



## Dealing with Change

**A**s we enter a new year, public education in Wisconsin continues to adjust to a host of changes and challenges.

Whether it has been in the boardroom or the classroom, school leaders had to enact substantial change in districts across the state this past year. And this work continues.

Public education is faced with continually evolving initiatives. Student assessments, teacher evaluations and school accountability systems are all being questioned and redesigned in addition to school funding.

Whether we like it or not, introducing and accepting change in public schools can be difficult and time-consuming work.

In her feature article, “Working Through Change,” Deb Gurke, director of the WASB Governance and Leadership Development (GoLD) services, discusses how to implement change in a complex organization like a school district. She emphasizes that the leadership driving the change must take into account specific needs of the district and to closely communicate and work with those teachers and staff affected by the change.

At the WASB Educator Effectiveness and Compensation Seminars in December, school leaders from the Hartland/Lakeside School District echoed Deb’s advice as they shared

their experiences in establishing a teacher evaluation system. School leaders from the district said the key to getting teachers to buy into the model was to get them involved in the planning and implementation of it. If people are going to accept change, they need to be a part of the process when deciding how that change will be adopted.

The WASB is gearing up for another year of helping school boards plan for and implement change.

In addition to the numerous sessions and events at the 91st State Education Convention this month and our regularly planned conferences and seminars throughout the year, the WASB will be hosting new events this year designed to deliver information on the most pressing topics and issues to help school leaders navigate the sea of change.

In March, the WASB will be hosting a School Finance Seminar with the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials. The WASB hasn’t held seminars exclusively on this topic for some time but given the school funding situation in the state, a seminar devoted to school finance issues is timely. In March, we will also have seminars that will deliver the latest information surrounding employee compensation systems and discuss the school board’s role in the post-Act 10 world.

We are planning to hold special Summer Seminars again to talk

about the latest topics and most pressing issues. We held these last August for the first time to connect with our members over the many changes that were being made to the state budget and collective bargaining. You’ve told us you valued these seminars, so we will look to bring them to you again.

I also urge you to watch for WASB webinars throughout the year to help keep you informed on the latest news and trends.

With the host of changes being made by and to school districts, we want you, our members, to tell us what you need and how the WASB can better serve you. The annual membership survey was sent to your email address in early January. If you haven’t already, please take time to take the survey.

Survey results are carefully considered by WASB staff and leadership, and responses help guide our services. In last year’s survey, when asked what is the most pressing issue facing school leaders, our members responded that school funding was at the top of the list. With that information, we offered more school funding sessions at our events, and, as mentioned earlier, will be holding a School Finance Seminar this March.

While 2012 may be a challenging year for public education, if we work together, we can continue to move public education forward. ■

**While 2012 may be a challenging year for public education,  
if we work together, we can continue to move public education forward.**