



National Joint Powers Alliance®

2010-2011 Annual **EVALUATION REPORT**

2011-2012 **ANNUAL PLAN**

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WELCOME TO NJPA

The National Joint Powers Alliance® (NJPA) was created by Minnesota Statue 123A.21, Subd. 1 as one of 10 Minnesota Service Cooperatives. The primary purpose of the service cooperatives, under Subd. 2, is identified to be the performance of planning on a regional basis and to assist in meeting specific needs of clients in participating governmental units, which could be better provided by a service cooperative than by the members themselves.

M.S.123A.21, Subd. 7 details the 23 programs and service categories that service cooperatives are to operate in, and this subdivision states that the service cooperatives are not limited to those categories. Under Subd. 7 the NJPA Board of Directors, in conjunction with its many advisory committees, annually develops a plan identifying the programs and services it will implement the following year.

This Annual Plan and Report is presented and discussed at the Annual Meeting of the NJPA Representative Assembly, which will be held on April 14, 2010. This meeting, required under Subd. 10, provides an opportunity for each NJPA full-voting member government agency's two Representative Assembly Members to give direct input into the NJPA operation.

The care, management, and control of NJPA is vested in its Board of Directors as stated in M.S.123A.21, Subd. 4. The Board is composed of six locally elected school board members, two from each of three sub-regions, and two representatives from the fourth sub-region representing the NJPA Member cities, counties, and other government agencies (CCOGA). Membership in NJPA and participation in any of its programs and services are discretionary (Subd 3).

Under M.S.123A.21, Subd. 5 (d), the NJPA Board annually appoints the many advisory committees that guide individual programs and services. The CEO Advisory Committee (CEOAC), made up of the chief executive officers of Member school districts, cities, counties, and other government agencies, gives general guidance to NJPA and helps the Board select its four Ex-Officio, non-voting members from their ranks. The CEO Executive Committee works with the Executive Director and representatives take turns attending monthly Board meetings.

The administration of NJPA, as provided in M.S.123A.21, Subd. 5 (c), is made up of an Executive Director and other support personnel. The Board has established a \$10.00 one-time membership fee for Full-Voting Members, which are those governmental units located within our five-county Governor's Development Region Five. Participating Memberships, for all Governmental Units legally able to execute a joint powers agreement, and Partnership Memberships are free. Each program and service maintains its own cost center and must stand on its own. NJPA initiates and eliminates programs and services based on Membership support. Originally a small portion of each budget is set aside for research, development and evaluation of programs and services. These resources are made available for exploring and creating fresh new approaches to problem solving and meeting needs far into the future. We hope you enjoy reading this year's Annual Plan and Evaluation Report. We look to you, our Members, for support and guidance. Thank you for your continued help and participation.

Wayne Wolden
Chair, NJPA Board of Directors

NJPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The care, management, and control of NJPA is vested in its Board of Directors as stated in M.S.123A.21, Subd. 4. The Board is composed of six, locally elected school board members, two from each of three sub-regions, and two representatives from the fourth sub-region representing the NJPA Member cities, counties and other government agencies (CCOGA).

Sub-Region I Representing the following school districts: Bertha-Hewitt; Browerville; Eagle Valley; Freshwater Education District; Long Prairie-Grey Eagle; Menahga; Sebeka; Staples Motley; Verndale; Wadena-Deer Creek

Seat 1: Barb Schmitt, Treasurer
Seat 2: Scott Veronen
Ex-Officio: Mark Schmitz, Supt.

Sub-Region II Representing the following school districts: Cass Lake-Bena; Crosby-Ironton; Emily Charter School; Northland Community; Pequot Lakes; Pillager; Pillager Area Charter School; Pine River-Backus; Walker-Hackensack-Akeley

Seat 1: Mike Domin
Seat 2: Barbara Neprud
Ex-Officio: Catherine Bettino, Supt.

Sub-Region III Representing the following school districts: Brainerd; Little Falls; Mid-State Education District-Little Falls; Paul Bunyan Education Coop; Pierz; Royalton; Swanville; Upsala

Seat 1: Mike Wilson
Seat 2: Randy Pepin
Ex-Officio: Steve Razidlo, Supt.

Sub-Region IV Representing the following CCOGA organizations: Cities: Baxter; Brainerd; Browerville; Clarissa; Crosslake; Emily; Little Falls; Long Prairie; Menahga; Nisswa; Pequot Lakes; Pine River; Sebeka; Staples; Wabedo Township (Cass); Wadena. Counties: Cass, Crow Wing, Todd, Morrison. Government Agencies: Central Lakes College; MN State Comm. & Tech College; Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe; Region 5 RDC

Seat 1: Lane Waldahl
Seat 2: Wayne Wolden, Chair
Ex-Officio: Charleen West, Wadena County Recorder

NJPA STAFF

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NJPA PROGRAMS, SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Academic Programs Advisory Committee: Carol Jackson, Facilitator, Knowledge Bowl Coaches, and Spelling Bee Coordinators from the following participating districts: Aitkin, Bertha-Hewitt, Brainerd, Browerville, Cass Lake-Bena, Crosby-Ironton, Crosslake Community School, Eagle Valley, Henning, Laporte, Little Falls, Long Prairie-Grey Eagle, Menahga, Nevis, Northland Community, Pequot Lakes, Pierz, Pillager, Pine River-Backus, Royalton, Sebekka, Staples Motley, Swanville, Upsala, Verdale, Wadena-Deer Creek, Walker-Hackensack-Akeley.

Knowledge Bowl

This interdisciplinary academic competition for grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 promotes academic achievement and rewards academic excellence. During a Knowledge Bowl meet, teams of students work cooperatively to solve oral and written round questions. No team is eliminated during a meet and every team participates in every round. Questions are related to all areas of learning typical of secondary educational programs. Knowledge Bowl competitions test students' recall and problem solving abilities, critical thinking skills and teamwork skills. Students compete in Round Robin competitions in January, February, and March. Sub-Regions and Regions are held in March. The top teams from Regions advance to MSC State Knowledge Bowl competitions.

Knowledge Bowl-Junior High Level

Similar to Knowledge Bowl but for grades 7, 8 and 9. Regional competitions are held each spring.

Spelling Bee

The Spelling Bee is designed to help students improve their spelling and increase vocabulary development. In the spring of each year, NJPA sponsors a Regional Spelling Bee for Member schools. The winner of the Regional Bee advances to the National Spelling Bee to represent our region.



CONTRACT PURCHASING

The Contract Purchasing Program continues to grow rapidly. Our Membership has now passed the 35,000 mark and the gross spend on our procurement contracts is estimated to reach \$532 million for the 2010-2011 year.

The dramatic rise in Membership is punctuated by interest and participation by a number of State-level Purchasing Departments. These organizations are not only becoming Members, they are also requesting specific co-sponsored procurement solicitations and adopting NJPA contracts to meet their specific needs. We believe this participation from State-level organizations will result in another wave of acceptance at the city, county, and educational levels within those states.

Our Vendor Partner list has grown over the past year, and our efforts to energize our existing contracts has paid dividends as well. Recent contract additions include Car Toys, Genuine Parts Company dba NAPA, LeasePlan USA, Lucas Oil Products, Inc., Mohawk Resources, Ltd., Petersen Industries, Inc., RR Donnelley, Sepialine, UniFirst Corporation, and more. Our investment in Contract Managers to energize and re-energize Business Partners and their contract solution is beginning to pay dividends and raise our profile and reputation with Members and Business Partners alike. We now spend substantially more time talking with potential Business Partners who have taken the time to contact us inquiring about opportunities with NJPA.

CONTRACT PURCHASING (CONT.)

Future product categories for bid may include "Professional Consulting Services," "Educational Curriculum Solutions," "HVAC," "Food," "Waste Management Vehicles," and more.

The personnel added over the past several years have successfully spread the workload and allowed us to proactively manage our existing Business Partners and Member relationships as well as proactively pursue new relationships. Through these staff additions, we have increased our ability to reach Members and Business Partners on both a group and one-on-one basis. We anticipate the trend of staff growth to continue.

Technology and the Internet have contributed greatly to our successes. We anticipate greater use of information systems, data management systems, work-from-anywhere equipment, data delivery and display systems, and software to drive future efficiencies. We continue to enhance our "Video Conferencing Studio" in our office, which has reduced the need for employee travel. When travel is the best option, our employees are equipped with remote access to our systems for both communications and computer systems. We are very proud of the content and format for the information displayed on our website, however we look forward to further fine-tuning of this extremely valuable communication medium.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT (EOHSM)

A safe environment is the first step in delivering a strong education program. Our EOHSM program specializes in training staff, as well as Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) programs to insure that all buildings are safe for all who enter.

NJPA and MacNeil Environmental, Inc. entered a new, competitively-bid service contract for the provision of comprehensive EOHSM services to 22 Member schools in compliance with both State and Federal law as well as the Minnesota Department of Education. The transition to the new contract which gives Members more control of this contract has proceeded smoothly thus far.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

Annually, NJPA honors students who would not otherwise be honored at a local or regional level. Each school district is invited to select two students to attend the NJPA Student Recognition Banquet, which will be held on April 6, 2011, at the Gull Lake Center at Grand View Lodge. District staff nominate deserving students for the regional honor. Student nominees, their families as well as their nominators are invited to attend our Banquet and Program.

The program for this event features the picture of each winner and a story about why they won. Each recognized student is eligible for scholarships and/or door prize drawings, donated by local area businesses. Our Student Recognition Program is the "venue" for our annual meeting of the NJPA Representative Assembly.

RISK MANAGEMENT

This year the Risk Management Division has been divided into two programs. We continue to serve our Members on a State-wide basis, as well as adding a national division.

Our Minnesota Risk Management Pool administers a self-insured health insurance program for 26 Members. The estimated annual premium for this pool is \$17,467,328 which includes 1,245 single and 695 family contracts. Our last renewal increase need was 6.36% which is well-below the medical cost trend of 17.7%. To better serve our Membership, we now offer two renewal dates. Prospective Members will be able to elect a July 1 or January 1 renewal date. HealthPartners® has proven to be a valuable partner.

The Life and Long-term Disability program serves 13 Members. National Insurance Services, our partner for a number of years, has been replaced by Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada® using Alliant Insurance Services, Inc. as our benefit broker consultant. This new program has refined the quoting and enrollment process while providing premium discounts and benefit duplication.

We continue with our wellness and preventative programs including on-site flu shots, frequent fitness reimbursement programs and Medication Therapy Management. New programs, such as Vision, Commercial Property and Casualty, Board Liability, Liquid Assets and Student Accident are being researched and negotiated. The addition of Voluntary Preventative Dental coverage was recently announced.

Our National Risk Management Division continues to develop Health Insurance Programs as well as Life, Long-term and Short-term Disability, Commercial Property and Casualty, School Board E&O, Student Accident and Travel Accident Programs for our national Members. The Life Insurance Program has been very successful with over \$1.2 million in premiums this year. Our partnership with Alliant Insurance Services, Inc. has proven to be very valuable as they have opened the door to many large carriers that we would not otherwise have access to. We are scheduled to quote many groups this year. These groups include several large schools, cities, counties and state employees.

SHARED SERVICES

Upon request, NJPA will employ staff and sell this time to Member organizations that wish to share positions. Examples include school nurses, counselors, psychologists, administrators, athletic trainers, curriculum coordinators, technology coordinators, student academic program coordinators, social workers, day treatment providers and behavior management assistants. Currently, NJPA provides employment services for 14 people staffing the Crow Wing County Family Services Collaborative, plus a grant facilitator and a language facilitator for two other NJPA Members.

THE REGIONAL LOW INCIDENCE PROJECT (LI)

National Joint Powers Alliance® (NJPA) is the fiscal host for the Regional Low Incidence Project for Economic Development Regions 5 & 7. Low Incidence covers eight (8) disability areas: Physically Impaired (PI), Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH), Blind/Visually Impaired (BVI), Autism (ASD), Deaf/Blind (D/B), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD), and Other Health Disabilities (OHD) – those disabilities that occur in low numbers compared to the total student population.

The purpose of the Low Incidence (LI) Project is to provide free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), along with equitable services for students with low incidence disabilities throughout Regions 5 & 7 using the most cost-effective format to meet the individual needs of the students. An indirect service model is used to allow for immediate access to highly qualified licensed educators to provide support to staff providing the services to students with low incidence disabilities. Providing these services to address geographic inequity has been historically difficult. The Regional Project serves to minimize the impact of regional differences and staffing patterns in the low incidence disability areas that have high intensities of need combined with difficulties in attracting and maintaining staff. The LI Project was initiated by MDE in 1980 to increase the availability of indirect services (e.g., consultation, training, etc.) to better meet low incidence needs, especially in greater Minnesota.

The LI Regional Project provides a number of services, including:

- Coordination of regional low incidence planning committees
- Development of strategic planning for each low incidence disability
- Development of common staff development plans to address needs across disabilities (low and high) in the region, as well as within the State
- Addressing common assessment and program needs across the region
- Planning for consideration and use of assistive technology

NJPA will continue to provide services according to needs. The Low Incidence Project continues to assist districts with compliance with new legislation, as well as provide training opportunities in those areas.

REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM FOR PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT (RCSPD)

National Joint Powers Alliance®(NJPA) is fiscal host to the RCSPD project. This program funds training activities throughout Regions 5 & 7 to allow a larger audience the opportunity to participate in necessary training to enhance the knowledge and skills of the districts' staff. Also, regional staff work directly with state consultants to develop the most effective programs for the needs expressed and to insure efficiency with "common threads" throughout the State. This project offers training opportunities for educators, parents, administrators and other interested people who live or work with a child (or children) with a disability.

The Regional emphasis was placed on three areas:

1. Autism Spectrum Disorders – to gain a better understanding of the various levels of disability, assessment, identification, behavior, intervention, transition, etc.
2. Assistive Technology – to insure educators understand and use technology to assist with student learning.
3. Competitive Grants – to allow Special Education Directors, Coordinators & Network Teams an opportunity to request funds for training in a variety of disability areas based on an annual plan as well as address identified needs throughout the two regions.

REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM FOR PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT (RCSPD)

Additional funds have been also been allocated to activities such as:

- Regions 5 & 7 Low Vision Clinic
- Winter Camp for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students
- ASL Skill Development
- Lake Carlos Environmental Camp for Visually Impaired

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER OF EXCELLENCE PROJECT

National Joint Powers Alliance® (NJPA) is the fiscal host to the early childhood professional development project “Centers of Excellence.” The goal of the Centers for Excellence Project is to design a regional system incorporating input from the field, to provide early childhood professionals with technical assistance, support, mentorship and coaching sufficient to improve practice. Specific topics cross disciplines and benefit not only Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) teachers, but also other early childhood educators (i.e., Headstart, Day Care Providers), enhancing child find efforts and supporting inclusion.

The Project plans to expand the use of scientifically research-based practices throughout the Region and the State of Minnesota, with a specific focus in the following areas:

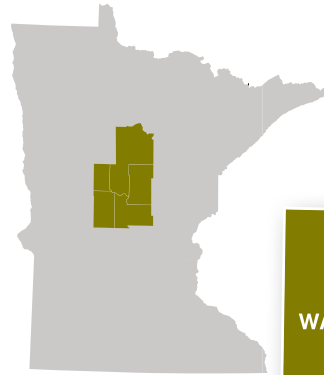
- Use of assistive technology
- Implementation of routine-based interventions (RBI)
- Improvement of assessment, evaluation and intervention practices for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children and families
- Use of communication options for a child with a hearing loss (i.e., ASL, Cued Speech/Cued Language, Auditory Verbal and Auditory Oral)
- Implementation of strategies to address challenging behaviors
- Effective practices to support successful inclusion of children with disabilities
- Infant mental health
- Categorical disabilities and intervention practices
- IFSP, IEP and IIP writing
- Data-based decision-making at the levels of the child, program, district and region
- Understanding and implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavioral Support and Interventions (PBIS), as they relate to early childhood
- Transition requirements and practices
- Priorities identified through Minnesota’s special education system of general supervision (compliance)

The Regional Low Incidence Project will provide the administrative infrastructure for the Early Childhood Centers for Excellence Project.

NJPA PURPOSE STATEMENT

At NJPA, we exist to:

- build relationships.
- create solutions.
- bring value to those we serve.



2011-2012 NJPA ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

1. Increase awareness of NJPA and its' programs across the nation and Region V in Central Minnesota.
2. Introduce on-going school improvement initiatives throughout Region V.
3. Continue to improve and expand our existing technology to better serve our members and vendors.
4. Seek partnership opportunities with cities, counties and other governmental agencies within Region V.



NJPA SURVEY

How can NJPA serve you better? Please let us know what services you would like to see NJPA provide or how we can serve you better by taking our online survey at www.njpacoop.org/survey.