

# Mississippi Association of School Superintendents

## MASS Strategic Planning Process

### INTRODUCTIONS

#### I. The MASS Strategic Plan

A. Purpose: to plan, develop and implement a strategic plan of action to enable the Association to achieve its Mission Statement.

B. Leadership Involvement in Strategic Planning:

*Dewey Herring, President (1993-94)*

*Les Johnson, President (1995-95)*

*Larry Jones, President (1995-1996)*

*Peggy Campbell, President (1996-1997)*

*Philip Terrell and Gordon Walker, Committee Co-Chairmen (1994-1996)*

*Sam Bounds, Committee Chairman (1996-1997)*

#### II. Vision:

MASS is a leader in education so that all children in Mississippi will have access to, and will participate in, quality public education.

#### III. Mission:

The mission of MASS is to provide resources, advocacy, leadership, policy information, training, support, renewal, hope, and public relations services to superintendents so that they can meet the MASS vision.

#### IV. Goals

**A. Public Relations**

**B. Member Services**

**C. Educational Policy Leadership**

**D. Collaboration with Other Organizations**

**E. Better-Trained Teachers and Principals**

**F. Growing the Organizational Structure**

# THE GOALS OF THE ASSOCIATION

## I. Public Relations

### A. Goal

*MASS should provide a pro-active, comprehensive program of public information to enhance the image of public education and its leaders*

### B. Objectives

1. Make the association's position on issues clearly understandable.
2. Correct misinformation and negative media with positive factual information.
3. Provide written compilations of public opinion acquired by polling the public.
4. Provide for systematic flow of educational success stories to the media and private business.
5. Expand the association newsletter and publishing to a quarterly schedule.
6. Publicly promote and commend public officials and citizens who support public education.
7. Show solidarity to the leaders and citizens of Mississippi by maintaining 100% membership in our association.
8. Develop a yearly legislative agenda and promote its success at the end of the legislative session.

### C. Strategies

1. *Publicity/Media Relations*  
The message once determined must be communicated consistently throughout the State. Issues that relate to **MASS** should be commented on by the Executive Director, the sitting President, or legal counsel for the Association. Ideas for developing a positive media relationship could include: (1) Sending letters suggesting story ideas to educators and news directors (2) Sending news releases announcing major new developments to target media (3) Calling media to follow up on your submissions (4) Responding promptly to media requests for information or interviews (5) Conducting media coaching sessions for designated spokespersons (6) Establishing relationships with key reporters and editors (7) Becoming a news source on education issues.
2. *Networking*  
Reestablish area Superintendent organizations. Subdivide the State into geographical areas and assign school districts and their superintendents to regional organizations. Network with Superintendent organizations from other states.

3. *Public Service Announcements*  
Budget an amount each year for public service announcement with copies of tape provided to each superintendent for broadcasting in regional areas.
4. *Contests*  
Get a public sponsor and reestablish the academic challenge bowl for high school students. Sponsor a statewide spelling bee.
5. *Special Events*  
Approach MHSAA about a partnership which could lead to funding. Sponsor a tournament with proceeds going to our scholarship program for graduating seniors. Sponsor political debates during election years.
6. *Letters to the Editor*  
The Executive Director's Office should be able to provide each superintendent with a shell document for writing to the editor of each newspaper that communicates our thought on selected issues.
7. *Newsletter*  
Distribute a quarterly (or monthly, resources permitting) newsletter with pertinent information on curriculum trends as well as our legislative agenda. Spotlight superintendents and friends of education.
8. *Speakers Bureau*  
A commitment from the executive director and superintendents to be willing to speak on the issues with little or no remuneration.
9. *Surveys/Opinion Polls*  
Conduct yearly survey opinionaires in our schools on teacher attitudes and curriculum trends and publish results in the state press.
10. *Target Audiences*  
Identify all target audiences, and develop a strategy to reach each one with our message(s). Audiences include: Older adults, congregational/religious leaders, civic leaders, government leaders (city, county, state, and national), charitable and not-for-profit organizational leaders, health professionals, business and foundation leaders, university faculty, and consultants in education.
11. *Target News Media*  
Since publicity will likely be our highest priority, and because the news media will enable us to reach the most people, it's important to have an up-to-date target media list. Print media (daily or weekly newspapers, neighborhood shopper papers, magazines), and Broadcast media (TV, radio, cable, news, talk shows, features).
12. *Develop Key Messages*  
What messages do we want our target audiences to hear? Identify one or two key messages that we will incorporate in our public relations activities (e.g. news releases, interviews, brochures, newsletters, etc.). Select one or two major themes per year and stick to them.

13. *Staffing*  
Who will implement the plan? Are the organization's goals realistic in light of our plans to hire only an Executive Director? Can volunteers be recruited to handle specific PR tasks? Realistically, the organization needs to plan on a position for public relations within our first three years of startup.
14. *Timeline*  
The organization does not want to find itself buried under a mountain of PR activities one month, and nothing to do the next. MASS must develop a realistic month-by-month PR timeline charting all the activities contained in the plan.
15. *Budget*  
Our plan will be as good as we pay for. Good public relations plans are not developed and implemented cheaply.
16. *Measurement*  
Examine news stories. Did we get our message across? Was MASS mentioned and accurately described? How did our legislative agenda fair? Are media and public inquiries increasing? Conduct an informal poll to determine if more people are aware of MASS now than before. MASS should conduct a comprehensive self-evaluation of its activities at the end of each year. Public Relations should be a major part of the evaluation process.

## II. Member Services

### A. Goal

*MASS should provide comprehensive services to MASS membership.*

### B. Strategies

1. Provide training for new superintendents.
2. Provide leadership training for all superintendents.
3. Share information on best practices. "
4. Provide training in management
5. Provide training in negotiation skills.
6. Assist superintendents in improving relations with school boards.
7. Provide training in financial management and budgeting.
8. Provide information on legal issues, legislative issues, and State Department of Education policies.
9. Develop better channels for networking.
10. Develop information clearinghouse. "
11. Provide benefits to members
12. Develop a peer review/evaluation process.
13. Develop a mentor program.

### **III. Education Policy Leadership**

#### **A. Goal**

*MASS should provide leadership to formulate, develop, and implement sound educational policy and legislation for Mississippi.*

#### **B. Strategies**

1. Encourage and support superintendent involvement in MASS efforts and in collaborative efforts with their local boards.
2. Work in collaboration with other groups.
3. Make MASS positions important to state leaders.
4. Conduct research on education policies.
5. Be pro-active and ready to state our positions.
6. Lobby visibly and aggressively.
7. Actively support pro-education legislative candidates and other officials.
8. Measure the success of our legislative agenda.
9. Conduct well-focused public relations campaigns.
10. Encourage every superintendent to be energized. ”
11. Speak as one voice on priority issues.
12. Call for better-trained teachers, principals, and administrators.

### **IV. Collaboration with Other Organizations**

#### **A. Goal**

*MASS should collaborate with other educational organizations (especially MSBA) to assure clear definitions of each group’s role and responsibilities and a clear plan for coordinated efforts.*

#### **B. Strategies**

The membership is in agreement that our organization needs to collaborate with all other organizations that have an interest in public education. This in no way needs to be limited just to educational organizations. We must look beyond what we’ve done in the past and find ways to communicate open-mindedly with all those who have an interest in the education of the children of this state. The following is a list of some organizations with which superintendents feel a need to collaborate:

1. MSBA
2. State Board of Education
3. MAE
4. AFT
5. MPE
6. MASA
7. AASA
8. NSBA

9. Public Education Forum
10. IHL & Community Colleges
11. PTA
12. Parents for Public Education
13. State Department of Education
14. Council of Public Schools
15. Business and Industry
16. Education Consortia (PREPS, etc.)

## **V. Better-Trained Teachers and Principals**

### **A. Goals**

1. *MASS should become a clearing house for professional development programs and consortia.*
2. *Establish a Superintendents 'Academy*

### **B. Strategies**

1. Organize regional superintendents organizations.
2. Promote membership in professional development consortia and align these consortia with regional superintendents organizations.
3. Superintendents meet and set professional development agendas for the consortia.
4. Hold information sharing sessions in the fall with legislators who represent the school district in the regional organizations and consortia.
5. Advertise professional development opportunities statewide in the **MASS** Newsletter or on the **MASS** Web Page.
6. Train and advise new superintendents in all aspects of the job.
7. Offer specific training on demand from superintendents who express a need.
8. Establish a superintendents internship and mentorship program.
9. Develop evaluation instrument(s) to evaluate school boards and superintendents and provide advice on superintendents contracts and benefit packages.

## **VI. Growing the Organizational Structure**

### **A. Goal**

*MASS should adopt an organizational structure which achieves goals 1-5. The organization should then continually renew itself, growing its structure as necessary.*

## **B. Strategies**

1. Increase budget to annual sum of \$250,000 - \$300,000 over a three year period.
2. Establish a timetable for employment of executive director, secretary and staff.
3. Establish a MASS office.
4. Sponsor professionally designed ad campaigns.
5. Sponsor an enhanced lobbying effort.
6. Enhance the newsletter, hire a PR director.
7. Implement new dues structure
8. Investigate the availability of grants for MASS.

## **C. Action**

1. Implement Dues Structure approved by membership at 1996 Winter Conference
2. Establish Board process for search and selection and providing membership input.
3. Establish timetable for selection and employment of new director.
  - a. Board approves proposed draft of job description for new executive director.
  - b. Seek additional input from members on process, refinements in job description, etc. at 1997 Summer Conference.
  - c. President appoints Search Committee for Executive Director in August, 1997.
  - d. Publish notice of opening for position in September, 1997.
  - e. Open application process/interviews during the fall of 1997.
  - f. January, 1998 Approval of contract with new Executive Director by MASS Board of Directors.
  - g. July, 1998 new Executive Director begins employment.

## **VII. MASS Strategic Planning Committee**

The MASS Board of Directors and Strategic Planning Committee should continue to develop the *STRATEGIC PLAN* of the Association to ensure implementation as mandated by the membership.

## **VIII. Mississippi Association of School Superintendents**

Over a reasonable period of time, by use of the increased dues, by soliciting additional outside sponsoring seminars and other fee-generating programs, and by conducting other fund-raising efforts, MASS, with the assistance of a full time Executive Director will expand the office resources and hire additional staff persons.

## **IX. Conclusion**

With enhanced services to members and a greater role in shaping statewide education Policy, MASS would then position itself as a trusted, reliable, professional organization which the public and the education community could look to for leadership. By accomplishing this mission, we could then realize our vision.