



## Help Guide WASB Advocacy

### *Submit a resolution to the WASB Policy and Resolutions Committee*

**H**ow does the Wisconsin Association of School Boards take positions on issues? Our legislative advocacy is directed through the Delegate Assembly. Resolutions are adopted at the annual Delegate Assembly, which is held in conjunction with the annual State Education Conference in Milwaukee in January. The resolutions guide our lobbyists as they advocate on behalf of public education.

Dan Rossmiller and Chris Kulow, the government relations team for the WASB, often refer to those resolutions when visiting the offices of federal and state legislators. The resolutions also inform and guide the WASB's lobbyists as they develop legislation for introduction by lawmakers and as they respond to proposed legislation. Those resolutions carry a lot of weight as legislators know that the resolutions have been adopted by locally elected school board members from across the state, including board members in their legislative districts.

**As your WASB president, I urge you, as members of Wisconsin school boards, to consider submitting a resolution this year.** The deadline: Sept. 15. Your board can submit a resolution addressing virtually any topic of concern to you and relevant to public education. One such topic for me is building trust at all levels of public education. You may remember my message from the convention in January: Trust is a must! I have heard from many school board members who share that concern. Resolutions can be drafted on vision topics to help move us in that direction. Proposed resolutions can be on a new topic, amend a current resolution or repeal a resolution, but can not duplicate a current resolution.

The resolutions submitted by individual school boards go to the WASB Policy and Resolutions Committee for consideration. The committee consists of two school board members from each of the WASB's 15 regions as appointed by the regional directors and the four members of the WASB Executive Committee. This year, that committee meets Sept. 30-Oct. 1 in Madison and again Nov. 11 in Stevens Point, prior to the WASB Legislative Advocacy Conference in Stevens Point the following day.

The committee has two basic charges: 1) examine the proposed resolutions to make sure they don't duplicate existing resolutions already on the books, and 2) advance resolutions that are timely, of statewide importance, and worthy of debate by the Delegate Assembly.

Every member school district and all 12 CESAs are allowed a representative at the Delegate Assembly.

Listening to school board members debate the resolutions at the Delegate Assembly assists our lobbyists in developing arguments in support of the WASB positions when they are testifying in legislative committees or meeting with legislators to discuss proposals on which the WASB has adopted a resolution.

Here's a few examples of resolutions that were passed in January and subsequent steps taken:

- "The WASB supports the provision of state funding adequate to: address the shortage of mental health professionals in our state qualified to address the needs of school-age children and young adults; provide adequate professional mental health supports in our schools and our communities; and permit schools to enter into effective partnerships with agen-

cies that are involved with mental health to provide for school-based mental health programs, that could provide services."

The WASB has been in contact with various stakeholders on this topic to gather information about what are the greatest needs and where resources should be prioritized. The WASB will be encouraging policy-makers to address this issue in the next state budget.

- "The WASB supports legislation allowing school districts to publish statutorily required notices electronically on the school district website and other social media maintained by the school district in lieu of publishing these notices in newspapers."

The WASB has been working with legislators as well as a related Legislative Council Study Committee to draft legislation to permit school board meeting proceedings to be posted on the school district website instead of published in a newspaper.

I chaired the Policy and Resolutions Committee last year and witnessed school board members coming to the process from different places and with different perspectives yet with open minds, willing to listen to arguments made by fellow committee members. Those principled discussions that took place centered around how to best serve the more than 800,000 students educated every day in Wisconsin's public schools.

WASB's Delegate Assembly is true democracy in action. Please consider being a part of that critical process by submitting a resolution. Thank you! ■

*Olson is 2016 president of the WASB and president of the Shell Lake School Board.*