A Message from our President

To everything there is a season...and when I think about seasons, my mind immediately thinks about the 4 standards - summer, winter, fall and spring. Well, truth be told, it really goes to the other “standards”, football, basketball, baseball, etc...and for many of you, it probably does the same.

Nevertheless, if we think about seasons in terms of leadership and our careers in education, we would most likely begin by thinking about our time in the classroom. And no doubt, we would have some fond memories of those children we have had the opportunity to serve.

However, most of us, if we are honest with each other would probably admit we could have done better! The point here?

Seasons do change and so does our career path. We are either aspiring or new administrators, well into our careers or close to retirement. But, regardless of our seasonal place in time or where we find ourselves within the seasons themselves personally and professionally, we have a responsibility to plant the seeds of learning, and then nurture, cultivate, and support the growth of the children we are privileged to serve.

For us, it’s back to school and a new season bursting with fresh opportunities. Let’s work together throughout the year with bold confidence and ensure that when the children we serve reflect on their seasons the beautiful memories and learning created for them are but for a lifetime. Have a great 2017-2018 School Year! Dr. Ray Morgigno

2017 Superintendent of the Year

Dr. Ray Morgigno, Superintendent
Pearl Public School District
Pictured with 2016 Superintendent of the Year Mr. Larry Green

THANKS TO OUR AWESOME SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR SPONSOR ~ Classworks
MASA is busy preparing an exciting agenda for your fall Leadership Conference.

_The Seasons of Leadership ~ To Everything There is a Season_ will be held at the Jackson, Mississippi Hilton October 29-31, 2017.

Register early & save! MASA members enjoy conference discounts!

Team Registrations
Register 3 from your district & get the 4th attendee FREE!

Pre-Conference Sunday, October 29, 2017

**Special Sessions Throughout the Conference**

**Dr. Andy Parker, Former MS Administrator of the Year**

**Dr. Bob Sornson, Early Childhood Expert – Early Learning Foundation**

**Dr. Doug Reeves, Educational Leadership Expert – Creative Leadership Solutions**

**Michelle Accardi, J.D. - National Board for Professional Teaching Standards**

**President Elect Learning Forward, Alan Ingram**

**Dr. Jessica Broome Mississippi’s Administrator of the Year**

**THANKS TO ALL OF OUR AFFILIATE MEMBERS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT!**

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF FEDERAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DIRECTORS

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICERS

LEARNING FORWARD

MS SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION

COUNCIL FOR ADMINISTRATORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

MISSISSIPPI COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL OFFICE PROFESSIONALS

MISSISSIPPI EDUCATIONAL COMPUTING ASSOCIATION

MISSISSIPPI HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL PLANT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

MASA LOVES PUBLIC EDUCATION BOARD MEMBER RICK SMITH

MASA LOVES PUBLIC EDUCATION BOARD MEMBER BEVERLY LUCKETT
Aspiring and Early Career Superintendent Academy
Connecting the Dots

If you're interested in this opportunity, we encourage you to apply online.

The course includes Mississippi Specific Content including, but not limited to the State Accountability Model, Process Standards and the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics, plus the five modules below:

- Framing the Superintendent Role/Knowing Yourself
- Superintendent/Board Relationships
- Family and Community Relationships
- Operations
- Curriculum, Accountability, Technology, Personalized Learning

Program Fee: $4000 per Participant

EARLY BIRD PRICING: $3,500 per Participant

Deadline: Early Bird applications accepted through Friday, September 1, 2017. Full price applications are accepted until the cohort is full.

Dr. Bob Sornson
EARLY LEARNING & PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Your district can be among our nation's leaders in using competency based learning systems during the crucial preschool and early elementary learning years. Using the Essential Skill Inventories as a competency framework during the PK to Grade 3 years allows you to know your students and give them the exact instruction they need at the correct instructional level. The Early Learning Foundation has been working with school districts to provide the essential skill framework and training since 2005.

Details on how MASA member districts can take advantage of this partnership are coming soon!

Dr. Douglas Reeves is the founder of Creative Leadership Solutions. The author of more than 30 books and 80 articles on leadership and organizational effectiveness, Doug has twice been named to the Harvard University Distinguished Authors Series.

He received the Contribution to the Field Award from the National Staff Development Council (now Learning Forward) and was named the Brock International Laureate for his contributions to education. Dr. Reeves has worked in every state in the U.S. and more than 20 other countries.

How can your district work with Dr. Reeves at a significantly reduced rate?

CREATIVE LEADERSHIP SOLUTIONS

DETAILS COMING SOON!
**Headlines from AASA, The School Superintendent’s Association**

**AASA Launches the Love Public Education Campaign:** At our legislative advocacy conference last month, AASA launched the Love Public Education campaign. The campaign is designed to facilitate deliberate conversations and strong, meaningful actions on the efforts to bolster our schools to best support the students they serve. We will work to reframe the current national dialogue on public education to highlight the critical role public schools play as the bedrock of our civic society and their work to prepare students to be successful, contributing members of their local, national, and global communities. Find more information and our newly adopted resolution at lovepubliceducation.org. You can participate in the campaign in a variety of manners, outlined on the website, and can start by using and following the #LovePublicEducation campaign on social media.

**AASA Medicaid in Schools Work Temporarily Paused:** As Senate efforts to repeal and replace Obamacare were temporarily and meaningful in late July, AASA is proud of the work of school leaders to educate Capitol Hill and the American public about the importance of Medicaid in schools. Members in the House and Senate continue to work to advance legislation that will stabilize insurance markets and exchanges as well as potentially reduce Medicaid spending. We are monitoring the situation closely. This month’s The Advocate provides a really good summary/overview of how the health policy conversations continue to unfold and what it could mean for schools. Related to this, our team will follow related policy conversations for CHIP (the Child Health Insurance Program).

**House Committee Passes FY18 LHHS Appropriations:** The House appropriations committee passed their bill to fund education for FY 2018 *(the dollars in your school for the 2018-19 school year)*. Provides $66 billion for USED, down $2.4 billion from the current budget.

- The House bill does **NOT** fund the Trump request for $1 billion for a portability/open enrollment provision in Title I, Part E, **nor does it provide funding for a proposed $250 million voucher program.**
- IDEA Part B receives a **$200 million increase**
- Title I is level funded
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers is cut by **$200 m**
- Charter Grants increase **$28 m**
- ESSA Title IV is funded at **$500 m**

**FY18 Appropriations:** Though the House appropriations committee passed the LHHS bill (our slice of the pie) the rest of the appropriations process remains very up in the air. It is very unlikely that Congress will have approved final versions of all 12 government funding bills before the new fiscal year starts on October 1, setting up the need for a short-term funding bill – a continuing resolution – to prevent the government from shutting down. While the House passed a security omnibus (four of the 12 bills it would need to pass, and it didn’t include LHHS), the path for the final 8 is to be determined. Overall, the 12 House bills break the FY 2018 discretionary cap on defense spending by $72 billion while providing $5 billion less than the level of the nondefense discretionary (NDD) cap. The Labor/HHS/Education bill is cut the most. On the other side of the hill, the Senate has appropriations committee has passed 6 of their 12 bills, but none have moved to the full chamber floor. The overall Senate allocation is level funded, and while the LHHS slice has a $3 billion increase, it will be absorbed by mandatory program growth. Given that the overall house and senate budget numbers do not match, the path to a final appropriations bill remains bumpy.

**FCC Update:** IN July, the Senate voted to fill the two remaining vacancies at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the agency that administers/oversees the ERate program. Former Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel returns to her seat (Democrat) and the final Republican seat will be filled by Ben Carr. A fully staffed FCC is always a good thing, even if we are wary of some of the potential policy changes that may come under FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. In terms of things you can do to bolster ERate support, make sure your entire Congressional delegation knows what ERate is, how it benefits your district, and why the program matters.
The guiding principles for federal education policy all stem from equity and the important role the federal government stands to play in leveling the education playing field for all students:

- Privatization of public education funding undermines our nation’s public school system, denies equitable educational opportunity and represents failed federal policy.
- Federal policy equity includes both policy and resources, both of which should remain available to all students, schools and states.
- The role of the federal government in education is to help ensure access to equitable educational opportunities and to supplement and support, rather than dictate, local efforts in education.
- It is unrealistic to expect all students to achieve college and career readiness without providing districts the necessary funding to do this challenging work.
- Federal funding should support the total child, from physical and mental health to the development of fundamental lifelong learning skills.

Ensure an Appropriate Federal/State/Local Balance

- The role of the federal government is to support and strengthen—not dictate and prescribe—to—the nation’s schools and state and local policies.
- School systems should not be required to spend state and local funds for federal mandates.
- Ensure all entities receiving public dollars are subject to the same transparency, reporting, flexibility & accountability requirements.

Support Students, Families and Special Populations

- Support equitable distribution of federal dollars with greater investments in formula driven programs.
- Permanently resolve sequestration through a combination of spending cuts and revenue increases.
- Oppose any proposals that would remove the ability to deduct local or state taxes from federal taxes.
- **Fully Fund IDEA:** By honoring its commitment to support the education of students with disabilities, Congress will enable districts to shift dollars towards new initiatives that address their local needs.
- **Ensure IEP teams shape assessment determinations for students with disabilities.**
- Address special education disproportionality more effectively and flexibly.
- Ensure school leaders can keep students and school personnel safe.
- Support expansion of access to affordable early college education, including expanded control over the requirements and awarding of educator credentials.
- Support federal policy that flexibly supports the unique needs of rural communities, including REAP, Impact Aid, and Forest Counties, among others.
- **Support expansion of access to early education to all children without cutting into K-12 funding.**
- Make available federal funding that supports high-quality early education opportunity (including head start, Pre-K, early education, professional development for personnel, and more), with ample flexibility for local authority in implementation.
- **Support use of a metric that reflects the total ELL subgroup.**
- Support continuation of DACA protections to eligible/appropriate students.
- Support out-of-school/after school learning opportunities (including 21st Century-like programs) with focus on ensuring district flexibility for program design and implementation.
Support Personnel
- Exempt substitute teachers and other variable hour employees from coverage under the Affordable Care Act.
- Ensure licensing and certification requirements for school nutrition workers are a state responsibility.
- **Ensure all licensing and certification requirements for high school teachers are flexible enough to support work in dual enrollment programs**
- Provide school districts immediate access to all relevant student data, including academic, social, emotional, criminal and behavioral.
- **Reduce the paperwork requirements for Perkins and E-Rate.**
- **Streamline IDEA procedures** by permitting parents and school personnel to opt-out of processes and paperwork related to IEPs to allow more time for teaching and learning.

Strengthen District Options
- Ensure new data collection requirements, burdensome regulations and new guidance and policies issued by the U.S. Department of Education must be examined in the context of what is statutorily required of districts and with consideration of current federal, state and local education funding levels.
- In expanding and delivering early education, ensure public schools are a core partner in all stages of planning, implementation and evaluation, including improving continuity to elementary level.
- **Reform the special education due process system to provide more effective, less costly and less litigious means of resolving disputes.**
- Ensure districts have greater flexibility to reduce local maintenance of effort levels for IDEA if the provision and quality of services for students with disabilities is unaffected.
- Ensure the IDEA burden of proof is on the moving party and not automatically the district.
- Preserve the current financing structure of Medicaid and ensure eligible mental health services in schools are reimbursable under Medicaid.
- Establish reasonable parameters around requests for Independent Education Evaluation.
- **Provide reimbursement to schools when federal food service requirements result in loss of revenue.**
- Refrain from increasing the administrative burden related to nutrition eligibility verification.

Support Students through Appropriate Curriculum and Assessments
- Provide developmentally appropriate curriculum, instruction and assessments to all students.
- Approach state-led accountability with an emphasis on capacity-building not punishment.
- Use tests for the purposes for which they were designed: one test cannot serve multiple measures (i.e., student achievement, accountability, and/or teacher evaluation).

Enhance District Technology Infrastructure & Student Data Privacy
- Support flexibility of federal resources to ensure equitable access to affordable broadband, to better support student connectivity both in and out of school.
- Permanently exempt E-Rate from the Anti-Deficiency Act.
- **Provide coherent and easy-to-understand guidance for parents and educators regarding FERPA, PPRA, and COPPA and their protections of the privacy and security of student data.**
- Update definitions to address the realities of the digital age, making it possible to protect data while ensuring appropriate use of student data for legitimate educational needs and reforms.
Top Ten Reasons to Join

The Mississippi Association of School Administrators

- **Professional Learning**...timely and relevant workshops, conferences, and our *Annual MASA Education Leadership Conference* and *Women’s Forum*, all at affordable member rates and special discounts
- **Advocacy & Powerful Network**...Lobbyist represent your interests at the Mississippi legislature and in Congress where your MASA/AASA Governing Board members providing strategic leadership to advance public education
- **Roger McDaniel Scholarship Award, Friend of Education & Golden Lamp annual recognition.** There’s never been a more critical time to build your professional contacts.
- **Legal Assistance** (individual members only)
- **Annual Recognition Mississippi’s Superintendent of the Year eligible to compete at the national level**
- **Leadership Opportunities**...Expand your influence through leadership opportunities at association, state, and national levels. Seek a state office/Vice President is nominated & elected annually
- **Communications**...Timely, practical communications that focus on issues specific to your duties and responsibilities will keep you in the know. Back to School Newsletter, AASA New Superintendent Journal, Follow us on Twitter @MASA4MS & Like us on Facebook
- **Member Reward Programs**...Lifelock Membership discounts, **Trustmark Credit Card/Low Interest**
- **Website (msasa.org)**...Instant access to information about MASA conference with immediate electronic registration capability, and links to education information and materials — including the latest research and best practices.
- **National Representation**...Join your national professional association through MASA. MASA works in full partnership with these national organizations to advance education’s agenda: American Association of School Administrators (**AASA**), National Association of Elementary School Principals (**NAESP**), National Association of Secondary School Principals (**NASSP**), Learning Forward and the Consortium of School Networking (**CoSN**).

*MASA’s Board of Directors includes representatives from many of these organizations.*

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**Congratulations to these Mississippi leaders who have been accepted into AASA’s National Certification Programs and Academies!**

Delesicia M.Martin, Brian Harvey, Tony Cook, Amy J. Carter, Xandra Brooks -Keys, Philip W. V. Hickman, R Buxton, Pamela Lenoir, Leeson Taylor, II., Christopher Williams, Cederick Ellis

_Established in 1932 MASA is the oldest educational organization in the state of Mississippi supporting School Superintendents and Administrators._
Exciting NEWS from our Partners!

Renaissance

Best-in-class assessment and instructional providers team up to support seamless personalized learning

Renaissance®, the leader in pre-K-12 learning analytics, announces an expanded partnership with Classworks® as part of the newly formed Renaissance Growth Alliance™.

The collaboration allows for a seamless connection between Renaissance and Classworks, ensuring a steady flow of actionable data, simplifying educators’ access to vital information necessary for student growth.

“Teachers are at the heart of everything we do. We focus on providing them the time and the tools to do what they do best—teach,” says Paula O’Gorman, senior vice president of strategic partnerships at Renaissance.

“We believe that by elevating our relationship through the Renaissance Growth Alliance we will provide teachers with granular student data and precise instruction materials to improve learning outcomes.”

For additional information on the Renaissance Growth Alliance, visit http://www.renaissance.com/growth-alliance/.

Mississippi NISL

Improving School Leadership: What Works in the ongoing quest to improve schools—and student outcomes—states and districts have historically focused on efforts to improve the quality of teaching. The new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law in December 2015, may be changing the script by allowing states and districts new ways to use federal funds for activities targeting school leaders. We recently conducted a review of research that relates school leadership improvement activities to student and teacher outcomes. In looking at the research, we saw considerable variety in the availability of strong evidence, the consistency of findings and whether the studies looked at a general approach versus specific “branded” activities or programs.

- Professional development. The National Institute for School Leadership Executive Development Program, which provides professional development, showed positive effects on student achievement.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) expands opportunities to use federal funds to improve the quality of school leaders. An important report just released by RAND offers critical insight into how ESSA supports school leadership, including:

- The evidence that school leadership positively impacts school improvement
- Allowable school leadership improvement activities under ESSA
- Evidence required by programs to be eligible for ESSA funding
- Current programs that meet evidence requirements
Under this last category—programs with requisite evidence of effectiveness—NISL was identified as the sole “Professional Learning Activity for Principals” found to increase student achievement and to meet the ESSA Tier II level of evidence (see page 13). According to the guidance in the report, this makes NISL the only source of Professional Learning Activity for Principals eligible for Title I funding that has been shown to increase student achievement.

NISL is the only activity identified in any category that used a train-the-trainer model to achieve the necessary evidence of effectiveness. This model is notable as it allows for sustainable improvements in school leadership and student achievement at scale and at low cost. Pasted below is a synopsis of the report from RAND and you can view or download the full report here.

NISL’s Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Institute strengthen school leaders’ capacity to engage and leverage these stakeholders to support student success. The 2-day Institute provides school leaders with a strong foundational understanding of the field, research-based strategies for success and a tailored plan for implementing changes when they return to their schools.

For information, contact Dr. Susan Rucker

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**Classworks Update**

Classworks® offers K-8, reading, English language arts, and math individualized learning paths driven by students’ assessment results for to close gaps and accelerate learning. The Mississippi College and Career Ready Standards-based, online intervention program helps teachers pinpoint learning gaps, deliver instructional practice at the right level and gain real-time insight into student progress.

This fall, Classworks® released several upgrades to its best-in-class online intervention solution. The new features more efficiently combine assessment data with state standards-based instruction to easily pinpoint and close learning gaps. Classworks strives to deliver the most effective individualized learning experience with all of its highly regarded assessment partners. This week, Classworks optimized the way Individualized Learning Paths are generated using NWEA™ MAP® assessment data. Lessons are automatically created and assigned to students based on the skills they are ready to learn in the NWEA Learning Continuum.

Renaissance® recently announced Classworks as the first Renaissance Growth Alliance™ partner. The collaboration means that Renaissance Star 360® assessment data and Classworks instruction seamlessly connect. This fall, students’ Star results will automatically generate Classworks instruction based on what they are ready to learn in the Renaissance Learning Progression. Read Renaissance’s full press release.

For teachers, Classworks’ close integration with assessment partners like NWEA and Renaissance means they no longer have to generate individualized assignments themselves, allowing additional time for monitoring and conferencing.

“Our district uses Renaissance Star 360® assessments to evaluate skill levels, monitor student progress, and guide and adjust our instructional plans,” explains Carol Artis, executive director of Curriculum & Instruction and Federal Programs, Wayne County Schools. “We currently use Classworks in our elementary schools and several middle schools as Tier I and Tier 2 MTSS instruction, providing individualized instruction for each student based on Star assessment results.

The Renaissance Growth Alliance partnership means students’ Star assessment results will automatically place and drive Classworks instruction based on what our students know and what they’re ready to learn. We look forward to seeing continued improvement in learning outcomes and student growth with these powerful assessment and instructional solutions working closely together.”
Exciting NEWS from our Partners!

TE21
A Pathway to Excellence
What drives teacher instruction—rigorous assessments with valid and highly predictable data? TE21’s proven assessment tools equip teachers with rigorous standard-based questions, presenting a clear pathway for student excellence and achievement. CASE Benchmark Assessments provide grade-level assessments aligned to state standards and mirror best practices for assessing standards. Timely, detailed reports are 95% predictive of student performance on state tests and provide rich data to identify the need for redirecting instruction. CASE Item Bank helps teachers create formative assessments to use in real-time, data-driven instruction with an item bank of over 70,000 rigorous, standard-based items, approximately 35,000 Mississippi state standard items, subjects including ELA, Math, Science and US History.

TURN DATA ANALYSIS INTO ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLSTATUS

What do we do?
Data-Enhanced Decision Making
- Integrate your SIS, third-party data, benchmark, and state assessments - automatically updated - to help educators at every level See the Whole Student™

Manage Parent Relationships
- Send integrated calls, texts, and emails to parents from the web or your phone, then manage those relationships on one dashboard with administrative insight included.

Bridge the Gap for Better Engagement
- By centering your one-to-one communication around student data, your parental engagement becomes more effective and meaningful to improve student outcomes.

Why are our customers so happy?
“1. All student data in one location. 2. Customer Service ROCKS! The Data Ninjas build reports/tags quickly and without making the user feel inferior.”
- Marilyn Crotwell, Principal, Scott County

“SchoolStatus is easy to use; its staff is second to none in responsiveness and knowledge; and it provides a one-stop place for those of us who frequently need multiple data sets from multiple schools.”
- Angie Quinn, Director of Instruction, Pontotoc City Schools

“It is an excellent way to connect with students’ families, maintain records of contact for future use, and aids documentation.”
- Calvin Dixon, Biloxi Public Schools
Curriculum Associates’ *Ready Mathematics* for Grades K–5 receives highest rating from EdReports!

Curriculum Associates’ *Ready Mathematics* for grades K–5 received a near-perfect rating by EdReports.org, an independent nonprofit that delivers evidence-based reviews of instructional materials. After an extensive review by expert educators, *Ready Mathematics* for grades K–5 was one of only three programs in its category to meet all evaluation criteria and was the overall highest scoring program of the three.

EdReports.org conducts extensive, third-party reviews to increase the capacity of teachers, administrators, and leaders to seek, identify, and demand the highest-quality instructional materials to improve and deepen student learning. The organization’s review process includes a 3-gateway system in which a “green” rating signifies that the program meets expectations for that given set of criteria.

*Ready Mathematics* for grades K–5 met all criteria at every grade level with a “green” rating and near-perfect high scores across EdReports.org’ three gateways:

1. **Gateway 1**: Focus and Coherence looks at how the program addresses the standards and makes connections to previous learning and future learning.
2. **Gateway 2**: Rigor and Mathematical Practices looks at the balance of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and application, as well as the integration of the Practice Standards.
3. **Gateway 3**: Usability looks at the program’s design of student materials, resources available to support instruction, and support for teachers.

To learn more about *Ready Mathematics* and get free sample lessons, visit [www.ReadyMississippi.com](http://www.ReadyMississippi.com)

To learn more about the EdReports results and evaluation, visit [www.edreports.org](http://www.edreports.org).

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**Move to Learn**

*Invite MOVE TO LEARN to present their LIVE Event at your school!*

**4 new pre-k videos coming for 2017-18!**

More information about The Bower Foundation’s Move to Learn programs may be found at [www.movetolearnms.org](http://www.movetolearnms.org)
Thoughts from the Executive Director

Sometimes now back to school makes me sad – maybe nostalgic is a better word...not because another season of life has come and gone for me and a new generation of kindergartners are beginning their educational journey, but because in my current season and leadership role, I don’t get to enjoy all of the excitement a new school year brings.

I miss the preparation and excitement of new programs, new schedules, new books, new staff, and new opportunities. I miss the smell of the fresh paint in the hallways and the shiny floors in the gym. I miss the buses lining up on the first day of school and the wide-eyed innocence of the children excited about the start of another school year. I miss the chances to touch hearts and minds through content and teachable moments and I even miss the challenges education can bring at that level of leadership and working to solve those challenges together.

So, I am grateful for the little things at this time of year that bring me back to why we do what we do. I am grateful when I go into Wal-Mart and see the Back to School Display, when I see the children smiling and digging through supplies in a basket to find just the right pencils, lunch box or backpack. I am grateful when I hear from my grand-daughter Acelyn that her new teacher wants her to bring a bag filled with (4) special things that are “all about her” and I am as filled with excitement as Sybil Grace, the 2nd grader at church is when she shares her enthusiasm about the awesome reading nooks her teacher has built “for her”.

It’s personal for them; it’s personal for me. We all have warm memories from our school days whether it’s a special teacher, coach or administrator. Whether it’s about getting to be the “class helper” that day or the team captain on Friday night. But do we make a concentrated effort to ensure that ALL of the children wherever they are in their season of school have those wonderful experiences to recall?

If we don’t then, shame on us. It’s our job to make sure that every single child who walks through our doors, into our classrooms, into our lunchrooms, on to our playgrounds or on to our fields enjoy the same kind of care and love that we would give to our own children or grandchildren, to our neighbor’s child, the teenager in our Sunday School class, the doctor’s baby, the disabled child or the child of the homeless mother. They are all ours and they all deserve the very best we can give them.

As our seasons come and go, and as our children’s seasons do the same, let us not forget our duty and responsibility to the whole child; let us not lose sight when the storm clouds roll in, the rain continues to fall, or the funding dries up; that whatever the season, a harvest will surely follow. Let us make sure that we can look back and say, the fruits of our labor are evident in the heart, mind and spirit of every child we touched.

As always, with admiration & respect for all you do,

Lisa

Galatians 6:9
And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

Lisa and her dog, Kissie...

Kindergarten a long time ago!