



Celebrating School Boards

Serving on a school board can be challenging, demanding and thankless. And, yet, it can also be one of the most rewarding jobs you'll ever have. School boards members are rarely recognized for their work but, this month, we hope to put the spotlight on our school boards and recognize and celebrate their role in leading our public schools.

I'm excited to announce that Oct. 4-10 will be officially recognized as Wisconsin School Board Appreciation Week by the state. Here at the WASB, we will be recognizing and thanking our school boards throughout this special week. I ask that our superintendents and school district staff help spread the word and take time to recognize their school boards.

On the WASB website, we have provided a School Board Appreciation Week "kit" that includes ideas for activities to recognize your school board and sample materials including a resolution acknowledging the special week, an opinion column and news release to send to local media outlets, social media announcements, and more. Find the kit by visiting wasb.org and selecting "Communications" and then "School Board Appreciation Week."

Wisconsin School Board Appreciation Week gives us an opportunity to not only celebrate our school boards but also build awareness and understanding in our communities about the vital function a locally elected board of education plays in our schools.

We know that knowledgeable,

informed and data-driven school boards are crucial to developing and maintaining a vision and school district culture that positively impacts student achievement. The importance of fostering a community of passionate and informed school board members cannot be overstated.

To assist in that endeavor, we've begun the process of building a Peer Mentoring Program for Wisconsin school board members. The program will officially launch next spring. In the meantime, we are looking for experienced school board members who wish to serve as mentors to board members who may be new to their boards or new to their positions on the board.

To qualify as a mentor, you must be a current or former school board member with at least six years of school board experience and have reached a Level 5 in the WASB Board Member Recognition Program. Experience serving as board president is a plus but not a requirement. I encourage experienced board members to consider participating and sharing their knowledge and experience with others. The online application can be found on the WASB website — wasb.org. Select "Governance" and then "WASB Peer Mentoring Program."

I have been discussing this exciting new program and other WASB news in my executive director's report at the Fall Regional Meetings, which began in September. If you haven't had your meeting yet, I encourage you to attend. In addition to meeting with colleagues, electing new directors (in some regions), celebrating the hard

work of our board members, and getting a legislative update, we'll have a feature presentation on community leadership led by WASB consultants. Specifically, the presentation will focus on what is working well in our districts and how boards can improve. There will be an opportunity for round table discussions for board members to learn from each other and to advise the WASB on how we can better serve you in these efforts.

At the Regional Meetings, we will also be discussing the upcoming State Education Convention in Milwaukee. The convention's theme is "Educating Hearts and Minds." This theme emphasizes the importance of supporting our students not only academically but also socially and emotionally. At this time, we are excited to announce our lineup of keynote speakers: educator and author Luis Cruz, molecular biologist and author John Medina, and innovative educator and author Chris Lehmann. Learn more about these fascinating speakers on page 22. We will be posting updates and additional information as it becomes available on the State Education Convention website at wasb.org/convention. It is shaping up to be another great convention.

With Wisconsin School Board Appreciation Week around the corner, I want to close by thanking our school board members for their work and leadership. There is no greater honor than working and advocating on behalf of our future generations. ■

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