MICHIGAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
DEVELOPING, DEPLOYING AND SUPPORTING OUTSTANDING LEADERS

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1. What's New?

MLI/MASA Present the New Superintendents Leadership Academy
MLI and MASA are teaming to present the **New Superintendents Leadership Academy** designed to support Superintendents who are new to the position as well as Superintendents who want to continue to grow and build new strengths in this tough but rewarding job. The cost to participants is $500 for the four, day-long sessions or $150 per session. Registration is now open on the MASA website. The remaining New Superintendents Leadership Academy sessions will be offered as follows:

- February 9, 2017: Tools for Effective Board-Superintendent Relationships
- April 20, 2017: HR Practices and Procedures for Success

New Contact Information

Since his former e-mail account was hacked, Dr. Michael Wilmot has a new e-mail address: drmwilmotmli@hotmail.com.

Survey

Share your thoughts on the Board President role by responding to our anonymous survey at:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/Qst5SXK

Leadership Opportunities

Detailed information about **Michigan Leadership Institute Searches in Progress** and the on-line application can be found at the Michigan Leadership Institute website, www.mileader.com.

LakeVille Community Schools
Michigan Leadership Institute is facilitating the search for Superintendent of LakeVille Community Schools. The application deadline is February 10, 2017. Questions regarding the search should be directed to the search consultant, MLI Regional President Charles Andrews, at 810-434-5631 or candrewsmli@gmail.com. See the MLI website "Searches in Progress" for information on this leadership opportunity.

Ludington Area School District
Michigan Leadership Institute is facilitating the search for Superintendent of Ludington Area School District. The application deadline is February 17, 2017.   Questions regarding the search should be directed to the search consultant, MLI Regional President David Killips, at 734-320-6572 or dkkillips@gmail.com. See the MLI website "Searches in Progress" for information on this leadership opportunity.

Harbor Beach Community Schools
Michigan Leadership Institute is facilitating the search for Superintendent of Harbor Beach Community Schools. The application deadline has not yet been established. Questions regarding the search should be directed to the search consultant, MLI Regional President Charles Andrews, at 810-434-5631 or candrewsmli@gmail.com.

2. Following Up 🔼

Note: If you are a graduate of any Superintendent Preparations Series Academy class, please keep us posted as you assume new education leadership roles.
Congratulations to Justin Jennings (SUPES 2011) selected as Superintendent of Muskegon Public Schools. Justin previously served the district as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Special Education.

3. Research/Reading Roundup: Articles of Interest

"Are You Solving the Right Problems?" Thomas Wedell-Wedellsborg, *Harvard Business Review,* **January-February 2017, pp.76-83.**
The author of this HBR article suggests that problem solving is often unsuccessful because the problem solvers are too close to the problem, assume the definition of the problem as *the definition*, or default to thinking about the problem in terms of their own expertise. He presents seven strategies that can be used to reframe the definition of a problem, thus opening up different perspectives and and alternative courses of action. These strategies, he says, can be used as a set in a 30-minute meeting; or, they can be used in part (2 strategies, for example) when a problem is presented informally and only about 5 minutes are available to begin problem solving. All of the strategies are presented with examples of their application. Two of the strategies: "get peoples' definitions of the problem in writing" and "analyze positive exceptions" were especially interesting. All of the strategies were ones that any problem solving group could employ. The author's only caveat was that the strategies should not be made evident to the group or presented as a checklist because doing so would limit the group's thinking. This "reframing" process could be used in addressing problems in any environment—including schools.

"The Neuroscience of Trust," Paul J. Zak, *Harvard Business Review,* January-February 2017, pp. 85-90.
This HBR article reports the author's study of brain chemistry related to employee engagement and the implications for building a positive employee culture. Zak's more than 10 years of study revealed that the levels of oxytocin in the brain enhanced or inhibited empathy and trust, and that specific work conditions could stimulate oxytocin production. He identifies eight management behaviors that create and sustain a culture of trust and result in significantly improved employee performance and job satisfaction. While many of the behaviors are predictable, others offer new insights/directions for building engagement and trust such as "enable job crafting," and "inducing challenge stress." Read the complete article for both reinforcement of good practice for building trust and for some new ideas on attaining employee engagement and its positive returns.

"The Stretch Goal Paradox;" Sim B. Sitkin, C. Chet Miller, and Kelly E. See; *Harvard Business Review;* January-February 2017; pp.93-99.
In this very interesting article, the authors argue that stretch goals—"goals that appear unattainable given current practices, skills, and knowledge"—are not right for every organization. In fact, they say, attempting stretch goals and missing the mark can have very negative consequences including reducing motivation, undermining employee confidence and willingness to take risks, and reducing performance. They maintain that the organizations best positioned to attempt stretch goals ("moon shots") are those that have had recent success, have available resources, and are complacent. The argue that the momentum and confidence-building of recent success allows employees to take on the challenge and risk of a stretch goal. Available resources supports their capacity to succeed. Unfortunately, the authors say, organizations that are not well-positioned to attempt stretch goals are often the ones that attempt them. They believe organizations that lack the employee momentum and confidence and/or the necessary resources are doomed to fall short of achieving lofty goals and damage themselves in the process. They recommend a program of "small step successes" or even "small losses" as the better choice for these organizations. The content of this article is informative for school leaders thinking about "how much change? how fast" and whether they are ready to set challenging, BIG goals for their districts.

"17 Teacher-Prep Programs Meet New Accreditation Bar," Brenda Iasevoli, *Education Week,* December 14, 2016, p.7.
This *Education Week* article reports progress on implementation of the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accreditation for teacher preparation programs nationally. This accreditation is based on newly-revised standards that place great emphasis on outcome data including data on the success of students taught by the schools of educations' graduates. Education schools are judged on five standards, each of which has multiple benchmarks. Twenty-one education schools applied for the 7-year accreditation. Seventeen met the requirements. Two Michigan schools of education received this accreditation, Saginaw Valley State and Madonna University.

4. Leaders' Speech File: Thinking

➢ "Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing 'patterns of change' rather than static 'snapshots.'"—Peter Senge

➢ "Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it."—Henry Ford

➢ "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."-Albert Einstein

- "The assumption that what currently exists must necessarily exist is the acid that corrodes all visionary thinking."—Murray Bookchin

- "The visionary starts with a clean sheet of paper and re-imagines the world."—Malcolm Gladwell

- "Big thinking precedes great achievement."—Wilferd Peterson

- "Dissatisfaction and discouragement are not caused by the absence of things, but the absence of vision."—Anonymous

- "The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious."—John Scully

- "If you limit your choices only to what seems possible or reasonable, you disconnect yourself from what you truly want, and all that is left is a compromise."—Robert Fritz

5. Notes from the Asylum:

- ❖ Two antennae got married. The wedding was boring, but the reception was great!

- ❖ Just read that 4,153,237 people got married last year. Not to cause any trouble, but shouldn't that be an even number?

- ❖ Today a man knocked on my door and asked for a small donation towards the local swimming pool. I gave him a glass of water.

- ❖ If I had a dollar for every girl that found me unattractive, they would eventually find me attractive.

- ❖ Money talks, but all mine ever says is good-bye.

- ❖ Did you know that dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity they can train people to stand on the very edge of a pool and throw them fish?

6. Sponsor Highlight—Eidex

Grand Rapids-based upstart Eidex was founded in 2011 by Northview school board member Doug LaFleur to help school districts find the answers in their data using cloud-based analytics software. The company has academic, financial and demographic information for every district in the state that can be sorted in multiple categories through a filtering system. It gives district administrators instant access to all that data so they don't have to spend time going into the state site and search. It allows users to compare their districts to similar districts and provides school leaders the proper context to evaluate their districts. School districts can use the tool to set performance goals relevant to like pers. The software can be used in multiple ways, including achieving cost-savings, in union negotiations, and setting academic and financial strategic goals.

7. About Us

Michigan Leadership Institute is committed to supporting the success of public education by developing, deploying and supporting outstanding executive leadership. Based in current leadership research, all MLI services are developed and delivered by successful leader-practitioners. For more information about MLI services, please visit our web site www.mileader.com or contact any of the regional presidents:

Dr. Michael Wilmot - President/CEO
Michigan Leadership Institute (Office)
P.O. Box 62
Ossineke MI 49766
989-471-2686 (o)
248-755-7596 (c)
drmwilmotmli@hotmail.com

 Charles S. Andrews - Regional President - East-Central Michigan
810-434-5631
candrewsmli@gmail.com

Mark Eckhardt - Regional President - Northern Michigan
231-590-4920
eckhardm@hotmail.com

Kathleen Eiler - Regional President - Northeast Michigan
989-354-6071
kathy_eiler@hotmail.com

David Killips –Regional President-South Central Michigan
734-320-6572
dkkillips@gmail.com

Gary Rider - Regional President - Southwest Michigan
616-901-3738
gridermli@gmail.com

John Silveri - Regional President - Southeast Michigan
248-420-9354
silverimli@gmx.com