

Election Analysis, School Funding, and More...

Experts at the Legislative Advocacy Conference analyzed this fall's elections and provided solutions to school funding challenges

Attendees at the 2012 WASB Legislative Advocacy Conference on Nov. 10 in Neenah received a wealth of timely information from experts around the state. Presenters provided an in-depth picture of state finances, school funding reform proposals, and how the Wisconsin electorate made its decisions on Nov. 6, how it might be possible to break the partisan standoff at the Capitol.

State Senator Mike Ellis (R-Neenah), the dean of Senate Republicans, expressed concern about voucher expansion. He acknowledged he attended Catholic grade school, but said his father's "voucher program" was working a part-time job to send his kids to a private school. Ellis said his dad never expected the state to pay for a private education.

Todd Berry, president of the non-partisan Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, provided an examination of the state and nation's fiscal recovery and how it would affect the resources available to fund schools. He characterized Wisconsin "as about as poorly prepared fiscally than almost any other state in the country" preceding the recession, but noted that for the first time in a decade, Wisconsin will start its two-year budget cycle without a structural deficit.

Berry said a major issue for Wisconsin is the "digital imperative," adding, "We really have to

have Internet/broadband access in remote areas. That should be a no-brainer for the Legislature if they really care about economic development and job growth."

On the school funding issue, Berry said, "The thing to focus on is revenue limits. I think the fundamental problem is the Legislature thinks in terms of a month or a year down the road," making long-term solutions problematic.

Assistant State Superintendent for Finance and Management Brian Pahnke noted that k-12 education took a hard blow to help the state balance the 2011-13 budget, "A lot of sacrifices came from public schools." Next year, "there's going to be revenue on the table," but many competing interests for limited resources.

Promoting Supt. Tony Evers' Fair Funding for Our Future proposal, Pahnke said, "It's time to be bold, move something forward and have a serious discussion about how to make our school finance system more fair, sustainable and transparent."

Veteran senators Tim Cullen (D-Janesville) and Dale Schultz (R-Richland Center) talked about prospects for changes in Madison.

Schultz warned against voucher expansion saying, "We've got to be a little more real about vouchers and the cost of vouchers in this state. The reality is (the voucher money) comes off the top of the general school aids formula. That hurts



poor school districts in this state, most of which are in rural areas."

Cullen also opposed voucher expansion, arguing, "this would be devastating to low-property (value) school districts."

Professor Charles Franklin and veteran journalist Alan Borsuk also offered their insight. Franklin provided a wealth of polling data on how voters viewed candidates at the top of the ticket and how this shaped their votes.

Borsuk, who covered education issues for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, cautioned about a looming school funding crisis by examining the finances of a real, suburban Milwaukee school district. "In year one (of the biennial budget), they come out ahead. In year two, things were turning a little more to the negative side and they were slightly in the red. By year five, they were really in trouble. They'd used up all of their fund surplus. They were deeply in the red. I used the term 'bankrupt' in my column." ■

Presentation materials and videos from the Legislative Advocacy Conference can be found at wasb.org. Select "Meetings and Events" and then "Event Recaps."



WASB Welcomes Three New Consultants

ROGER J. FOEGEN

*Organizational Services Consultant,
Superintendent Search Services
Consultant*

Roger J. Foegen has served Wisconsin school districts for 40 years. Currently, Mr. Foegen serves as an adjunct professor at Viterbo University in the field of Educational Administration. Mr. Foegen then served the Bangor School District for 23 years first as a middle/high school principal and later as the district administrator. He retired as district administrator of the Bangor School District in July of 2012 and currently resides in Onalaska with his wife Pam who is the Special Education Director for the School District of La Crosse. •



MARY DeYOUNG, PH.D

*Organizational Services Consultant,
Superintendent Search Services
Consultant, Coaching
Program Consultant*

Dr. Mary DeYoung believes strongly in providing a quality education for all students and to that end has dedicated more than 30 years working in Wisconsin public school districts. She taught at the high school level in the Royall School District and at the junior high level in the Sparta Area School District. She served as district administrator (principal and business manager) of the Linn J4 School District for 20 years until she retired in 2012. She is currently working part-time as the business manager for the Genoa City J2 School District. •



MATT GIBSON, PH.D.

*Governance and Leadership
Development Consultant*

Matt Gibson brings 31 years of successful superintendent experience working with school boards and communities in the State of Wisconsin. Matt's experience in governance and leadership helps school boards and superintendents understand their separate yet complementary roles and focus these roles toward development of long and short term school district improvement goals, capacity building to achieve them, and accountability for both processes and results as a team. One of Matt's specialized areas of experience is helping school districts with needs assessments, master planning, phasing, and community engagement and communication processes that predict referenda results.



Dr. Gibson will be joining the **WASB Governance and Leadership Development (GoLD)** team, which offers information, tools and support to Wisconsin school boards as they work in the face of globalization, economic and demographic changes, and pressures from state and federal policies.

The WASB GoLD team offers board development sessions that provide an opportunity for the school board to work as a team as they cover important topics such as board organization, board-superintendent relationships, evaluation, community engagement, and strategic planning, among other issues.

Through the WASB GoLD team, school boards can also learn more about the Key Work of School Boards Framework, which serves as core curriculum for WASB board governance development. •

As consultants with the **WASB Organizational Consulting Service**, Dr. DeYoung and Mr. Foegen will be providing member school districts with an alternative resolution strategy to the specific challenges and circumstances that confront Wisconsin school boards. The WASB Organizational Consulting Service is designed to be a resource with a focus on Problem, Assessment and Response. Many problems go unresolved because the core issue of a problem is not identified correctly. As a result, the symptom may be treated, but not cured, leading to frustration and failure. Problem misidentification occurs when there is inadequate expertise, time or commitment to address the problem.

Dr. DeYoung and Mr. Foegen will also be serving as consultants to the **WASB Superintendent Search Services** department. The WASB's Superintendent Search Services are designed to make the search for a district administrator a positive experience that helps school boards serve the communities they represent.

Finally, Dr. DeYoung will also be working as a consultant with WASB's new **Coaching Program**. Designed for initial and second-year district administrators, the WASB Coaching Program includes the active participation of the school board president. The program works to build the working relationship and strengthen the leadership capacity of these two individuals and focuses on the development of effective communication strategies internally within the school system and externally with the school community. •

For more information on our new consultants or any of the services described on this page, visit wasb.org.