

Advocacy, School Law, and More

A look back at the WASB's fall events: Full event recaps along with presentations can be found on the WASB website (wasb.org). Select "Trainings and Events" and then "Event Recaps." *Member log-in required.*

■ Legislative Advocacy Conference | Nov. 4, Stevens Point

School leaders from around the state gathered Nov. 4 in Stevens Point for the 2017 WASB Legislative Advocacy Conference. The event covered the impact of voucher funding on public schools, school finances, school funding trends, and advocacy tips and techniques. The event also featured a legislative panel with state lawmakers.

Brain Pahnke, assistant state superintendent for finance and management for the Department of Public Instruction, discussed voucher funding. Pahnke noted the increase in student enrollment in all of the voucher programs, especially the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP). In 2017-18, it was estimated that 4,403 students were enrolled in the WPCP voucher program. That number is estimated to jump to 7,150 for the 2018-19 school year. With the expansion of the voucher program, there will be an increased cost to the state and its taxpayers. It is estimated that the program cost the state about \$33.9 million this school year. Next school year, it is estimated that number will rise to \$56.5 million.

Todd Berry, president of the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WisTax), looked at school funding trends nationally and at the state-level. Berry noted that Wisconsin has fallen behind the national average in per-pupil spending. Between 2012 and 2015, the nation saw an average increase of 7.4 percent in per-pupil spending. During that same time period, Wisconsin increased its per-



pupil spending by only 3 percent. Looking at the 2017-19 state budget, Berry noted that the budget's second-year spending will outpace revenue, which will set up a structural imbalance as the state heads into its next budget.

Dan Rossmiller, WASB government relations director, covered advocacy 101. He shared tips for building relationships with lawmakers and successfully advocating for public education. Rossmiller emphasized the importance of building relationships with lawmakers by inviting them into your schools, sending them your district newsletter, and signing up to receive information from them. Once a relationship is developed, Rossmiller said school leaders should follow up and stay in touch via email or in-person visits.

Experienced school board members continued the school advocacy conversation during a panel discussion. Participating in the panel were Jim Bowman of the Appleton Area School Board, Teresa Ford of the Howard-Suamico School Board and Doug Mering of the Baraboo School Board (pictured above). Among other topics, they discussed how they formed relationships with their lawmakers and how their districts carry out advocacy efforts.

The event wrapped up with a legislative panel featuring Sen. Luther Olsen (R-Ripon) and Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay). They addressed hot topics, including school funding, the 2017-19 state budget, and a look at what bills might pass in the remainder of this legislative session. □

■ Fall Regional Meetings | September and October, various locations

The WASB Fall Regional Meetings gave school board members and administrators an opportunity to meet with their area WASB director, vote for directors, hear about the future activities of the WASB, and listen to an in-depth legislative update from WASB government relation staff.

WASB legal staff also held a pre-regional meeting workshop on “School Board Policy Implications of the 2017-19 State Budget.” This in-depth workshop walked through the state budget and discussed how it impacts public education.

During the Regional Meetings, WASB government relations staff



provided a recap of the state budget, including the new rules regarding school district referenda, sparsity aid, vouchers, and new mandates.

The Regional Meetings also provided an opportunity to recognize

those school board members who participated in the WASB Member Recognition Program. Board members who attended professional development opportunities such as WASB conferences and events or who had participated in other leadership capacities such as the WASB Policy and

Resolutions Committee were recognized for their hard work.

For a list of those board members who reached Level 5 of the WASB Member Recognition Program, see page 27. □

■ WSAA/WASB School Law Seminar | Oct. 20, Madison

The WASB, in partnership with the Wisconsin School Attorneys Association (WSAA), held a School Law Seminar on Oct. 20 in Madison. The event featured sessions on important school law topics and an optional pre-seminar workshop presented by WASB staff.

WASB consultants Guy Leavitt and Louise Blankenheim led the pre-seminar workshop on board-superintendent relations. They emphasized the importance of building trust between the board and administration. A possible starting point to build trust can be working together to review or define the school district mission and goals.

The WSAA/WASB School Law Seminar featured presentations from school attorneys across the state. Tony Steffek of Davis & Kuethau and Mindy Dale of Weld Riley discussed “The Role of the Union Post-Act 10.” With teacher unions losing much of their influence with the passage of Act 10, unions have switched their focus to challenging employment decisions through prohibited practice complaints and assisting with collateral actions such as discrimination complaints, wage and hour claims. Steffek and Dale

point out unions are doing this in an effort to stay relevant.

Presentations and handouts

from these sessions and more are available on the Event Recap page as WASB.org. □

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WASB Welcomes New and Returning Directors

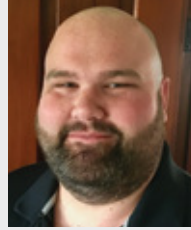
At the Fall Regional Meetings, three current directors won election to new three-year terms and one new director was elected. They join 11 other directors on the 15-member WASB Board of Directors.

Sue Today, a member of the Sevastopol School Board, was elected Region 3 director. She was serving as an interim director and will now serve a regular three-year term. Today has been on the Sevastopol School Board for the past 11 years and serves as chair of the CESA 7 Board of Control.

Andrew Maertz, a member of the Reedsville School Board, was also serving as an interim director. He was elected director of Region 8. Maertz has been a member of the Reedsville School Board for nine years. He has served as delegate to the WASB Delegate Assembly for eight years and has been a member of the WASB Policy and Resolutions Committee.



Today



Maertz



Rozmenoski



Weber

Mary Jo Rozmenoski, a member of the Black River Falls School Board, was re-elected director of Region 6. Rozmenoski is also WASB 1st Vice President. She has been on the Black River Falls School Board since 2008 and has served as president since 2012. She is also a member of CESA 4 Board of Control.

Tom Weber of the Sun Prairie School Board will be the new Region 12 director, replacing Nancy Thompson who reached her term

limit of nine years. Mr. Weber will begin his director duties in January following the 2018 WASB Delegate Assembly. He has been on the Sun Prairie School Board for seven years and has served as president for six years.

“I will serve you as I do in Sun Prairie,” he wrote on his nomination form. “Through strategic planning, customer service, alignment, and accountability. All with the end goal of education excellence.” ■

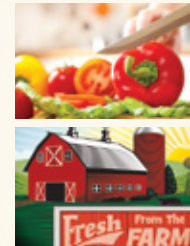
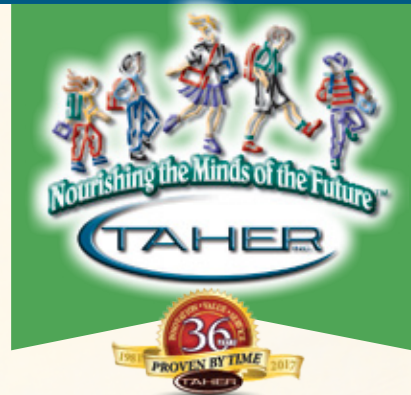
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