



## A Renewed Focus

*This coming school year, the WASB has pledged to revamp its advocacy and school board governance efforts*

Those of us at the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) — staff and the board of directors — believe we do a good job of serving the needs of public school districts.

As the WASB president, I am proud that the WASB continues to be the premier voice for public education in Wisconsin. And I know you all believe in our effectiveness, as all 424 public school districts in Wisconsin are dues-paying members of the WASB.

We are a member-driven organization, guided by the resolution process that leads to the important work done by your fellow board members at our Delegate Assembly at the annual State Education Convention in Milwaukee.

But there is always room for improvement, for we know the WASB must remain relevant if we are to continue providing our members a worthwhile service in the constantly evolving educational and political landscape.

Consequently, earlier this year, the board of directors — along with Executive Director John Ashley and Associate Executive Directors Bob Butler and Barry Forbes — spent time strategizing how best to provide what our members need and want.

At the conclusion, we reaffirmed

our dual purpose: advocacy and board governance. And those two go hand in hand.

In the past several years, the attacks on public education have been unrelenting, and often the arguments advanced by critics of public education bear little resemblance to the truth.

Yes, we have our challenges in public education and we must do a better job of serving the needs of all our children. However, public schools across Wisconsin have never been more vibrant as we customize our educational offerings to ensure that all our students are successful.

In public education, we educate every child, every day. Every child, every day.

WASB's advocacy includes the obvious — lobbying legislators and the governor's office — but goes far beyond that. Our Stand Up for Public Education website is but one example. Working with other groups that advocate on behalf of Wisconsin's 800,000 public school students is another.

Rest assured that John Ashley and his staff are on point in this advocacy effort. But all school board members must also play a vital role in their own communities. And that's where enhanced board governance and the WASB come into play.

Professional development for

school board members has never been more vital. As the elected representatives in our communities, we are ultimately responsible — along with our superintendents if we truly value a team approach — for a myriad of educational initiatives.

Let the WASB help you become better informed. Many of you have already engaged — in the New Board Member Gatherings, at the Spring Academy, at the Summer Leadership Institute, at a variety of webinars, and at the Fall Regional Meetings now taking place.

Down the road, consider attending the Legislative Advocacy Conference in Stevens Point in November and, next year, the State Education Convention in Milwaukee and the Day at the Capitol in Madison.

I'm reminded of a quote from futurist Alvin Toffler that I think stresses the importance of professional development and continual learning. He said this: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."

Thank you for your service on behalf of our children. Remind those in your communities of the vital role of public education: we educate every child, every day. Every child, every day. ■

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