

Minnesota Association of School Administrators

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**P R E S S
RELEASE**

**Electronic versions of this press release and Mr. Robertson's photograph are available.
Please email Mary Law at MASA (mrlaw@mnasa.org) to request copies.**

Mark Robertson is 2008 MN Superintendent of the Year



Mr. Robertson

(St. Paul, Minn.) — — The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) has named Mr. Mark Robertson, Superintendent for the Fridley Schools, the 2008 Minnesota Superintendent of the Year.

As the Minnesota honoree, Mr. Robertson is a candidate among other state winners for National Superintendent of the Year, to be announced at the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) convention on February 15, 2008 in Tampa, Florida.

Superintendent of the Year nominees are evaluated on how each candidate demonstrates:

- Leadership for learning—creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.
- Communication skills—strength in both personal and organizational communication.
- Professionalism—constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills, while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.
- Community involvement—active participation in local community activities and understanding of regional, national, and international issues.

Mr. Robertson was selected for this honor by a panel of representatives from a variety of Minnesota education organizations. “Mark Robertson is truly an exemplary leader,” says MASA Executive Director Dr. Charles Kyte. “He is a skilled collaborative leader who knows how to help his district community envision positive change and chart a course for achievement. We are proud to have Mark represent Minnesota’s superintendents as Superintendent of the Year.”

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Mr. Robertson has been superintendent for the Fridley Schools since 2003. With an enrollment of 2,750 students, Fridley is a second-tier suburban school district located ten miles north of downtown Minneapolis. The district's student population is slowly declining as area residents tend to stay in the vicinity after their children graduate. (82% of district homeowners do not have children in school.) However, 23% of the student population comprises non-resident or open-enrolled students from surrounding districts. Student demographics have changed drastically in the past ten years, with a growth in the percentage of students of color from 10% to 37%, an increase of English Language Learners from 2% to 12%, and growth in the number of students financially eligible to receive free or reduced lunch from 23% to 46%.

During Mr. Robertson's tenure, the district has refocused its mission to reflect a new motto of "Fridley Schools, A World-Class Community of Learners," resonating both a global perspective to education and the diversity of the student population. At the core of the vision is the goal of becoming the first Minnesota school district to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum from kindergarten through high school, in which all students will be expected to succeed at the high standard levels required by the IB program.

The Fridley School Board nominated Mr. Robertson for the Superintendent of the Year Award. "Mark Robertson is a progressive thinker, a persuasive leader, and an effective manager," says Fridley School Board Chair Kim Sampson. "As Superintendent of the Year, he will be an excellent spokesperson for education and an excellent example to others of the diverse skills and knowledge required to be an effective transformational leader in this field today."

Mr. Robertson is especially noted for innovative leadership, finding creative means of improving the district and accomplishing goals. He has secured significant financial support for district initiatives through grants. He has expanded corporate partnerships, community mentors, after school programs, and community-based opportunities to maximize opportunities for students. In the past two years, both of Fridley's elementary schools have been named Minnesota Schools of Excellence, an honor typically given to fewer than six schools statewide each year. Last year, Fridley Middle School received recognition as one of the top magnet schools in the United States, and Fridley High School was one of four schools selected to participate in the Minnesota Department of Education's initiative, "Systemic High School Redesign: Building a Minnesota Model."

A statewide leader, Mr. Robertson was one of twenty-six superintendents serving on the Minnesota Superintendent Symposium, the result of which was a significant document defining the traits of a world-class school system that prepares all students for success in the Global Information Age. He is a key leader in the Northwest Suburban Integration School District, a collaborative that supports the effectiveness of integration programs. He serves in a number of leadership roles for civic groups and

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professional associations.

Mr. Robertson received his superintendent licensure from the University of Minnesota, and he holds specialist and master's degrees from the University of St. Thomas, and a bachelor's degree from Bethel University. He is an adjunct professor in leadership and curriculum for Bethel University's doctoral program and St. Mary's University's master's program. Before becoming Superintendent for the Fridley Schools, he was a high school principal in Forest Lake, MN, and an associate principal in Blaine, MN.

MASA is a professional organization whose mission is to establish the statewide agenda for children, serve as the preeminent voice for public education, and empower members through quality services and support. MASA members are school superintendents, directors of special education, other central office school administrators, regional administrators, and higher education administrators and professors from throughout Minnesota.

AIG VALIC sponsors the Minnesota Superintendent of the Year program. ARAMARK Education and the American Association of School Administrators are co-sponsors of the National Superintendent of the Year award program. #####