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MINNESOTA ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 1996 - JUNE 30, 1997

IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING AND EDUCATION DELIVERY BY:

- INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY
- CREATING CAPACITY TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE
- ENGAGING STUDENTS AS ACTIVE PARTNERS
- ACCELERATING VALUE-ADDED PARTNERSHIPS

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MAEF, CALL US AT:

971 Capitol Square Building
550 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
Phone: 612.297.1875
Fax: 612.296.5846
E-mail: maef@state.mn.us
www.st.cloud.msus.edu/~maef

MAEF ANNUAL REPORT

EDITOR: HOLLY HANNAH LEWIS, **DESIGN:** VENTRELLI DESIGN CO.,
WRITER: ZONA SHARP-BURK, **CONTRIBUTOR:** OWEN HEIBERG

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DEAR FRIENDS,

On behalf of the MAEF Board of Directors, we report the results of another successful year of operations. We use this opportunity to report to you a sample of the impact we are seeing as a result of our work.

As an **organization**, we continue to move towards even higher levels of quality and continuous improvement. Our work continues to be cited externally for its focus on:

- customer and stakeholder satisfaction;
- impact and results rather than activity;
- the use of facts and data to make decisions; and
- the alignment of our resources, staff and work systems to achieve our highest priorities.

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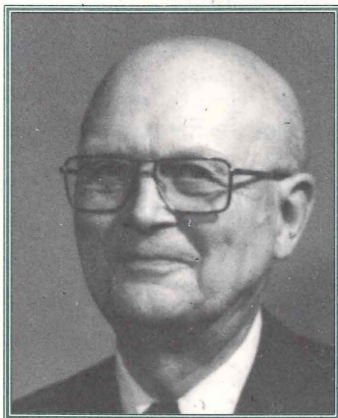
We continue to invest in our staff. As higher levels of performance are needed, we continue to work in cross-functional project teams, to align our work segments to leverage better results, and to train staff to apply the practices of Baldrige-type quality.

The MAEF Board completed a new strategic plan, and in this report, we begin to address the charges established in that plan:

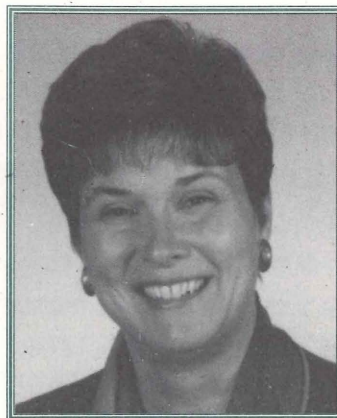
- to increase accountability within the system and within communities to increase student learning;
- to create capacity within the education delivery system to continuously improve itself;
- to facilitate and engage students as active partners in increasing their own learning; and
- to accelerate value-added, results-oriented partnerships which advance the work of MAEF and its mission.

We **thank everyone who has made this year a good one** for MAEF and for Minnesota students, families, schools and communities. We especially want to thank:

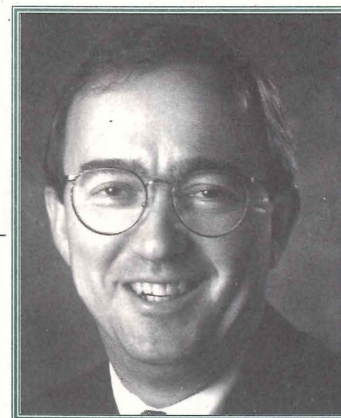
- the Minnesota Legislature for their investment in our capacity-building strategies to accelerate local accountability for student learning.
- the Department of Children, Families and Learning and the State Board of Education for collaboration with MAEF to expand school improvement performance contracts.
- the 10 founders of our new Silver Boosters Club and its first initiative, **the 401(k)ids plan**.
- Honeywell for its accelerated support of the new classroom quality initiative. All of the pilot classrooms increased student learning!
- the many donors and volunteers who made it possible for the Gathering of Champions to reach 17,000 students and their families this past August. A national record!



ERLING JOHNSON
Retired education leader
Board Chair



ZONA SHARP-BURK
Executive Director



GREG LEA
Vice President
Jostens Inc.

BEST PRACTICE

*One small school district
of about 300 students
increased its activities by
50% from 28 to 42, with a
similar level of increased
funding for the programs.*

INCREASING LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT LEARNING

VISION: The Academic League will accelerate student learning by functioning as a community-based, volunteer-driven initiative.

CURRENT PERFORMANCE:

- Membership increased to 250 districts, the most members since the inception of the Academic League in 1989. This number represents about 80% of all Minnesota public schools and nearly 90% of public school students. Twenty-four private schools and one charter school are members of the Academic League.
- MAEF services resulted in 95% of the members completing a profile of their current levels of participation in Academic League activities. About 70% of these sites have completed or are in the process of completing an improvement plan based on the profile. Districts and schools continue to add Academic League challenges and recognitions at an average of one to two per year.
- Community and volunteer support is evident in most of the districts. About 50% of the members have either school-community teams or staff teams with responsibility for planning and implementing programs of the Academic League. About 75% have an organization of some sort, besides athletic booster clubs, to support academic activities within the district.

Nearly 25% of districts have an academic booster club or a similar organization that focuses only on supporting academic achievement. Field staff estimate that about 40% of Minnesota districts now implement this program idea.

- Impact is increasing. More than 35% of Minnesota students now participate in Academic League activities. Surveys and focus groups of these young people indicate that the young people themselves see great value in using the activities to develop these skills and insights: critical thinking, problem solving, working in groups and communication.
- Financial investment will begin to be measured for the first time this year. Anecdotal data supports that most schools and districts do not budget for Academic League activities in the same ways they budget for sports. A school accounting line item code has been established to assist in tracking how these activities are supported and how this support compares per capita to other school spending vs. results achieved.



CREATING CAPACITY WITHIN THE EDUCATION DELIVERY SYSTEM TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE ITSELF

VISION: The Partners for Quality Education Initiative will be broadly and deeply embedded in ongoing education delivery with capacity to sustain itself. Specifically, the quality approach will be embedded in:

- Educator preparation and continuing education.
- Major education initiatives and programs such as Chapter I and graduation standards.
- School and classroom operations.

CURRENT PERFORMANCE:

- Participation in Partners for Quality expanded in a number of ways this past year. In addition to the ongoing enrollment of schools and school districts, MAEF expanded the Partners for Quality initiative to include classrooms, colleges of education and special initiatives such as the learning standards sites and Chapter I staff and sites. Also, MAEF began to serve schools and colleges in other states such as Indiana and Idaho and to work more closely with potential sources of business volunteers for the Partners for Quality sites.

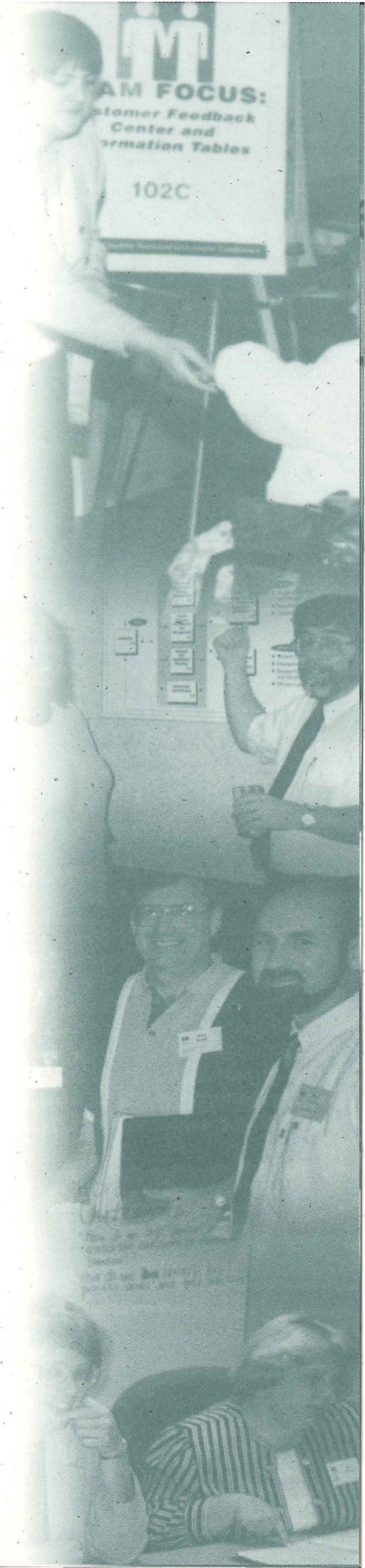
Taste of Quality sites	101
Training conference sites	40
Classroom Quality pilot sites	17
Performance contract sites	9
Specialized service sites	9
Customized service sites	95*

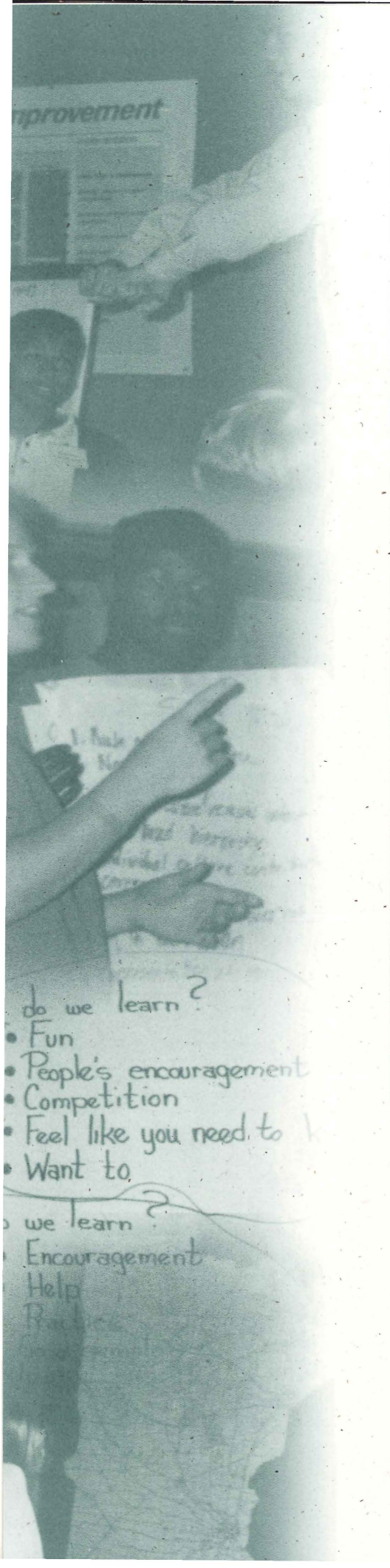
(*Some sites received more than one service.)

- MAEF services were expanded this past year to accommodate the needs of sites ready to more broadly and deeply deploy quality. As new sites enter the initiative and as continuing sites identify new needs, the range of MAEF services continues to grow. Additionally, new and lapsed sites now have multiple points of entry and re-entry. Classrooms, school site teams, school and district leaders can now utilize training and technical assistance customized around their needs and levels of experience.

BEST PRACTICE

The Minneapolis Public Schools has designed and begun to implement a seamless, closed-loop process to increase student learning and to improve educator practice. The process includes a School Improvement Plan, feedback on the plan and how to improve the plan, a Quality Improvement Process using a narrative self-assessment with external feedback and a site visit, a Quality Performance Award based on results found in the annual School Information Report, and a professional development process for teachers aligned with the School Improvement Plan. (MAEF provided technical assistance and customized training to Minneapolis Public Schools.)





ENGAGING STUDENTS AS ACTIVE PARTNERS IN INCREASING THEIR OWN LEARNING AND IN IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF LEARNING IN THEIR SCHOOLS

VISION: MAEF will create capacity in schools to continuously improve learning through ongoing partnerships with students and teachers.

CURRENT PERFORMANCE:

- MAEF implemented the new Classroom Quality Program as a pilot during FY1997. Training was developed, used and refined. The mini-assessment was developed and used within each classroom. Fourteen schools enrolled classrooms in the new Classroom Quality pilot program.
- Each participating classroom improved student achievement.
- Each classroom completed a narrative self-assessment, which examined instruction, student satisfaction, information usage and learning results.
- Each classroom received a feedback report citing strengths and opportunities for improvement from a team of MAEF examiners.
- Twenty-five classrooms and schools implemented ***What Works? Ask the Students!***-- then designed and implemented improvements with the students based on feedback from the students.
- Classroom Quality Program and ***What Works? Ask the Students!*** were improved and are ready for a full roll-out in FY1998.

BEST PRACTICE

"Quality First Time is our motto here. I'm beginning to notice the first grade students printing this on their work that they are doing daily. They are really living (quality)."

"The post-testing has been administered, and the results compiled. The data indicates a 46% increase in student achievement on the goal. This surpasses my expectations going into the project. I am very pleased."

"I want to thank MAEF for your efforts in helping kids better their education. My son took part this year in your program at Olson Elementary School. His wonderful teacher implemented a before-school reading program to give kids an extra boost in their reading skills. I can't tell you how much this helped my son's reading. Thank you for the assistance you provided."

ACCELERATING VALUE-ADDED, RESULTS-ORIENTATED PARTNERSHIPS WHICH ADVANCE THE WORK OF MAEF AND ITS MISSION

VISION: Partnerships and alliances with the private sector will advance MAEF and its mission and accelerate its strategic impact.

CURRENT PERFORMANCE:

In 1997, the Gathering of Champions again leveraged the resources of MAEF and its strategic partners to recognize students who achieve academically and to call public attention to academic excellence as a concept. The annual event held at the Minnesota State Fair honored 17,000 students and their families in a day filled with fun and celebration.

- More than 100 adult VIP's assembled from early morning to evening to personally recognize and congratulate MAEF's student academic all-stars.
- A lively Grandstand Concert assembled 24,000 of the students and their families, the largest assembly of brain-power known.
- The Star Tribune donated a full-page ad on the day of the event to call public attention to the achievements of these students and the importance of academic excellence.
- 100% students said they felt recognized and want to continue to achieve as a results of the event.

Key sponsors included Ashland Inc., U S WEST, Jostens Inc., Hubbard Broadcasting, Cowles Media, ReliaStar, IBM Corporation, Minnesota Business Partnership, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, Office of Governor Arne H. Carlson, the Minnesota State Fair and others.

BEST PRACTICE

Through the Gathering of Champions, corporate, community and media organizations leveraged their resources to deliver a mega-event and a mega-message:

***Academic achievement counts.
It is an investment in our future.***

...

"I can't think of a better way to reach so many people with such an important message."



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS,

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FOR HELPING TO UNDERWRITE MAEF.

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Camp Snoopy
Carlton College
Chanhasen Dinner Theater
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Chippewa Springs
College of St. Scholastica
Crown College
Cub Foods
Cycling, Ski America
FuncoLand
Gopher Ice
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Orpheum
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Minnesota High Technology Council
Minnesota Power
Minnesota State Fair
National Alliance of Business
Quality Academy, Pinellas County,
Florida
St. Cloud State University
University of Minnesota
Will Pitts
William Randolph Hearst Foundation

IN TRIBUTE

Governors' Scholars (by Tanya
Hoagland)
Mary Ann Rotondi (by Thomas Bersell)

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John & Nedra Wicks
Mary Trowbridge



*We apologize if we have inadvertently left anyone out or made any errors in spelling. Please call us to correct the error
-- 612-297-1875. Thank you.*

MUCH OF THE WORK AT MAEF IS DONE BY OUR VOLUNTEERS. THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF SO MANY MINNESOTA CHILDREN!

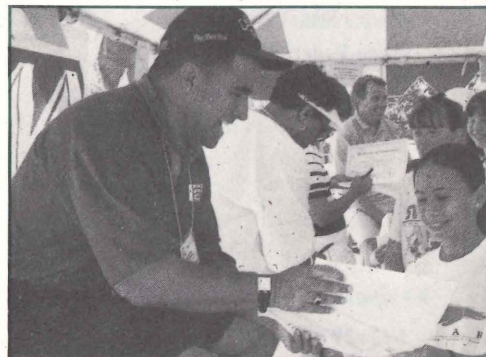
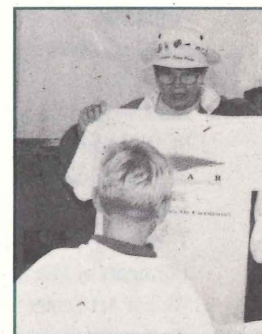
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FY 1997 FINANCE REPORT

JULY 1, 1996 - JUNE 30, 1997

(AS OF JUNE 30, 1997)

		FY 1997 BUDGET	FY 1997 ACTUAL
INCOME	Government	\$597,000	\$679,747
	Private Gifts (includes interest)	95,306	140,671
	Fees	61,400	86,971
	TOTAL	\$753,706	\$907,389
EXPENSES	General Administration	\$80,000	\$94,191
	General Program	394,000	421,377
	Partners for Quality -- State	71,000	84,470
	Partners for Quality -- National	0	1,959
	Assistance to Partnerships	22,800	13,116
	Publications, Events	35,700	29,560
	Partnerships	10,000	9,397
	Governor's Scholars	31,000	26,177
	Academic League	43,700	37,599
	Gathering of Champions	25,900	26,804
	Strategic Planning	4,000	3,244
	Research and Development	30,000	25,465
	Community Organization	5,606	5,500
	TOTAL	\$753,706	\$778,859¹

¹ Actual expenses reported represent only amounts processed as of 6/30/97. Final close-out amounts will be available after 9/30/97.

ACTIONS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Tabled indefinitely a decision to pursue a gift from the Kraft Foods Division of Philip Morris
- Adopted a new Strategic Plan; charged Board members to align behind the concepts of the plan.
- Approved concept and approach for implementing the new "Silver Boosters Club" campaign.
- Approved an advocacy stance which focuses on and presents a voice for children.
- Authorized Personnel Committee to reallocate funds, as possible, to increase salaries of the leadership team positions.
- Approved request from Friends for MAEF Board to increase the allowable administrative deduction to cover actual costs.
- Approved recommendation to Governor Carlson and Commissioner Wedl to accept gift from and to participate in the Milken Family Foundation program focusing on teachers and technology.
- Endorsed the mission statement of the newly-formed Gifted and Talented Roundtable and encouraged the coalition to focus its work on the "Standards of Distinction".
- Approved a government relations plan and advocacy stance including the Governor's Budget Narrative, additional funding for the Partners for Quality Accelerated Initiative, expansion of the Performance Contracts, the Governor's Technology Initiative and Learning Site Technology Grants.
- Accepted a Partnership Award from IBM.
- Authorized a Fund Development Work Group to determine long-term fund development and revenues strategies, priorities and options for staffing.
- Approved expenditures for staff member to attend Vice President Gore's Family Reunion VI, "Families and Learning" in Tennessee as part of the Minnesota delegation.
- Directed staff to maintain a high level of visibility for and to increase marketing of the positive aspects of the Academic League without new monies.

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MAEF MISSION STATEMENT

The Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation (MAEF), chartered in 1983 by the Minnesota Legislature and through private sector and community-based partnerships, is the primary advocate for promoting and recognizing the importance of academic excellence in Minnesota's elementary and secondary students, schools and communities.

MAEF has established three strategic priorities to promote student learning. These include:

- **Facilitating systemic change** to increase student learning and enhance educator practice
- **Creating values** in society which demand academic achievement by and for all learners and which increase students' and families' expectations and opportunities for students to learn to think, to achieve, and to go beyond what has ordinarily been a common standard of learning
- **Creating partnerships** with the private sector, government, the media, and local communities to focus public attention on academic achievement, to assist in designing partnerships which advance student learning and to foster innovation in stakeholder collaborations.

MAEF's goal is to be a voice for the customer: students, schools, community, businesses and the State of Minnesota. MAEF is highly customer-focused and results-oriented.

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