



## School Safety: Continuing the Conversation

Reading the headlines this year has been sobering. Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (FL), Huffman High School (AL), Pearl-Cohn High School (TN), Oxon Hill High School (MD), Sal Castro Middle School (CA), Marshall County High School (KY), Italy High School (TX), Great Mills High School (MD) — these are some of the K-12 schools that have experienced a shooting on school grounds since January 1 of this year. Prioritizing school safety is our new normal.

Over the past few years, schools across the country have put safety plans in place, implemented anti-bullying and student well-being initiatives, and improved their infrastructures. But more needs to be done at all levels to keep our students safe. Every student deserves a safe learning environment and every level of government should be held accountable to contributing to that goal.

I've been particularly heartened to see the engagement of young people in the recent school safety discussions. While we may wish for the topic to be different, it's the role of public education to produce an active and informed citizenry and our young people have the right to make their voices heard.

To contribute to the local discussions, we are dedicating this issue of the *Wisconsin School News* to school safety.

We know every district has different needs. Whether it's updating your policies or strengthening partnerships with local law enforcement and first responders, we hope the

safety resources outlined in this issue of the *Wisconsin School News* are useful and contribute to informed decisionmaking. And, we want to keep the conversation going. We'll continue to feature stories throughout the year on student safety and wellness. We invite you to submit articles on what you're doing to keep your schools safe. We need to learn from each other.

In July, we'll be expanding the annual WASB Summer Leadership Institute to include a one-day school safety seminar for school board members at the KI Center in Green Bay. The sessions on Friday, July 13 will focus on school safety with the traditional leadership program held on Saturday, July 14. Details and the agenda will be released soon. Mark your calendar.

We also need to turn our attention to the school board elections taking place across the state this month.

We welcome our newly elected school board members who will be sworn in and begin their service. Congratulations for standing up and helping to lead your local public schools. We congratulate you on your election and look forward to working with you.

To our experienced board members who will be leaving office, thank you for your service and your commitment and dedication to public education. You strengthened democracy by taking an active role in local government. I encourage you to continue your advocacy efforts as private citizens in supporting public education and the efforts of your school board.

Our new board members are joining at a critical time for public education. To help them transition into their roles, the WASB offers a series of New School Board Member Gatherings. These informal, evening gatherings take place in each WASB region between April 17 and 19 and will focus on introducing new board members to the basics of governance and the WASB services available to you. If you will have a new school board member in your district, please inform them of the gathering in your respective WASB region (see page 26). Or, better yet, join us at the gathering and bring along any new school board members in your district. The gatherings are free and open to new and experienced board members and superintendents.

In addition, in partnership with the state's CESAs, there will be 12 evening workshops held throughout the state in May that will take a deeper dive into the legal roles and responsibilities of board members. We encourage new board members to attend these to learn more about the laws that directly impact board service. The workshops will serve as a good refresher for experienced board members as well.

As we move forward, remember that the WASB is here to serve you. Throughout this special issue on school safety, we've highlighted resources available at the WASB specifically on that topic, but no matter the question, you can find support and resources at the WASB. ■

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