

# Building Successful Board Members

*At the WASB Spring Academy, school leaders discuss board service, referendums, and leadership skills*

New and experienced school board members attended the WASB Spring Academy May 2 in Appleton to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of school board members. The event featured three tracks of programming: introduction to board service, referendum pathway, and developing effective leadership skills. Each track featured sessions led by experienced WASB staff members.

The introduction to board service track covered a variety of topics including legal and policy-making duties of board members, governance, and school finance.

Ben Richter, WASB staff counsel, described the legal and policy-making responsibilities of school board members. There are 44 statutory school board powers in the state statutes, including: suspension and expulsion of pupils, purchasing or otherwise acquiring necessary books and equipment, and soliciting and obtaining options to purchase real property (upon approval of an annual or special meeting). Among other expectations, the school board is expected to reflect the values of the community it represents.

“Other board roles include the ability to understand and articulate community core values and beliefs, using them to guide board decision-making and communicating them throughout the district so that they guide day-to-day actions at every level,” Richter said.

The referendum pathways track included sessions on master planning, legal and policy considerations regarding referendums, and preparing for referendums from a facility and financial standpoint.

“The master plan will require a comprehensive assessment of all owned and leased properties and their use,” said Roger Price, WASB



consultant. “This will include ascertaining the extent of deferred maintenance, remaining facility life and renovations needed.”

The third track focused on developing effective leadership skills. Sessions in this track covered communication, practices for effective school boards, dealing with stress to improve leadership performance and a session on the politics of leadership.

Lou Birchbauer, WASB consultant, took an in-depth look at what makes or hinders a high-performing school board. Among other issues,

Birchbauer talked about the importance of building a healthy dialogue at school board meetings.

“People who are skilled at dialogue do their best to make it safe for everyone to add their meaning to the shared pool — even if ideas at first glance appear controversial, wrong, or at odds with their own beliefs,” Birchbauer said.

For links to presentation slides from these sessions, visit [wasb.org](http://wasb.org). Select “Meetings and Events” and then “Event Recaps.” ■

**The WASB, in conjunction with CESA 10 and CESA 11,** are holding a series of workshops focused on important board governance and school board leadership issues.

■ **WASB/CESA 11 Workshop**

Key Work of School Boards: Vision and Accountability  
Thursday, June 25 – 6-9 pm | CESA 11, Turtle Lake  
Presenter: *Al Brown, WASB Consultant*

■ **WASB/CESA 10 Workshop**

Key Work of School Boards  
Wednesday, August 12 – 6-9 pm | CESA 10, Chippewa Falls  
Presenter: *Cheryl Stinski and Al Brown, WASB Consultants*

■ **WASB/CESA 10 Workshop**

The School Board’s Role in Superintendent Evaluations  
Wednesday, Nov. 4 – 6-9 pm | CESA 10, Chippewa Falls  
Presenter: *Lou Birchbauer, WASB Consultant*

**To register** or for detailed descriptions of the workshops, visit [wasb.org](http://wasb.org).

## Upcoming Event: Summer Leadership Institute

July 18 | Heidel House Resort & Spa, Green Lake

School board members are invited to the Summer Leadership Institute, taking place July 18 at the Heidel House Resort & Spa in Green Lake. This event aims to provide school board members with the tools and knowledge to successfully lead your school district and improve board governance.

This all-day event provides school leaders with an opportunity not only to network with colleagues from around the state but also get up-to-date information on a range of school leadership issues. The Summer Leadership Institute will

feature sessions on leadership, community engagement, student achievement, and school funding.

Other sessions, focused on school leadership, will be given by a number of Wisconsin school districts, including: Brown Deer, River Falls, Verona Area, Kettle Moraine, New Berlin, Pewaukee, and Racine.

The WASB Summer Leadership Institute provides school leaders with the information and leadership strategies to improve the governance and operation of your school district. For more information, visit [wasb.org](http://wasb.org). □



## WASB Business Honor Roll

Has a local business been particularly helpful to your district this year? Nominate them for the 2015 WASB Business Honor Roll!

Selected businesses and partnerships will be given statewide recognition and highlighted by the WASB.

To nominate a business, visit [WASB.org](http://WASB.org) (under Communication Services).  
Deadline: **Friday, August 14.**



WASB Business Honor Roll | 608-257-2622 | 877-705-4422 | Visit [wasb.org](http://wasb.org)