

More than Just Numbers

Business Manager of the Year **Erik Kass** says connecting with students and staff is crucial work for school business managers

As he accepted the award for top business manager of the year, Erik Kass, assistant superintendent for finance, operations and human resources at the Elmbrook School District, reminded his colleagues that a big part of doing the job well meant leaving the office.

“I’d urge you to get out in the schools,” Kass said. “It’s so easy to get bogged down in the numbers. It’s so easy to get bogged down in the board documents.”

Taking the time to mingle with students and staff and observe the day-to-day activities will make people “appreciate the work that you do a lot more,” he said.

“They’re going to ask you for things, I’m not going to lie,” Kass continued. “But that’s where the real magic of education happens.”

Kass was honored as the 2016 Wisconsin School Business Manager of the Year at the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials’ luncheon. Kass, who has been at Elmbrook since August 2013, was nominated for his leadership, his role in the community, and his involvement in the field among other factors. He was described as “incredibly innovative in his approach to problem solving.”

Kass thanked his family, office staff and teachers at Elmbrook as



well as his colleagues and the superintendents with whom he has worked.

“It is such a humbling experience to be considered for this award,” he said.

He talked about his involvement with WASBO and urged his colleagues to also get involved and “find a way to give back.”

“Each of us has a passion to give back,” Kass said. ■

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