

**James C. Morse, Ed.D**

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**RESUME**

**Objective**

A position as superintendent in a school system with the courage to move forward educationally and the sensitivity to never forget the impact of change on the students, staff and the community.

**Education**

April, 1996

**Ed.D University of Sarasota**  
**Major: Educational Leadership**

1987

**M.Ed. University of Maine @ Orono**  
**Major: Educational Administration**

1977

**B.S. University of Maine @ Orono**  
**Major: Art**

**Professional Employment**

April 1996 to present

**Superintendent, Messalonskee School District**

As I transitioned into the position of Superintendent of MSAD 47, a number of areas needed critical attention. Four that I would use as examples include: 1.) Rebuilding community support, 2.) Implementation of visionary board policies and strategic plan, 3.) Increasing student success through programs and practices that reached out to the disadvantaged as well as the advantaged and 4.) Building accountability into the district finances.

First, as I assumed the position of superintendent in April 1996, the relationship with MSAD 47 member communities was tenuous at best, as evidenced by a district budget being defeated for the first time in the history of the system. As a result, the School Board gave me my first goal: to rebuild a positive relationship with member towns.

By actively engaging town leaders, by communicating clearly, and by building trust, town leaders and citizens have been supportive of school district endeavors by wide margins ever since. After my first full year as superintendent, the budget passed by a 2:1 margin and in my second year by over a 3:1 margin; the support for the district budgets has remained unabated even though state support has decreased significantly. Communication has never been stronger, and support from elected town leaders has never been higher.

Second, the Board, with the support of community members, adopted a broad educational agenda outlined in the District's Strategic Plan that established goals related to community involvement, school facilities, curriculum and assessment, technology K-12, and literacy, as well as other important goals. A few achievements are noted below.

By building support through community involvement, the district facility plans were approved by Maine Department of Education. As a result a new middle school opened in September 2004 as well as two elementary additions, and over 40 portable classrooms were eliminated.

Through extensive involvement of the staff, the curriculum has been aligned to Maine's Learning Results and local assessment practices have been enhanced and expanded upon. Assessment is being used to provide guidance for professional staff to enhance instructional practices being implemented.

Efforts in improving literacy have seen improvements from pre-school to high school. At one end of the spectrum we began a program for 4 year olds to better establish a foundation for literacy. We started an all day Kindergarten for the same reason. At the middle school and high school level we are now emphasize adolescent literacy. Struggling readers are offered specialized courses, built around the latest research and best practices.

The district's technology plan has grown from a hodgepodge approach with little focus to a sophisticated plan that supports educators in their

efforts to utilize technology to enhance and support their teaching and student learning.

Third, a revitalization of the commitment that all children can learn has resulted in incredible successes; 24% more students going on to post-secondary placement, 98% of seniors graduating, and a decrease in the number of students dropping out of high school. As a District we have decided to mimic services of those provided special education students for those who are not identified as special education. These students are often characterized as 'falling though the cracks'. This effort has contributed to the successes noted above.

At the primary level we assess student-reading skills using a diagnostic tool called an Analytic Reading Inventory (ARI). Any student not on grade level has developed an individualized reading program by the classroom teacher, a reading specialist and the building principal. We re-administer the ARI in the spring and have documented incredible increases in student performance.

Fourth, when I assumed the superintendency of MSAD 47, the district's financial accountability measures were weak. I was offered the job in February of 1997 and took over the helm in April of 1997. As I reviewed the accounts in February it was clear that the district was heading toward a potential financial disaster. I made the recommendation, before assuming the job, that the School Board 'freeze' the budget to avoid a deficit. The Board did so. I also was concerned that proper accounting procedures were not in place. In the first year, I eliminated twenty-seven different checkbooks that were being maintained at the superintendents office, I had the central office staff cross trained and brought all accounts under the Maine Department of Education handbook IIR guidelines. I also asked the School Board to resurrect the Budget Finance Committee and requested they meet monthly. During the last eleven years, all budgets have been supported by member communities and all have ended with a balance.

July 1992-April 1997

**Superintendent, Limestone Public Schools &  
The Maine School of Science & Mathematics**

When I arrived in Limestone as the middle/high school principal, it was like walking back in time to my youth. Due to Loring Air Force Base (LAFB), the student population was as diverse as Portland's. In fact, during the time the base was open, Limestone was second only to Portland in the diversity of the ethnic background of students. Tragically for the community of Limestone, that ethnic diversity was about to come to an end

Due to the imminent closure of LAFB, I was a key person on the Challenge of Change Committee, a local group made up of community and civic leaders faced with envisioning a new educational future in Limestone. The Challenge of Change Committee ultimately focused on the creation of a new type of school for Maine – a magnet school for science and mathematics that serves children statewide. Political pundits gave this radical departure from the norm little chance of success. Ultimately it was successful by gathering local, state and federal support. Today, twelve years later, The Maine School of Science and Mathematics stands as testament of the hard work of many whom shared a unique and compelling vision for the future.

While in transition from a municipal school system that once enrolled 1550 students, I facilitated the development of a new vision for the school system that would lose 75% of its students due to the closure of Loring Air Force Base. We moved forward despite the unparalleled challenges we faced. During my tenure we instituted teacher teaming and common planning at the middle school and the high school. We also developed a comprehensive technology plan where none had existed. Even as the system changed from a moderate sized Maine system to a small school system, test scores and post-secondary placement rates increased.

Throughout my tenure as Superintendent of both the municipal school system and the Magnet School I was able to generate over 2 million dollars in competitive grant funds that assisted in the transition of the public school and provided seed money for the Magnet School.

July 1991-1992	<b>Principal, Limestone Junior/Senior High</b>
August 1987-June 1991	<b>Assistant Superintendent, MSAD 3 (Unity)</b>
Nov. 1989-June 1990	<b>Interim Superintendent, Region 7 Vocational District</b>
July 1986-July 1987	<b>Principal, Miller Grade School, MSAD 40 (Waldoboro)</b>
Oct. 1984-June 1986	<b>Principal, Unity &amp; Troy Elementary Schools, MSAD 3</b>
July 1977-Oct. 1984	<b>Elementary &amp; Secondary Art Teacher, MSAD 3 (Unity)</b>
Sept. 1976– June 1977	<b>Elementary Art Teacher, Bangor School System</b>

### **Service Committees**

Juvenile Justice Advisory Group, (2003-present, Governor's Appt.)  
MDOE Truancy & Dropout Committee, (2004 to present)  
Kennebec Valley Alliance (KVA), (1997 – present)  
Kennebec Consortium for School Administrators (1997-present)

### **Professional Organizations**

ASCD, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
MASCD, Maine Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
MSSA, Maine State Superintendent's Association  
    Legislative Committee Chair 1996  
    Executive Committee 1999-2008  
AASA, American Association of School Administrators  
The Center,  
    Board of Trustees  
NAFIS, National Association of Federally Impacted Schools  
    Maine State Coordinator 1993-96

### **Civic & Service Organizations**

Visioning Committee of the Kennebec Chamber of Commerce  
Strategic Planning Committee of the People of the Kennebec  
Kennebec Valley Council of Governments Education/Business working committee  
Kennebec County Education & Juvenile Justice Symposium (Organizer)

## **Interests & Hobbies**

Art. I love to draw because it allows me to look at the world as a whole and to recreate that world through the prism of my mind.

Motorcycling. Riding a bike is my way of 'escaping' and enjoying the world around me.

Racquetball. Although not skilled, I enjoy delivering shots and anticipating shots that require analytic skill while in motion.

Traveling. As I've grown older, I've come to realize the vastness and the smallness of the planet we live on. Traveling allows me to blend my love for art and motorcycling together.