

January 30, 2015

Members of the Michigan State Board of Education:

This letter is written on behalf of the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE), a statewide professional organization representing over 630 special education leaders in local school districts, public school academies, intermediate school districts, and other agencies serving students with disabilities. MAASE appreciates the opportunity to provide input regarding the desirable characteristics of the new State Superintendent of Instruction.

We have reviewed the position description which was developed in the fall of 2014 by the State Board of Education, and we support the credentials, skills, traits and experiences that have already been identified. Based on input from our membership, we would like to emphasize the following qualities which we believe are most critical for new educational leader ~~in our state~~.

A primary consideration is for this individual is to have a wide range of experiences ~~that~~ reflecting the diversity of our state and the students that we collectively serve. This includes experiences within local districts and regional/intermediate entities, in small and large districts, and in districts of varying socio-cultural-economic statuses. Ideally this individual should have experience as a classroom teacher, building administrator, local district superintendent and intermediate level superintendent--- perhaps even as a special educator!

This individual's leadership experience should include successfully carrying out initiatives that have demonstrably improved outcomes for students in traditionally underserved populations such as those with IEPs, English learners, and children who live in poverty. As we know, students rarely fit neatly into a single demographic category, so experience that supports students who come to us with multiple characteristics and challenges would be advantageous. In addition, a strong knowledge base in the area of early childhood with a commitment to early intervention and high quality preschool education supports the improvement of educational outcomes for entire communities.

In the interpersonal arena, the individual who is selected must be:

- open-minded,
- solution-focused,
- data-driven, and
- innovative,
- with critical listening and feedback skills.

This individual must also be a

- relationship-builder,
- problem-solver, and
- systems thinker.

Finally, it is critical that this individual have a proven history of working effectively with legislators from both sides of the aisle to support student-focused legislation and discourage unnecessary entanglement of the legislature in educational practice. In particular, this individual must have expertise in anticipating, informing and shaping the legislative and policy conversations around topics such as instructional outcomes, assessment of student learning, educator evaluation, and adequate and sustainable school funding.

Given the above characteristics, we believe that this individual will have the ability to create a compelling vision rooted in the learning and personal needs of our children ages birth to 26 in order to build coalitions with educators and stakeholders in every community, to move the state forward to realize that vision.

The hiring of a superintendent is the greatest responsibility faced by any board of education, and we realize that the expectations we have for our new state leader are exceedingly high. However, we believe that the schools of our state and the children we serve deserve nothing less.

Please do not hesitate to contact MAASE if you have any questions about our input or if we can support the State Board in any way. You may reach us at 517-376-0949.

Yours in Education,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dawn G. Bentley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dawn" being the most prominent part.

Dawn G. Bentley, Ed.S.  
MAASE President

**From:** [Bentley, Dawn](#)  
**To:** [statesuptsearch@michigan.gov](mailto:statesuptsearch@michigan.gov)  
**Subject:** MAASE State Superintendent Input  
**Date:** Friday, January 30, 2015 7:39:01 AM  
**Attachments:** [MAASE State Superintendent Input 1-30-2015.pdf](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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State Board of Education Members,

Please accept the attached input from the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE) regarding our next State Superintendent. We realize that this process is well underway, but we are hopeful that our feedback will assist the Board in the process of narrowing the candidate pool and selecting the perfect individual for this vital position.

Our organization extends its gratitude for your consideration. If you have any questions or need clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time.

**Dawn G. Bentley, Ed. S.**

*MAASE President*

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