



Stand Up for Public Education

As I write this month's column, we are in the midst of the Fall Regional Meetings. I look forward to these meetings each year, visiting every WASB region and connecting with our members across the state.

One of the new WASB initiatives that I've been very excited to talk about at the Regional Meetings is a new website we're developing called Stand Up for Public Education. Using social media, this website will be devoted to spreading the success stories of our public schools. With all of the challenges and attacks on public education today, it is imperative that we share the great things happening in our schools with a wider audience. Watch for more information to follow once the site goes public.

I'm also very excited to announce our keynote speakers for the 2014 State Education Convention in January. Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, will kick off our Convention. Education has been his passion his entire life. At age 12, Dr. Hrabowski participated in the "Children's March," organized by Martin Luther King, Jr. and spent five days in jail. His research has focused on science and math education, with a special emphasis on minority participation and performance. In 2012, Dr. Hrabowski was named one of *Time* magazine's "100 Most Influential People in the World."

Brad Meltzer, *New York Times* best-selling author and host of the History Channel's "Brad Meltzer's

Decoded," will join us for the second general session. Meltzer's story is filled with perseverance, focus, and the commitment to one's dream. And thanks to his recent nonfiction hit, *Heroes For My Son*, it is a story filled with the inspirational tales of the Wright Brothers, Abraham Lincoln, Rosa Parks, Jim Henson, Mr. Rogers, and more.

Stacey Bess, our third keynote speaker, taught homeless children in Salt Lake City, chronicling her experiences into a book, *Nobody Don't Love Nobody*, which was made into a Hallmark Hall of Fame movie *Beyond the Blackboard* in 2011. Bess gives an address you won't soon forget.

With the speakers finalized, the break-out sessions are now being scheduled and the exhibit hall is quickly filling up. It's promising to be another great Convention! If you haven't already, I encourage you to book your hotel rooms soon because they are filling up as well. Watch for more information about the Convention in the November issue of *Wisconsin School News*. Registration opens online Nov. 1 at wasb.org.

On a completely different note, I want to address the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which have recently sparked debate in Wisconsin and around the country. As you may know, this is the first school year that the standards are in place, covering language arts and mathematics in K-12.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to read the standards so you

can form your own opinions and educate your community about what the standards actually entail. While a healthy debate is always productive, unfortunately, there is misinformation circulating about the standards as well. It is important for school board members to understand what the standards are and what they are not. I encourage you to read this month's *Legislative Update* (page 27), which provides background information on the CCSS and references to two new reports from the DPI and Legislative Fiscal Bureau. Check the online version of *Wisconsin School News* for links to these reports.

As usual, there is much to think about and stay on top of for school leaders. We have many events and conferences coming up in the next couple of months, including the WSAA/WASB Employment and School Law Seminar, session two of the WASB Executive Coaching Workshop, and the WASB Legislative Advocacy Conference. As always, we hope these events will help you lead your district.

In the meantime, if I haven't already, I hope to see you at your Fall Regional Meeting. I enjoy seeing new and familiar faces, and look forward to visiting with those that I have yet to see. And a special thank you to Ruth Morton of the Turtle Lake School Board who assisted us with photographs at the Regional Meeting in Rice Lake. Thanks for all your help and all you do for public education! ■

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