

WASB GoLD Staff ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS ...

The Statewide Accountability System

Q. *It is now clear that the Statewide Accountability System is coming. What can we do as a school board to prepare?*

A. Change is again in the wind for Wisconsin school districts in the form of NAEP (National Assessment for Education Progress) cuts for test scores, educator effectiveness, use of data, and school report cards to define whether the public education of our children is effective and improving.

The core value that remains constant is something that successful school districts have practiced for many years — vigilantly remembering why any new accountability or reform measure is created in the first place. We must commit to making the child, and his or her learning, THE focus of all our work and keep that focus front and center throughout the roll out of these accountability measures.

One of the best ways to keep focus is for the school board to ask the right questions about the various data that will be used to describe a district's success. Asking the right questions has become the hallmark of astute governance. Always seeking to first understand what information means leads to solutions and results that make a real difference.

For example, do action plans surrounding standards, curriculum and assessment have a prominent place in your district's Strategic Plan? What do the staff and administration need to know about the Common Core State Standards to successfully implement it as part of the curriculum and local assessments? What is your school board's understanding of the Common Core State Standards? How does your school board review assessment data?

What does the data look like? Is the data able to be understood or is it hyper-technical, preventing the “drill down” review that offers the best understanding of what the results mean and where improvement opportunities exist? In other words, how does your district analyze data to inform instruction?

In the June-July issue of *Wisconsin School News*, the article “Data First” gave an excellent description of how data can be portrayed in a way that is immediately understandable and prescrip-

tive as to areas for continuous improvement attention. As the data is analyzed and we seek to understand what the data are telling us, the alignment of resources and professional development will be much more evident. And as we make the decisions to support various district initiatives, the data will serve as our rationale for specific choices and give school boards the information our communities need to debate and discern the future of our schools.

The Key Work of School Boards clearly serves as an excellent paradigm for executing governance responsibilities while responding to the Statewide Accountability System. Vision, Standards, Assessment, Accountability, Alignment, Climate, Collaborative Partnerships and Continuous Improvement are the eight major

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THIS COLUMN IS FOR YOU!

Each issue, a member of the WASB Governance and Leadership Development (GoLD) Team answers member questions about board governance.

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Click the “GoLD” tab and then select “Governance Questions” at the bottom of the page.

Complete the form and your question may appear in the *Wisconsin School News*.

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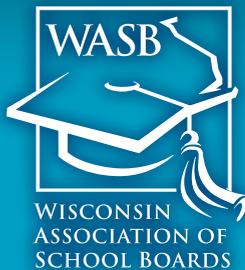
concepts within the Key Work model. School boards that incorporate *The Key Work of School Boards* into their governance role will see the synergy the model has with the Statewide Accountability System.

Although some may be skeptical regarding the way student, teacher

and school performance will be measured, in the end the goal is to have all our children learn and grow while enrolled in the public schools in our state. We want our graduates to find their path and reach their potential in life. Asking the right questions and understanding data to

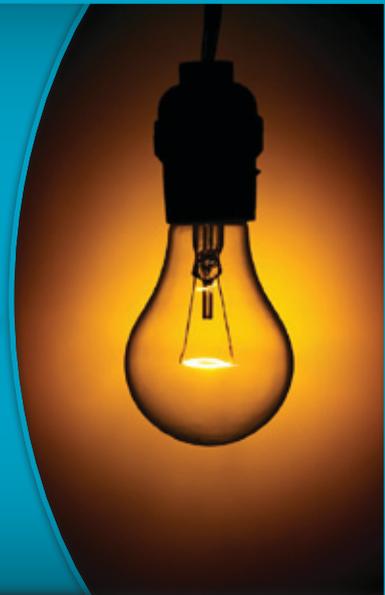
make the best resource choices will continue to demonstrate the value of public education for each and every child. ■

McCormick is a Governance and Leadership Development (GoLD) consultant and is secretary of the Greendale School Board.



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