses are firmly in place! Our community has decided to work to raise additional revenues. We still have a fiscal responsibility to make budget reductions where necessary, but we believe our students deserve a well-rounded education and will work to keep our cuts as far away from the students as possible.

I **can** say unequivocally that the State of [MSBO](#) is strong. Even in these tight economic times, our membership has remained stable. Last spring, the annual conference was well-attended, and Financial Strategies this month had near record attendance. Our members continue to seek accurate information in order to provide for their students' needs. [MSBO](#) continues to deliver.

Customer Service in Schools?

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By: Cheryl S. Wald, CPA, CFO, MSBO Board, Financial Services Supervisor, Howell Public Schools

Excellent customer service is everyone's responsibility in public schools as in every other aspect of our lives. The payback for successfully meeting this goal can be great. The risk of failure may prove disastrous.

So what are the prerequisites to achieving a high level of customer service in our school districts? Creating and maintaining a healthy school culture is essential to providing effective customer service, and impacts all aspects of the educational *and customer* experience. A positive and caring school atmosphere impacts all of us, and ultimately can affect the quality of our product and the perceptions of our customers. What does it mean to have successful customer service? Who is our audience and what are their expectations when they interact with us?

Unfortunately, when the public talks about service oriented organizations, public schools are not traditionally at the top of the list. For us to be successful in the future, this will have to change. In the ever-changing public school environment, we need to change how we provide our service, which will ultimately change the perception of our *customers*. With more and more marketplace alternatives such as schools of choice, cyber schools, distance learning opportunities and new initiatives like Any time, Any Place, Any Way, Any Pace education, our customers have to want to choose public schools over our competition if we are to succeed and grow in this competitive environment. We need to change our thinking and how we act towards all our customers. We need to "do unto others, as you would want them to do unto you." When our parents, community, students and stakeholders truly believe that we care about them, and when they experience this through their interactions with us every day, every time, only then will we become a viable choice in this competitive marketplace. Creating a consistent positive impression is critical to our future.

In a recent report by Hanover Research prepared for our local ESA, detailed information on the subject of school improvement through strong relationships and excellence in customer service was provided. In the Key findings section, one point that was summarized is as follows: "In order for customer service within school districts to be effective, it must address the needs of both internal and external customers. Internal customers who feel well served within a district with a healthy culture will be capable and far more likely to focus on quality service for external customers."

Customer service is the responsibility of everyone in the school district. Knowing how to interact with parents and other visitors, handling phone calls timely and professionally, communicating effectively and dealing with challenging customers, has an impact on each customer. Creating a positive and welcoming environment for our customers, and taking responsibility for the interactions we have with each customer trickles through the whole organization. A positive first impression truly is a lasting one, and this is true for both internal and external interactions.

When I started with the schools and staff referred to parents as customers, it always made me feel uncomfortable. It felt impersonal, as I knew the people we were dealing with were parents, teachers and the community. As times have changed, and the demands on public schools have also changed, so has my perception. How does a customer (or parent) want to be treated? What are his or her expectations? How are they treated in other customer service oriented situations in the marketplace? A customer wants to be treated professionally, respectfully and leave with a feeling that they are important to the organization. Knowing that we care about them and that their experience is important to us, creates the lasting impression of how important they are to our organization. *Customer service*. It all starts and finishes with us. It is within our power to take control and make a difference.

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Conference Registration Scholarships Available

The [MSBO](#) Board has authorized scholarships for members to attend the 2013 [MSBO](#) Annual Conference and SET SEG has agreed to continue making a generous contribution for partial support of these scholarships. The scholarship covers the cost of registration for a full or one-day Conference registration. **Scholarships do not include the Tuesday Pre-Conferences and Tuesday certification classes. There is a limit of one scholarship per district.** Recipients are responsible for their own transportation and lodging. [MSBO](#) will notify you regarding the status of your scholarship application approximately within two weeks after it is received.

For Early Bird registrants: Fill out the [registration form](#) or [register online](#).

For Scholarship registrants: if you are applying for a scholarship you **cannot** register online. **You must fax the scholarship application and registration form together to 517.327.0768, or email the forms to mcadwell@msbo.org.**

You can cancel your registration at any time up to two weeks prior to the Conference and pay only a \$25 processing fee. If you have questions about registration procedures, e-mail [Marte Cadwell](#) or call her at 517.327.5920.

Headquarters Hotel Available for Reservations—Amway Grand Plaza, Grand Rapids, MI—The Amway Grand Plaza Hotel has a conference rate of \$133 for a single/double room. For reservations call 800.253.3590 using the [MSBO](#) reservation code 1098U6. Daily parking costs are \$16 for self-park/\$25 for valet per night (parking prices are subject to change). The Amway charges a \$50 penalty for checking out before your planned departure date; be sure to inquire about the policy at check in if you have any concerns.

Paula Johnson from Comstock Public Schools attended [MSBO](#) 's Financial Strategies Conference and won a free registration to the 75th Annual [MSBO](#) Conference.

MSBO Scholarships Help You Pursue Your Education Goals

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[MSBO](#) offers two \$1,500 scholarships, which encourage and recognize individuals currently employed in school business who are improving their technical skills and competencies by pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree.

The Mark & Kay Stebbins Scholarship recognizes individuals currently employed in school business who are improving their technical skills and competencies by pursuing a degree.

The Wally Piper Scholarship recognizes individuals currently employed in school business who are improving their technical skills and competencies by pursuing a graduate degree.

To be eligible for the Mark and Kay Stebbins or Wally Piper Scholarships, you must:

1. Be an active member of [MSBO](#) for at least 36 consecutive months before January 31 of the year in which the application is made.
2. Be employed on a full-time basis in a school business position for 36 consecutive months immediately prior to January 31 of the year in which the application is made.
3. Be recommended for the scholarship by the superintendent or chief school administrator under whom the applicant has served for the preceding 12 months.

[Mark & Kay Stebbins Scholarship](#)

[Wally Piper Scholarship](#)

Submit an application form by January 31. Scholarship awards are determined by the [MSBO](#) Board of Directors and are presented at the [MSBO](#) Annual Conference.

Local Governmental Summit on Efficiency Creation and Cost Saving

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Thursday, February 28, 2013 • Lansing Center • Lansing, MI
Time: 8:30 AM-4:40 PM • Registration: 8:00 AM

Participants previously registered for the December program will be automatically transferred to the February date.

[MSBO](#) is co-sponsoring a workshop for you to join local government leaders from across Michigan to tackle the challenges of sharing services across governmental segments. Learn from others who have tackled this issue and can share best practices to improve in ways you might not have known you could. Get primed for a day that helps you understand the prioritization, operational and financial modeling, restructuring, and related issues associated with design and implementation of intergovernmental collaboration. This summit provides the action steps you've been looking for!

To get more information and to download the Brochure [Click here](#).

In Partnership with:

- Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants
- Michigan Association of Counties
- Michigan Association of School Administrators
- Michigan Association of School Boards
- Michigan Government Finance Officers Association
- Michigan Municipal League
- Michigan School Business Officials
- Michigan Township Association

Price: \$139

6 SCECHs (State Continuing Education Clock Hours) awaiting approval.

Accommodations: Overnight accommodations are available at the Radisson Hotel 517.482.0188.

MSBO Bus Purchasing Program Phase I Ends January 31, 2013

Tagged: [Newsletter](#) • [Jan](#) • [2013](#)

Phase one of this year's [MSBO](#) Bus Purchasing Program will conclude on January 31, 2013. But don't despair; the next phase for purchasing will open again in April. This strategy will hopefully better suit districts' circumstances and provide more accessibility to the program whenever a purchase decision is made.

[MSBO](#)'s Bus Purchasing Program makes bidding and ordering buses extremely simple and smooth. The bidding has been accomplished for you; all that is left is to "build" the bus desired and compare pricing from the four bidding dealers. The program provides extensive flexibility and customization – there are over 275 options available, allowing you to customize your bus to fit your district's needs. It automatically keeps a running subtotal of all dealer prices as you select various options.

Bus dealers enter stock buses in the program to allow districts to compare those buses within the program and make a more informed decision. It is not a sole source bid process. Districts can compare and choose among the four dealers, who represent International, Blue Bird, and Thomas/Freightliner.

The program offers an extensive help menu listing instructions, dealer contact information, base specifications and options. Conventional, Special Needs, Transit Rear Engine, Transit Front Engine, A-II, and BE style buses are all offered in the program.

[MSBO](#) has continued to keep the administrative fee low at \$100 per bus, with a maximum of \$1,000 per district per year.

For questions or more information regarding the bus purchasing program, call Scott Little at 517.327.2582 or Pat Korloch at 517.327.5924.

EMU Partnership Offers Leading Software Tools

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An exciting collaboration, that benefits K-12 students, teachers and school administrators in the State of Michigan, provides a complete suite of geographic information systems (GIS) free to K-12 schools.

In addition to supporting educational goals, schools and districts can use the GIS license software to perform key administrative support tasks related to facilities management; vehicle routing and scheduling; district boundary mapping; geo-demographic studies; site new schools or close schools; provide campus safety; and plan disaster preparedness. These applications allow schools to run more efficiently and save dwindling resources.

This partnership, between [Environmental Systems Research Institute](#) (ESRI) and Eastern Michigan University, changes the way teachers can design learning opportunities and teach their K-12 students. Due to the availability of ArcGIS, a state-of-the-art GIS software suite, all public, charter, parochial and private schools can join the [Geospatial Revolution](#) today.

Instructionally, GIS is well suited to driving Problem-Based Learning (PBL), an approach to classroom inquiry that is guided by a question, with students collecting data and making analytical conclusions. PBL and inquiry are specifically mentioned in the National Science Education Standards as instructional frameworks best suited to support deep, meaningful learning. GIS allows students to collect and visualize authoritative data about the question of interest, adding their own data to a map before performing a wide range of analyses. Students working with the GIS tools can become a valuable resource to their communities through the projects they complete.

GIS problems are steeped in both critical and spatial thinking elements, motivating learners as they learn work-force ready skills and allowing students to do exactly what many professionals do in thousands of career fields every day.

[Register and download the software.](#)

For more information, contact Mike Dueweke (mdueweke@emich.edu).

Hunger Doesn't Take A Summer Vacation

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The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is looking for community sponsors and potential site locations to run summer food programs to prevent nearly 575,000 children in Michigan from going hungry when school lunchrooms close for the summer.

The Summer Food Service Program could fill the summer hunger gap for hundreds of thousands of children if more sponsors are signed up to run the food program. Last year, out of the nearly 575,000 low-income Michigan children who were eligible, only around 85,000 (15 percent) were able to eat free meals or snacks at approved summer meal sites in their neighborhoods.

Research shows a direct relationship between good nutrition and learning. The Summer Food Service Program is a key building block in Michigan communities to develop healthy, happy kids who are ready to learn.

Sponsors receive federal payments for both the meals served to children and the administrative costs of serving the meals. New sponsors will receive free training and technical assistance from MDE.

The Summer Food Service Program serves nutritious meals to children up to age 18 living in low-income areas (where 50 percent or more of the students qualify for free or reduced price school meals). The program can operate in schools, public housing centers, playgrounds, camps, parks, and faith-based facilities.

Sponsors can be public school districts or nonprofit private schools; public or private nonprofit residential summer camps; local, county or state government agencies; colleges or universities; or private nonprofit organizations.

In order to become a sponsor of the program this summer, organizations need to contact MDE by **March 1, 2013**. Applications and sponsor information may be obtained from MDE's Office of School Support Services, Summer Food Service Program, 608 West Allegan Street, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909, 517-373-3347; or on the MDE website at www.michigan.gov/sfsp.

Bargaining in a New World Conference, March 14-15

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Join us for Bargaining in a New World: A two-day labor relations conference to get your upcoming negotiations off on the right foot.

[Register for Day 1: Thursday, March 14 - Basics of Bargaining and Grievance & Contract Administration](#)

[Register for Day 2: Friday, March 15 - Bargaining in a New World Conference](#)

[Event Brochure and Registration Form](#)

MSBO , MASA and MASB are pleased to announce Bargaining in a New World, a labor relations conference designed for administrators and school board members to be held March 14 and 15 in East Lansing.

Why Attend?

Costs that are negotiated in labor agreements can make up more than 80 percent of your budget. You need to be aware of new laws and regulations to avoid costly mistakes. Bring a team of board members and administrators so you can get on the same page with these changes and your strategy for dealing with them!

When and Where?

The conference will be held on Thursday, March 14 and Friday, March 15 at the Henry Center (adjoining the University Club) in East Lansing.

What?

Thursday will consist of two in-depth sessions. The first session runs from 8:30 a.m. to noon, and the topic is "Grievance and Contract Administration." An experienced attorney and school administrator will cover:

- Principles of contract language
- Discipline and discharge under a contract and under the new tenure standards
- Processing grievances
- Letters of understanding and last-chance agreements
- Going to arbitration

The second session runs from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and covers the "Basics of Bargaining." This session is intended for beginners or those with experience who wish to refresh their knowledge of collective bargaining process and laws. Subjects include:

- Preparation for negotiations
- The process—negotiations, mediation, fact finding, impasse • At the bargaining table
- Common mistakes and how to avoid them
- Key legal concepts, including unfair labor practices and prohibited topics for bargaining
- The law and practice of negotiations: definitions and process

On Friday, the full day conference begins at 8:30 a.m. on "Bargaining in a New World," covering the following topics:

Right-to-Work the Implications for Bargaining
Evaluations, Layoffs and the Law—Getting it Right
MERC Decisions that Clarify Recent Changes in Law
Bargaining Concessions
The Evolving Implementation of the Tenure Act
Negotiations—Getting the Relationships Right
Bargaining Health Insurance
Projecting Your Budget for Negotiations