



# Executive Director's Update

Massachusetts School Administrators' Association

33 Forge Parkway | Franklin, MA 02038 | 508-541-7997 | [msaa.net](http://msaa.net)

## **From Executive Director Robert Baldwin**

Massachusetts School Administrators' Association

**December 19, 2025**

### **MSAA High School Principal of the Year**



Scott Palladino, Principal of Wareham High School, has been named the 2026 MSAA High School Principal of the Year. This year marks his 33rd at Wareham High School. He has served as principal for the past 16 years, following three years as vice principal and 14 years as a health teacher. During his teaching years, Scott also coached

three sports for a decade. What has kept him in Wareham throughout his entire career is the compassionate faculty, the diverse student body and the close-knit families who continually support their schools and community. Many of Scott's current students are the children of Wareham High School graduates whom he taught earlier in his career

Scott earned his bachelor's degree from Springfield College, his master's degree from Cambridge College, and an Administration Certificate from Bridgewater State University.

Scott was born and raised in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and is a proud product of the Plymouth Public Schools. He comes from a strong family of educators: his wife is a kindergarten teacher at Nathaniel Morton Elementary School; his mother taught Spanish in Plymouth for 29 years; and his father served as an administrator in Plymouth and Carver for 35 years. His brother Brian is the principal of Plymouth Community Intermediate School, his other brother is a central office administrator in Ridgefield, Connecticut, and his sister-in-law is a history teacher at Marshfield High School.

Outside of work, Scott is actively involved in his children's academic and athletic activities. His daughter, Emily, is a senior at UMass Dartmouth, and his son, Domenic, is a junior at Plymouth North High School. Scott also contributes to the MIAA, serving on the Ice Hockey and Field Hockey Committees, and is a board member of the Cranberry Federal Credit Union (formerly the Plymouth County Teachers Federal Credit Union). In the winter, he also serves as an MIAA high school hockey referee. During the summers, he enjoys spending time with his family, traveling, and relaxing on the water in Cape Cod Bay.

### **MSAA Middle School Principal of the Year**



Sarah Houle, Principal of Southbridge Middle School in Southbridge, has been named the 2026 MSAA Middle School Principal of the Year. She has served at Southbridge Middle School for the past seven years. Sarah earned her bachelor's degree from Boston University and holds master's degrees from UMass Boston and Endicott College. She is currently

pursuing her Ed.D. at Clark University in Transformative Education.

Prior to her work in Southbridge, Sarah was a high school social studies teacher with a passion for developing critical thinkers and active citizens who can chart their own course. She started her career at Cathedral High School in the South End of Boston, teaching a diverse population of often first generation high school graduates. After spending a few years in a suburban district, Sarah followed her heart back to urban education and has been in Southbridge working with stakeholders to improve the Middle School. Sarah is most proud of the team of committed, passionate, and pragmatic educators she works with. They pour so much into the work, and persevere together to find ways to overcome the obstacles that often impede progress in urban settings.

Sarah grew up in Massachusetts and currently lives on a farm in Douglas with her husband and best friend Eric, and their three children Emalie, Trevor, and Tucker.

In her free time, Sarah most enjoys doing anything with her family, but especially camping in their vintage Airstream (named Peggy). She also enjoys reading, watching her kids play sports, and volunteering at her church.

### **SY26-27 Professional Development Survey**

At MSAA, we are committed to supporting Massachusetts school leaders and highlighting best practices across our schools. To that end, we strive to provide high-quality professional development workshops that meet your needs. Your input is invaluable! By completing this brief survey, you will help us design workshops that are practical, engaging, and meaningful for school leaders across the state.

Please take a few minutes to complete the [survey](#) by Friday, December 19. Thank you in advance for your time and insights!

### **Save the Date**

Please mark your calendar and join us on Monday, March 16, for the Middle School Best Practices Hybrid Showcase, hosted by the MSAA Middle School Committee. [Click here](#) for more information.



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### Middle School Resource

Middle school students are growing, learning, and navigating complex emotions every day. Yet, many struggle academically - not because they can't learn, but because they feel unseen or disconnected.

**Vilenti Tulloch** wrote *Engage to Excel* and how connection can bridge the achievement gap. This book is more than a guide - it's a framework for educators who want to see their students thrive emotionally, socially, and academically.

In this [blog](#), Vilenti shares stories from real classrooms, including students who were completely closed off, and how building authentic relationships transformed their learning experience.

#### [Book Review](#)

Pre-order a copy: [Engage to Excel Order Form](#)

### Administrators Coaching and Mentoring Program

We are thrilled to offer 34 trained and experienced Coaches who are available to support new administrators as they navigate their leadership roles. Our coaches bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to help guide and empower school leaders in creating positive change. This year, we've set a goal of recruiting 75 new leaders into our coaching program. As of now, we have 26 new leaders enrolled - that's 49 more to go! We need your help to reach this milestone. Could you please refer at least one new leader (Principal, Assistant Principal or Central Office Leader) by sending their name, email, and telephone number to Yolanda at [yburnett@msaa.net](mailto:yburnett@msaa.net).

Together, we can ensure that more school leaders benefit from the support and guidance of the MSAA Coaching Program. Check out the details of our Coaching Program through the following links: [Outline](#); [Request a Coach](#); or view our [Coaching Directory](#). Whether you're a new administrator or know someone who could benefit, this program is designed to provide tailored guidance and practical solutions. Explore the program and take advantage of this valuable resource!

### Soul of Leadership Alumni Offerings

Open to all past participants in Soul of Leadership and Feed Your Soul. [Click here](#) for more information.

### Professional Development Workshops for SY25-26!

We are excited to announce the offerings for the SY25-26 [Professional Development Workshops](#)! These workshops are designed to support educators, school leaders, and staff in enhancing their skills and practices. Please share these opportunities with your school community, network, and colleagues. It's a great chance to learn, grow, and collaborate with professionals across the state. Together, we can foster professional growth and continue making an impact on our schools!

### Online Workshops

- **Brave Leadership in Schools: Leading with Equity, Courage, and Vision** - *Craig Aarons-Martin* (January 20, 12:00-3:00 PM)
- **Building Effective Relationships with Students with Challenging Behaviors** *Vilenti Tulloch* (February 5, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM)

### In-Person Workshops

- **Coaching Teachers to Excellence: Exploring What Department Chair and Administration Partnerships Look, Sound, and Feel Like** - *Tom Millett and Kate Holmes* (January 7, 8:30-3:00 PM)
- **The Three Vs of Leadership** - *Dr. Joseph Baeta* (January 8)
- **Pie the Principal, Pitch a Tent, Positive Peer Visit: How Are You Adding Purposeful Positivity to Your School?** - *Tyler Steffey* (January 9)
- **Introduction to Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation** - *Holly Cachimuel and Ruth Henry* (January 14, 8:30 AM-3:00 PM)
- **Empowering Educators for Trauma-Sensitive Success** - *Tara Rossi* (January 21)

### LLP 2026-2027 Cohort

We are so pleased to announce that the 2026-2027 LLP Cohort is accepting applications. As many of you know our program combines hands on experiences in schools through the practicum as well as coupling that experience with practical and meaningful instruction. Please find below a more detailed description of LLP.

The Massachusetts School Administrators' Association (MSAA) Leadership Licensure Program (LLP) is a rigorous and comprehensive program designed to support aspiring PK-12 educational leaders across the Commonwealth. This program goes beyond simply fulfilling licensure requirements, aiming to build a significant and lasting Personal Learning Network (PLN) for its candidates. Through a blend of robust instruction, collaborative learning, and practical, performance-based assessments, LLP offers extensive professional learning opportunities. Our faculty consists of Superintendents, Principals and Special Education Directors. Its curriculum is grounded in effective teaching practices, instructional leadership, and Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices, with the ultimate goal of cultivating transformative, equity-driven leaders.

Participants will engage with the Massachusetts Administrative Leader Guidelines and relevant curriculum frameworks, preparing them to lead with impact in public schools. The program's unique integrated approach, which includes a focus on DESE's Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL) Tasks woven into each module, ensures candidates are well-prepared to meet the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrators. So, tap the shoulder of the teacher, counselor in your district or school who just has "it".



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## **MASC State Conference Workshop Proposals**

Proposals are now being accepted from students interested in presenting a workshop at the MASC Annual Conference in March. Each school participating in the conference is encouraged to submit one workshop proposal. Please note - advisors must review and approve all proposals prior to submission. [Click here](#) to submit a workshop proposal.

## **Student Council Award Nomination Information**

Each year, MSAA/MASC awards are presented to students, advisors, administrators and schools that have made significant contributions to student council activities. Nominations are currently being accepted for each of these awards. Please utilize the links below to access the online forms and additional award details. Awards will be presented at the MASC Annual Conference that is scheduled for March 4-6, 2026 at the Emerald Resort in Hyannis. \*Please note - nominations must be submitted by schools that have registered Student Council as an MSAA Student Activity and are due by **Friday, January 16, 2026**.

### [Administrator of the Year Award](#)

This award is presented to one school administrator in recognition of outstanding support for student council activities.

### [Henry Sullivan Advisor of the Year Award](#)

This award is presented to one student council advisor in recognition of a commitment to excellence and service to young people in their school.

### [Top Ten Project Awards](#)

These awards are presented to ten student councils who have submitted one of the ten most outstanding projects during the school year.

### [Unsung Hero Awards](#)

These awards are presented to one student council member from each region of the state who goes above and beyond the call of duty on a regular basis with little or no recognition.

### [Council of Excellence Awards\\*](#)

These awards are designed to recognize and reward the achievements of outstanding student councils and provide standards of effective student leadership.

\*The due date for this nomination information is February 3, 2026.

## **Esports**

Esports continue to grow in our MSAA high schools. The best way to get started is to pass along the flyer linked below to a staff member, often times a teacher, to help start an esports club and eventual team. Please pass along and see what your school can offer to excited and motivated esports students!

[Esports Flyer](#)

## **Holiday Hours**

December 24-26 – Office Closed

December 31-January 2 – Office Closed

**Thanks for your continued support!**

Robert Baldwin

