

Here to Help

2011-12 Report to the Membership

The WASB is built on a tradition of providing high-quality service to member districts. We are proud to report that all public school boards and CESA boards of control in Wisconsin are voluntary members of the WASB. With your membership, you have a statewide voice in public education and your district benefits from valuable member services.

Below are highlights of the WASB's work for you in 2011-12. For more information about WASB services, publications and events, visit us online at wasb.org or contact the association toll-free at (877)705-4422.

Advocacy for Public Education

The Government Relations (GR) team worked hard to connect to school board members by revitalizing the WASB Legislative Contact Network. This was particularly important in thwarting attempts to expand taxpayer-funded vouchers statewide as well attempts to bypass local school board approval and authorize independent charter schools statewide through an appointed state board.

School board members shined. The GR team received reports from legislators across the state who heard from school board members expressing concerns about these legislative bills and about diminished resources for public schools.

The GR team appreciates the critically important work school board members do by staying connected to their legislators. To provide school board members with more background on key advocacy issues, the GR team also expanded the coverage of its weekly *Legislative Update* e-Newsletter with new sections and graphics.

Access to Legal Information

In 2011-12, the WASB staff responded to more than 5,000 law-related inquiries from members and provided direct employment, human resources, labor and school law services to more than 100 districts. The WASB attorneys have made numerous updates and revisions to the *WASB Employee Handbook* to reflect law changes and provide additional information. The *WASB Employee Handbook* provides school leaders with a comprehensive, customizable tool to manage all school district staff.

In 2011, the School Law Index on the WASB website was made more user-friendly to enable members to easily cross-reference statutes, legal comments and other WASB documents. In early 2012, the WASB launched an Employee Opinion Survey service. The survey, administered by WASB staff, gauges your employees' opinions on a range of issues related to the operation of your district to guide your work in crafting employee handbooks, building rela-



tionships and improving services.

Also in 2011, the WASB attorneys began offering webinars on select legal topics to enable school leaders to stay up to date on the most pertinent issues. Watch for additional webinars to be offered later this year.

Access to Policy Information

In 2011-12, the WASB Policy staff responded to more than 1,400 individual requests from member districts for sample policy information. More "Hot Policy Topic" information has been added to the WASB website to make it readily accessible to member districts and WASB plans to add even more in the future.

The WASB's new internet-based, policy development and implementation tool – the Policy Resource Guide (PRG) – was launched last year at this time and is now being used by subscribing school districts from all parts of the state – small and large, rural and urban. In addition, WASB Policy staff has provided direct policy reviewing and updating services to over 40 districts this year.

Eighty-five percent of member districts currently subscribe to WASB's subscription policy publication, *The FOCUS*. In total, more than 90 percent of the districts in the state have taken advantage of the WASB Policy Library and/or have utilized other WASB policy services this year.

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Access to Governance and Leadership Development Services

The Governance and Leadership Development (GoLD) team has revamped its strategic planning service and has created a program that engages boards, staff and community stakeholders in establishing targets and identifying strategies to achieve them in ways that are consistent with this accountability.

Starting this spring, the GoLD team is offering Key Work in Action workshops, designed to bring the Key Work concepts to life. Finally, a new offering, Data First, will roll out this summer, providing school board members with an opportunity to learn about data and the key questions that determine which of these data are relevant at any moment and translate the data into sound decisions.

Access to Superintendent Search Services and Organizational Consulting Services

In 2011-12, the WASB Superintendent Search Services directly served 14 school districts and aided

numerous others through presentations and advice. The WASB Organizational Services provides member school districts with an alternative resolution strategy to the specific challenges and circumstances that confront Wisconsin school boards. WASB Organizational Consultants provide districts with experienced, objective and non-biased perspectives to assess problems and suggest resolutions. In 2011-12, WASB Organizational Consultants directly served eight school districts in formal projects and assisted numerous others through presentations and consultations.

Seminars and Conferences

In 2011-12, the WASB hosted 56 conferences, seminars, gatherings, webinars and, of course, the annual Joint State Education Convention. Collectively, more than 4,700 school board members and administrators participated in the numerous WASB events and programs. Topics included legal, board development, policy, legislative, finance, and much more to meet the needs of districts.

Publications and Website

The WASB provides numerous publications on a regular basis, including the award-winning *Wisconsin School News* magazine. In 2011-12, the WASB website was expanded. Among other new pages and updates, a special page was created for new school board members. It includes a compilation of basic resources in legal, policy, governance and other topics to get new board members started on the right foot. Earlier in 2011, the WASB launched its Facebook page to share topics of interest on public education in Wisconsin.

Service Associates

This year, the WASB Service Associate program expanded to 24 companies proven to have solid working relationships with school districts across the state.

With so many programs and services available to you and your district, the WASB is an investment in your district's ability to meet your student achievement goals. Please visit us online or call our staff with any questions. The WASB is here to serve you. ■

REPORT TO MEMBERS

Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Inc. Condensed Statement of Activities For the Year Ending June 30, 2011

REVENUE	
Membership Dues	\$ 1,709,727
Program Revenue	\$ 2,059,323
Interest & Investment Related Income	\$ 59,039
Other Income	\$ 18,866
Total Revenue	\$ 3,846,955
EXPENSES	
Program Expense	\$ 3,102,942
Office Operations	\$ 743,991
Total Expenses	\$ 3,846,933
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets-Operating	\$ 22
Depreciation & Other Non-Operating Expenses	\$ 101,342
Change in Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ (101,320)

Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Inc. Condensed Statement of Financial Position June 30, 2011

ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Investments, Cash, & Cash Equivalents	\$ 2,097,109
Accounts Receivable	\$ 219,643
Deferred Costs & Prepaid Expenses	\$ 209,483
Inventories	\$ 35,450
Accrued Interest Receivable	\$ 10,870
Total Current Assets	\$ 2,572,555
Property & Equipment, Net	\$ 77,183
Total Assets	\$ 2,649,738
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
Current Liabilities	
Deferred Revenue	\$ 752,531
Accounts Payable, Payroll Taxes, & Benefits Payable	\$ 228,364
Other Accounts Payable	\$ 5,289
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 986,184
Long Term Liabilities	
Long Term Portion of Note Payable	\$ 17,671
Total Liabilities	\$ 1,003,855
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	\$ 1,619,167
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 26,716
Total Net Assets	\$ 1,645,883
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 2,649,738

Knowledge for New and Experienced School Board Members

WASB Spring Academy delivers on a variety of topics

New and experienced school board members gathered May 5 at the WASB Spring Academy to delve into the roles and responsibilities of serving on the school board. WASB staff members presented on a variety of topics including legal issues, policy development, board governance, and school finance topics.

The 2012 WASB Spring Academy featured two tracks – introductory and advanced – to allow attendees the opportunity to gain the information most relevant to them.

Barry Forbes, associate executive director and staff counsel, led sessions on the “Legal Authority of Wisconsin School Boards” and “Labor Relations in Wisconsin Public Schools.” In the labor relations session, Forbes discussed changes in bargaining that specifically prohibited practices such as bargaining over increasing base wages in excess of the consumer price index.

In the introductory track, school board members had an opportunity to participate in an interactive, hands-on tool developed by the WASB, the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials (WASBO) and the Wisconsin School Public Relations Association (WSPRA) to help people understand and see the variables involved in funding public schools in Wisconsin.

Deb Gurke, director of Governance and Leadership Development (GoLD), held sessions on “The Key Work of School Boards,” and “Communication as Leadership.” At Gurke’s “Communication as Leadership” session, she asked participants to name something they had learned during the day that astounded them. One participant said that he particularly liked a



quote from the Key Work of Schools book: “Collaboration is an unnatural act, performed by unconsenting adults.” Gurke commented that this was the perfect set up for the “Communication as Leadership” session, which focused on building trust in the school board team.

School board policy was also extensively discussed. Dan Mallin, legal and policy services counsel, covered “School Board Policy Development.” This session oriented new board members to the important work of policy development and highlighted WASB resources that are available to assist school boards and administrators with their policy-related responsibilities.

Mallin stressed that while it can be fairly easy to articulate and describe “best practices” for effective school policy work, it is very difficult to implement and adhere to those best practices on a consistent basis due to competing priorities, limitations on available time and resources, and the need for both process expertise and very diverse content expertise.

David Carlson, WASB Organizational consultant and former director of DPI’s School Financial



Top: WASB Legal and Policy Services Counsel Dan Mallin lead a session on policy development. **Bottom:** As part of a special activity, school board members worked in teams and discussed the intricacies of public school funding in Wisconsin.

Services Team, discussed the school district budget cycle. The session referenced WASB/WASBO’s The Budget Cycle Handbook, which all attendees received as part of their registration.

Mallin and Dan Rossmiller, director of government relations, offered a session in the advanced track titled “The Evolution of a Challenge to School Board Governance.” This special session studied 2011 Senate Bill 2 (expansion of open enrollment) and explored how school boards and even individual board members helped to shape educational policy at the state and national levels.

The WASB would like to thank those members that were able to attend the 2012 WASB Spring Academy. We hope to see you at the 2012 Leadership Conference, taking place July 13-14 in La Crosse. ■

The Results are In

Your responses to the 2012 WASB Member Survey



For the second year in a row, the WASB posed a survey to Wisconsin school board members and administrators. We thank you for responding to the member survey again! Your responses help us better understand your needs in order to continually improve our services.

In terms of demographics, much of that information stayed the same from last year. Of the respondents:

- half have served for at least five years;
 - the majority is motivated in an interest in educational issues and a desire to give something back to their communities;
 - 87 percent have received some type of post-secondary degree; and,
 - the political leanings are nearly even.

We're pleased to report that 91 percent of respondents reported an overall positive opinion of the WASB – up slightly from the previous year. Our publications are utilized the most, followed by legal information and the convention. Board governance information is used less frequently, but respondents indicated that these services provided the most

significant, positive impact of any provided by the WASB.

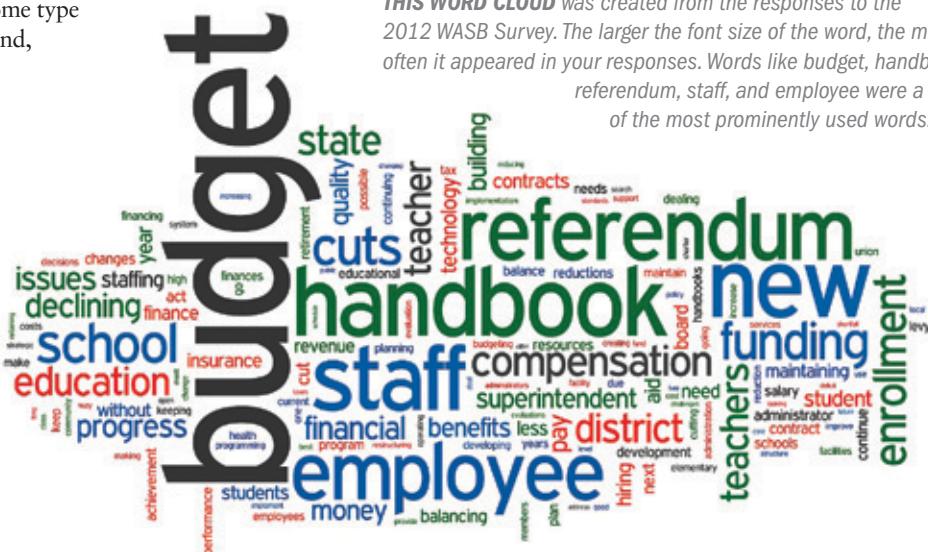
When asked how you like to receive information from the WASB, there was a stark shift this year towards email. Last year, communications by email slightly edged out paper, but this year, email won by overwhelming margins. In response, the WASB will be reviewing all of its communications to ensure that we are best meeting members' needs with the transition to less paper and more reliance on technology.

Asked in an open-ended question about what are the one or two critical decisions facing school

boards in the next 12 months, the responses again affirmed what we thought. The words you used that were repeated again and again were budgets, employees, handbooks, referendums, and staff (see word cloud).

We at the WASB are working hard to ensure that you receive the most value for your membership. We know that you value most the information that you can readily implement and customize to your unique situation. We look forward to continuing to be your partner in promoting public education and student achievement. ■

THIS WORD CLOUD was created from the responses to the 2012 WASB Survey. The larger the font size of the word, the more often it appeared in your responses. Words like budget, handbook, referendum, staff, and employee were a few of the most prominently used words.



Your responses help us better understand your needs in order to continually improve our services. We look forward to continuing to be your partner.