

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT VOICE: Student board representatives contribute to meaningful school change *page 10*

WISCONSIN School News

September 2018 | wasb.org

Journal of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Inc.



The Power of **Literacy**

Reading programs are really about supporting strong parent-child bonds

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Report Shows Dramatic Drop in Students Completing Teacher Training Programs

A new report from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education found that between the 2007-08 and 2015-16 academic years, there was a 23 percent drop in the number of students completing education programs.

In addition, the report found that almost half of college graduates who become teachers leave the profession within a few years. Deans of colleges of education who were polled by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities said the top reason why less students are enrolling is an undesirable perception of the teaching profession.

Although colleges can only have a minimal impact on public perception, they are trying to reverse this trend and improve teacher preparation programs. In an article in *Education Week*, Renee Middleton, the dean of Ohio University's college of education, said the school has taken a "community focus" when preparing its teachers. This includes adding trauma-informed care instruction and providing more training to students on multicultural education.

Other teacher preparation programs are working to get students more real-world experience by placing an emphasis on student teaching and developing closer relationships with school districts. □

Student Loan Debt Up Nationally, Down Slightly in Wisconsin

The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* analyzed a report on college students who graduated in 2017 and found that U.S. student loan debt continued to climb while in Wisconsin, the average debt dropped slightly.

The national student loan debt for the average graduate in 2017 was \$28,288 (up \$313 from last year). For students graduating from Wisconsin's colleges and universities in 2017, the average debt was \$29,569 (down about one percent from last year). Wisconsin ranked 33rd in the nation.

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay had the lowest student loan debt among public universities at \$22,664. Debt for 2017 grads at other campuses in the UW System: UW-Whitewater (\$24,948); UW-Stevens Point (\$25,918); UW-Eau Claire (\$26,244); UW-La Crosse (\$26,768); UW-River Falls (\$27,428); UW-Madison (\$27,979); UW-Parkside (\$28,504); UW-Superior (\$30,285); UW-Stout (\$30,409) and UW-Milwaukee (\$37,131). Data was not included for UW-Oshkosh or UW-Platteville.

The numbers were published in the third annual Student Loan Debt by State Report, which uses data collected through a voluntary financial aid survey by Peterson's, which purports to help students find the right college or university. □

STAT OF THE MONTH

23%

Percent drop in the number of students completing teacher training programs between 2007-08 and 2015-16 academic years.

Source: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

Youth Vaping Continues to Raise Concerns

The 2017 National Youth Tobacco Survey released in June reported that 3 percent of middle school students and 12 percent of high school students used an electronic cigarette or vaping device. Experts estimate that those numbers have increased since that survey was completed. Vaping products, such as those produced by Juul, continue to gain popularity among students.

While debate has been ongoing as to whether vaping is less harmful than traditional cigarettes, vaping products are getting more youth addicted to nicotine. Scott Gottlieb, commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said nicotine "can rewire an adolescent's brain."

The FDA has come under fire by

some health groups for its lack of action against regulating vaping products. Last year, the agency announced that vaping products won't be required to go through a rigorous approval process until 2022. Until then, the products can stay on the market. According to *USA Today*, the administration is reviewing more than half a million public comments it has received as the agency considers whether to restrict or ban certain liquid tobacco flavors. In addition, this month, the FDA is expected to launch a vaping prevention campaign targeting youth.

"We are very concerned that we could be addicting a whole generation of young people," Gottlieb said. "We only have a narrow window of opportunity to address it." □



The WASB's Summer Work Continues

It has been a busy summer at the WASB as we work to continually improve and to better serve and support public schools in Wisconsin.

Earlier this summer, the WASB was selected to work with the Wisconsin Resource Center for Charter Schools (WRCCS) at CESA 9. In this partnership, we are collaborating to provide resources to public school boards that currently or are interested in becoming a charter school authorizer. The initiative is funded through a federal grant via the Department of Public Instruction.

As part of this partnership, we are offering a series of trainings for public school board members and administrators. These trainings include an online series of courses on authorizing public charter schools, governance for charter school boards, charter school strategic planning, mental health supports for charter schools and much more. While the WRCCS work applies to all charter schools in the state, the WASB's role is specifically targeted at school-board authorized charter schools. For more information on this special project including how to take advantage of the trainings, visit the WRCCS website at WRCCS.org. As a reminder to all school districts that authorize charter schools, the governing boards of charter schools are subject to the state's open meetings and public records laws, among other laws. As members of the WASB, school districts can register their charter school governing board members for WASB legal trainings.

Throughout this summer, we've also been working on several important projects related to school advocacy. The WASB Government

Relations (GR) team is developing the 2019 WASB Legislative Agenda, finalizing recommendations for the Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding, and helping boards draft resolutions for consideration at the 2019 Delegate Assembly by the Sept. 15 deadline. And, of course, the GR staff has been busy discussing ideas with legislative offices, monitoring legislative study committees and keeping you up to date with K-12 news via the Legislative Update blog.

I am also pleased to report that we've continued to update and expand the WASB Policy Resource Guide (PRG). The PRG is our in-depth, online policy tool designed to assist boards in developing and implementing policy. The PRG can help you stay on top of state and federal law changes and develop policies that best fit your district by providing sample policies and rules. It also includes extensive background information, and links to relevant laws, regulations and other resources. For more information or to subscribe to the PRG, contact our policy services staff or visit WASB.org. All members are welcome to contact the WASB policy services staff for sample policies.

In addition, our communications team has been hard at work preparing for the 2019 State Education Convention set for January 23-25 in Milwaukee. I'm excited to announce that we've selected one of our keynote speakers — Steve Pemberton. Pemberton, the chief diversity officer for Walgreens, is author of "A Chance in the World," which tells his triumphant story of overcoming difficult odds to finding success. You can hear more of Steve's story in the next issue of *Wisconsin School News*

when we will publish an excerpt from his book. For more information on the convention, visit the convention website and/or see page 19 for a list of important dates and information related to the convention. Plan to join thousands of your colleagues from across the state at the convention. Registration opens Nov. 1.

Of course, we have some other great events taking place before the convention. I encourage school board members and administrators to attend our Fall Regional Meetings in September and October. These meetings take place in each WASB region throughout the state and give us an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of you, our school board members. A Pre-Regional Meeting Workshop, led by a WASB attorney, will be available to help members plan and conduct effective school board meetings. For information or to register, visit WASB.org. In November, the WASB GR team will be leading a series of legislative advocacy workshops. Watch for more information about those.

Finally, I want to remind everyone that Oct. 7-13 has been designated as Wisconsin School Board Week. During this week, we encourage school districts to thank their boards for their dedication and public service. We have developed a kit (available on WASB.org), which includes a sample press release, activities, and more to help districts honor their school boards.

I hope everyone has a great start to their school year and I look forward to seeing you at our Fall Regional Meetings. ■



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Pet Riddles and Jokes

with - Franny and Frank



written by Lisa Eisenberg
illustrated by Scott Scheidly



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The Power of Literacy

Reading programs are really about supporting strong parent-child bonds

Dr. Dipesh Navsaria

Recently, I encountered a new-to-Wisconsin mother and toddler who had left behind a not-so-good environment. As we established trust with one another, it came out that she was concerned about her child's mild speech delay. The upheaval in their lives meant they hadn't been able to find a primary care clinic and schedule his regular checkups yet. What could I do that might offer some immediate benefit for them?

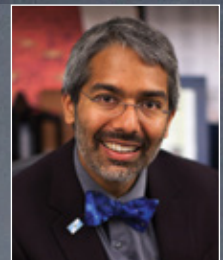
I do a lot of work around early literacy promotion. Recently, there have been two relevant, notable studies released in this field. The first article was a meta-analysis — a combining of several studies together

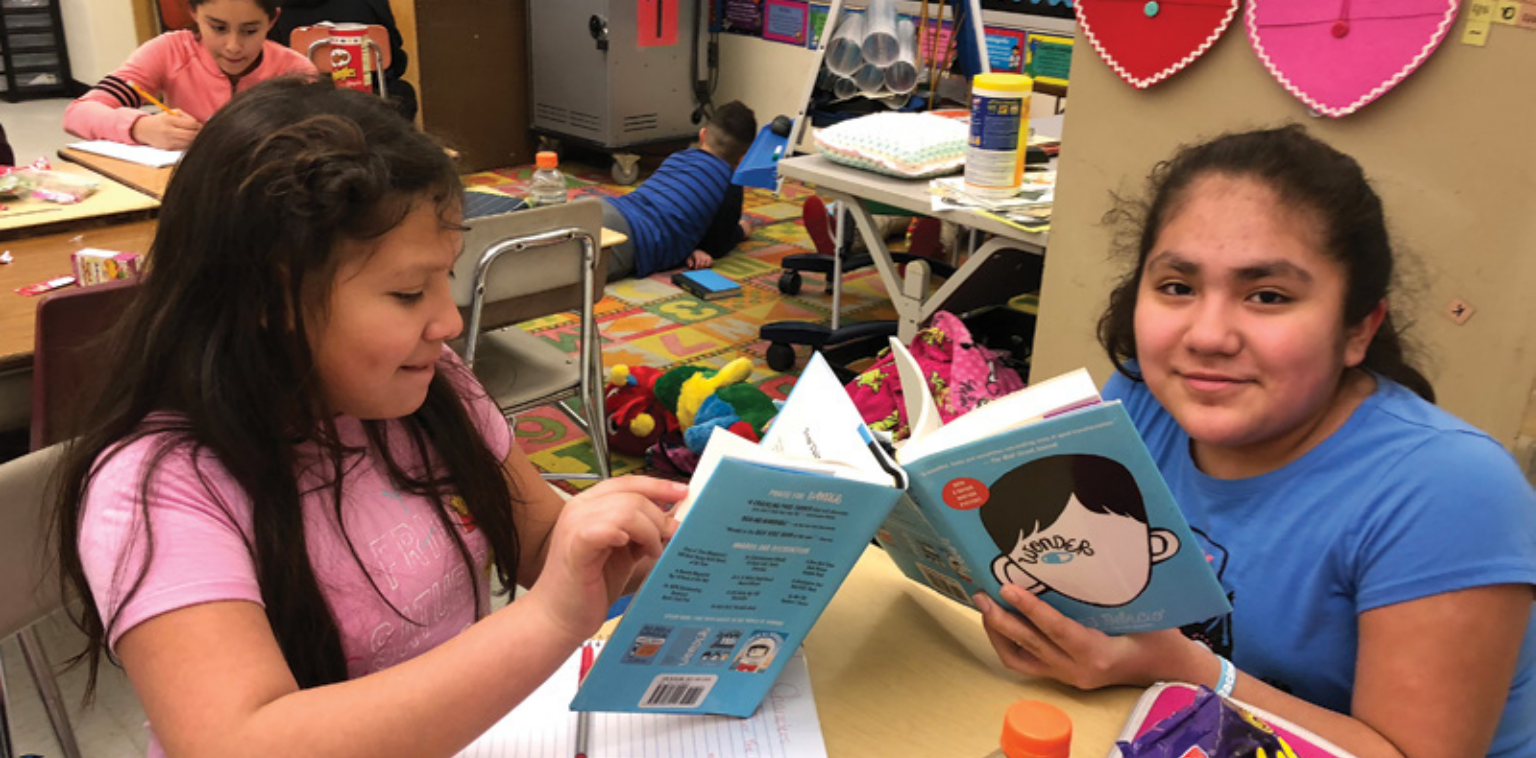
— showing interventions in parent-child shared reading have clear benefits, not just to the child's language and literacy skills (we've known this for some time), but also psychosocially. There were better social and emotional skills and improved behavior in the children. Less expected was the benefit to parents, who had less stress, less anxiety, and greater confidence in their ability to parent.

The second study was on the Video Interaction Project (created by a friend and colleague, Dr. Alan Mendelsohn of New York University). It uses a video recording of a parent playing and reading with their child, followed by watching the recording

A child learns the magic and power of reading only when a loving, nurturing, responsive caregiver (usually a parent, but could be anyone) reads aloud with them.

— Dr. Dipesh Navsaria





PAPERS, PIXELS, AND PEDIATRICS

Is there a difference between reading a book on a screen versus a paper page?

I'M ASKED THIS QUESTION FREQUENTLY when I give talks about early literacy, and I try to give at least some amount of guidance. My answer is as follows: To a certain extent, I think that text is text, whether it's being viewed as ink on the dried wood pulp that we call pages or glowing pixels on a screen. There are a few key caveats though.

First, the research is mixed on whether use of backlit screens can impact sleep. Melatonin is a hormone involved in initiation of sleep, and it is affected by light exposure, particularly certain wavelengths. While television has been in our collective lives for decades, those screens are a few feet away, rather than the several inches for most portable devices. However, while studies of close-in light use may affect melatonin, does typical real-world use do so? It's hard to know as of yet. Until there's better clarity on this, avoiding glowing screens at least an hour before bedtime is reasonable.

Second, most books for young children involve skillfully created images. Ensuring that a screen is high-quality enough to allow the beauty of the images to be displayed is important and shouldn't be compromised. Illustrations are as much part of the story as the text.

Third, there is a danger of a slippery slope when it comes to electronic devices — even young children often know that devices can provide not only a Caldecott-award-winning picture book, but also offer up games. It's hard for parents to resist a young child's demands for the attention-grabbing nature of games — after all, marketing cereals to children is predicated

on them throwing tantrums in the supermarket for a particular kind. Indulging in games poses a high risk of displacing the intention to share books together — night after night.

Finally, there's the danger of thinking that the enhancements offered by e-books are necessarily an improvement over physical books. A parent might assume that having a cow moo when tapped on a screen is inherently better than the silent paper equivalent. But is it? If that moo is not essential to the narrative or structure of the book, it may simply be a distraction. Children who become attuned to the “tap-and-make-something-happen” dynamic may ignore much of what is on displayed pages in favor of tapping everything on the screen in an attempt to “make it go.”

Ultimately, it all comes down to how the book is used. Assuming due care is exercised with the above points, for young children the most important factor is the presence of a caring, nurturing, responsive adult who understands how to interactively explore a book with a young child. This may be a skill unconsciously picked up by the adult through environmental role models, but for some they may require modeling, coaching and the encouragement to do so. Rather than become lost in the electronic versus paper book wars, we would do well to ensure that each and every child has an adult in their lives who knows how to read well with them and can do so routinely. □

This article first appeared in The Capitol Times in November 2017. Reprinted with permission from the author, Dr. Dipesh Navsaria.

together with a parenting coach who points out notable moments in the interaction. The researchers found decreases in child aggression, hyperactivity, and difficulty with attention.

These studies both support the value of working on early literacy skills, the foundation of the almost-30-year-old Reach Out and Read program, which makes discussion about early literacy an integral and routine part of medical checkups in early childhood. (Note: I am the founding medical director of Reach Out and Read Wisconsin, and serve on the national board.)

However, I'd like to point out that these studies emphasize a critical element that's not always present in the countless literacy programs out there. While you may view Reach Out and Read as a child literacy program, it's really secretly a parenting program: a program designed to gently and collabora-

Reach out and Read Wisconsin

Dr. Dipesh Navsaria is the founding medical director of Reach Out and Read Wisconsin and serves on the national board of Reach Out and Read. Reach Out and Read Wisconsin prepares the state's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with clinicians to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. The program begins at the 6-month checkup and continues through age 5, with a special emphasis on children growing up in poverty. Ages 0-5 are the most critical for brain and language development, and parents and caregivers play a crucial role in their child's development. Children who are read to at an early age develop a lifetime love of books and learning.

Reach Out and Read Wisconsin has served more than 109,000 children in the state and "prescribed" more than 187,000 books in 210 clinics across 50 counties.

For more information, visit chawisconsin.org/ror or blog.rorwisconsin.org



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Digital e-Books Available for Students Through WSDLC

More than 80 school districts across the state have partnered with the Wisconsin Schools Digital Library Consortium (WSDLC) and expanded their library collection with popular and classic e-books that students can read anytime, anywhere. The WSDLC provides nearly 3,500 e-books to over 83,000 students across the state at a cost of only \$1.50 per student. The consortium launched in January 2018 to help all districts across the state gain access to digital resources at an affordable price.

"The WSDLC collection opened the door to accessible e-books at our elementary school through easy use, a large selection, and teacher support," said Peg Billing, Library Media Instructional Technology Coordinator of the School District of Tomahawk. "As the district library media

specialist, I can now offer e-books for everyone and can accommodate requests with almost instant additions to our collection with our account — this keeps students reading and teachers requesting them."

The collection includes three grade-appropriate libraries, for grades K-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Students can browse the library's catalog, borrow titles, and start reading on all major computers and devices. All checkouts automatically expire at the end of the lending period — no late fees!

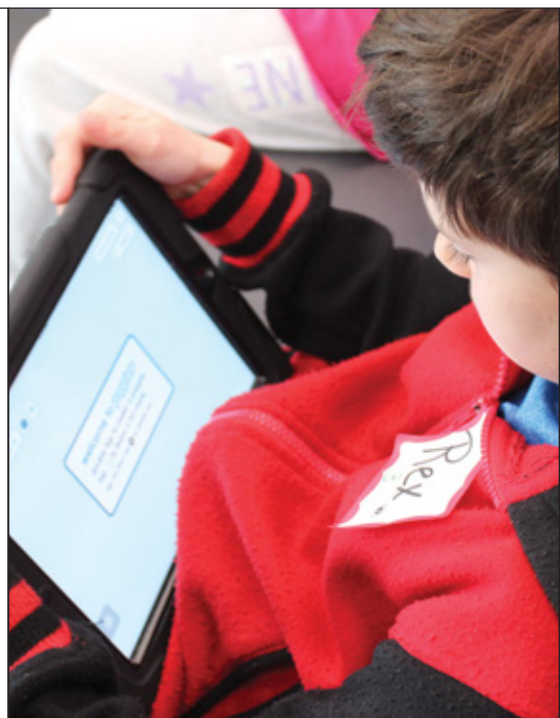
The Wisconsin Schools Digital Library Consortium is a partnership between the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, CESA Purchasing, the CESA Statewide Network, and WiLS. To learn more about WSDLC and sign up for the e-book collection, visit wils.org/wsdlc. □

Family Reading Resources

Fostering and supporting literacy development should be about developing and promoting the enjoyment of reading. Here are some resources for age and grade-level strategies for supporting literacy development.

- **Teaching Books:** An online database that can be used by teachers, students, librarians, and families to explore children's books and young adult literature. TeachingBooks.net
- **Reading Rockets:** Reading Rockets is a daily updated website containing information for parents and educators on teaching kids to read and helping those who struggle. ReadingRockets.org
- **Cooperative Children's Book Center:** Resources and reading lists compiled by the University of Wisconsin's School of Education. ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books
- **Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association:** A focus on forming strong connections between schools and families. Wisconsinpta.org

For more information, visit dpi.wi.gov/reading/resources/families. □





tively support strong shared reading between a parent and a child.

I don't object to programs that bring high-quality books into a child's home, but that emphasis is often misplaced; the book itself does little if handed to a child without any other interaction. A child learns the magic and power of reading only when a loving, nurturing, responsive caregiver (usually a parent, but could be anyone) reads aloud with them. A book that sits on the shelf is useless — it only does its magic when open in the hands of a parent and child reading together.

Equally important is a parent who knows how to read effectively to a young, squirmy toddler, a technique known as dialogic reading. Simply reading at a child doesn't work for a child with a naturally short attention span. Knowing how to read with them and interact is an important learned skill. Merely providing books accomplishes only part of the job — supporting parenting confidence is absolutely essential.

It's not just about the books. It's about the act of reading together. A book without a caring adult ... is

just a book.

The key point: Parents benefit most when we offer clear modeling, coaching and encouragement. It's not enough to say what to do; careful intentional skill-building is crucial for success. This explains the incredible outcomes seen from high-quality home visiting programs.

When reviewing programs, ask questions and recognize that not all programs are the same. Ask yourself if the programs merely provide resources or whether they are building capabilities or capacities in families.

So, what of the family I encountered? I took the board book we had given the child and pointed out his brief interactions with the book. Then I modeled talking about illustrations and I reassured the mother that his turning away quickly was just his normal, short attention span. Finally, I complimented her on her good parenting when she described how he would bring a book to her and "ask" to be read to.

She beamed with pride. And that's how I knew we were doing right by her. ■

Dr. Dipesh Navsaria, is associate professor of pediatrics at the UW School of Medicine & Public Health. He is a regular speaker at school districts and CESAs around the state. For more information, visit his website navsaria.com.

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The Importance of Student Voice

Student board representatives contribute to meaningful school change

Dr. Michelle McGrath

A lot of you are reading this article are probably thinking that I could not possibly be writing about your district. Your districts have had student voice and representation on your boards for years. In fact, 155 school districts in Wisconsin do. What is alarming, however, is that only 155 districts out of the 421 in Wisconsin consider student voice a priority. And of those 155 school districts, only 20 of them invest resources for their students to get trained to be effective, engaged representatives.

I have the opportunity to speak with hundreds of school board members and superintendents across

Wisconsin. What I hear from them often is this: we need student representatives that are effective communicators, collaborative, and self-advocates — students who give true voice that reflects the student body, not a student who merely reports out a calendar of activities.

However, there is a missing link — the investment from districts to provide students the opportunity to get the necessary training needed to serve in an engaged, impactful way. Wisconsin schools have traditionally pioneered amazing educational reform. Now is the time to stop settling for mediocre and pioneer a new route for student representatives.

Why Student Voice?

The most current research provides measurable data that shows the positive impact student voice has on a multitude of educational outcomes. Research shows that student voice is more than making students feel important and giving them a seat at the school board table; it is an approach to school improvement that makes the learning environment engaging, relevant, meaningful and more productive.

A recent Harvard study suggests that student voice may be as critical to outcomes of school as basic academic skills (*Ferguson, et al., 2015*).

According to Russ Quaglia,

executive director of Quaglia Institute for School Voice & Aspirations, “Student Voice is an opportunity that you can’t afford to ignore. It is more than gathering students’ feedback on an annual survey, through token committee positions, at a special event, or in response to a crisis. It is embracing students’ opinions and ideas as the cornerstone of school improvement efforts. When students have a voice, they are seven times more likely to be motivated to learn and eight times more likely to experience engagement in learning.

■ Which States are Leading the Charge?

California is leading the charge with investing in their student representatives on school boards.

Sandi Kurland, executive director for the California Association of Student Leaders (CASL), said, “A recent study observed California schools of varied demographics and found differences in achievement gaps can often be mediated by addressing opportunity gaps on campus. Thus, the role of a student board representative becomes the connection between the campus and

the school board to expand the leadership base at the school, communicate with other leaders, represent all groups and connect the voice of the unheard.”

California quickly realized that student board representatives also needed opportunities to learn and grow in order to become an effective voice on the school board. Student board representatives now attend a leadership training strand facilitated by CASL at the California School Board Association’s annual education conference in which they are taught leadership skills and understand the governance process of school boards in order to become the most effective student voice. Since they started this movement six years ago, California has seen student board representatives go from giving a report on the events on their campus, to becoming the true voice of the student needs, challenges, and vision for their school.

■ How Does Wisconsin Rank?

There are only a handful of schools in Wisconsin that continue to make an investment in their student leaders and are seeing incredible change because of that investment. The Howard-Suamico School



Student councils, like the the Bay Port High School Student Council (pictured above), can help encourage students to make their voice heard.

WASC Training Opportunities for Students

Leadership Institute – October 14-15, Wisconsin Dells

This program is a must for elected student officers such as board representatives and other leaders in your schools, including your teachers. We’ve collaborated with key researchers like Russ Quaglia and the National Association of Secondary School Principals to launch with your students a student voice program. This program will teach students about how to effectively gather insight from students and create an action plan for success — Addressing the: Wows, Wonders, Whys, What’s Next for your school community. We also welcome, Andrew McPeak — the co-author of “Marching off the Map” — a collaborative book with Tim Elmore addressing the importance of connecting with Generation Z and how to create a positive school culture where students are engaged and empowered.

Extensive Training for Student Representatives

In the month of June, the WASC provides four extensive training programs for student leaders. Our three-day experience, Project Delta, and our five-day experiences. Students dive deeper into concepts like civility, listening, communication, and collaboration. They participate in activities that allow them to experience how to maneuver into environments with unwritten rules, participate in conversations with people of differing opinions, and prepare proposals for a panel of experts using collaboration, advocacy and communication skills. And these are just a few!

To learn more about programs at the WASC, please visit wasc.org.

District is one of them. Not only are they setting the bar for student voice, but also, utilizing the resources of the Wisconsin Association of School Councils (WASC) to make sure their student leaders are trained to meet the needs of their important roles as leaders.

According to Damian LaCroix, superintendent, “The student representative to the board of education has benefited the Howard-Suamico School District greatly for years. Students are the primary beneficiaries of board-related efforts and having them trained is the hinge piece of their leadership.”

The Adams-Friendship School District is another district that stands out in Wisconsin for best practice in training their student leaders. Scott Willis, Adams-Friendship advisor to the student board representatives said, “Our school board representative is an intricate part of change in our district. Investing in their training

is an essential piece. Having them attend WASC events has made all the difference.”

■ So, Will You Blaze a New Trail?

Blazing a new trail will certainly be a collaborative effort and one that will include organizations, like the WASC, to push the needle forward. The WASC has been fortunate enough to collaborate with some of the most distinguished, forward thinking researchers on student voice from across the country. Our programs reflect not only their work but best practice from educators around the world. We are dedicated to teaching students the necessary skills needed to effectively serve your districts and our communities in their adult life.

■ Invest in Students

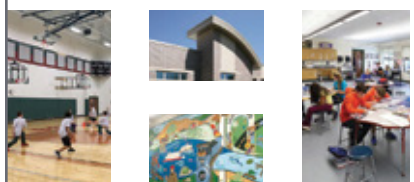
There is no denying that student voice is important. But equally as

important, is investing in the correct training for your young leaders.

Tim Elmore, CEO of Growing Leaders, has become an esteemed colleague of mine and his messages to educators echo what we have always believed at the WASC – it is our charge in this world to fill the tool boxes of our young people. By doing so, we are “preparing” for tomorrow, not “repairing” — a trend I see far too much in Wisconsin.

Tim Elmore shares this, “In today’s culture, I believe it’s imperative to include student voices on school boards. Generation Z is growing up feeling empowered and possessing an incredible intuition on where society is going. We owe it to our communities to both impart and to listen to our students — and let them experience leadership.” ■

Dr. Michelle McGrath is executive director of the WASC.

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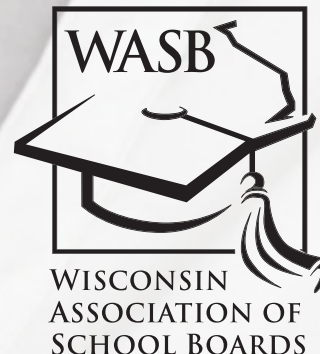
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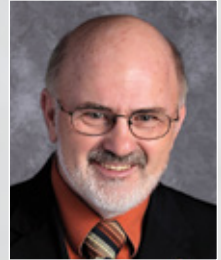
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The Importance of **TRUST**

Building and maintaining trust in your school takes time and constant attention

Guy Leavitt



Reflect back for a moment to your high school days. Remember your best friend. What made him or her such a good friend? You probably shared common interests but this person also was very likely your closest confidant. You felt you could share anything with them. In short, you trusted them.

This relationship we call friendship didn't just happen. It was built slowly over time. As friends, you didn't necessarily agree on everything but you knew they had your back when it really mattered.

Bring these life experiences forward to today and see how they may be applicable in the board room or in interactions between board members and the superintendent. In my experience, I have observed that highly effective boards understand and value the importance of relationships and trust for effective governance.

They also understand that trust is not instantaneous. A superintendent or a board member does not build trust simply by saying, "trust me." Trust is built over time much like that childhood friendship that you reflected back upon. Another way to

look at building trust is to think of it as a savings account. You start small but make regular deposits into your trust account and see the benefits of doing so. Occasionally a withdrawal is made but you ensure you have the adequate reserves available.

Trust Defined

So how do we define trust? In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, trust is defined as "assured reliance on the





PRE-REGIONAL MEETINGS WORKSHOP

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COMING TO ORDER:

How to Plan and Conduct Effective School Board Meetings

WASB members can improve their board governance skills and school law knowledge by attending a special workshop before the WASB Fall Regional Meetings. The workshop, “Coming to Order: How to Plan and Conduct Effective School Board Meetings,” will cover a range of topics, including:

- ▶ Sources of meeting procedures and rules of order
- ▶ Open meetings and closed sessions
- ▶ Calling meetings and setting the agenda
- ▶ Public participation
- ▶ School board operating principles and ground rules
- ▶ Recording minutes
- ▶ Electing officers and the role of officers

The Pre-Regional Meeting Workshops will take place 4:30-6 pm before each Regional Meeting.

For a complete schedule of WASB Fall Regional Meetings, visit wasb.org.

character, ability, strength or truth of someone or something.” Wikipedia defines trust as “confidence in the honesty or integrity of a person or thing.” An example of trust in Wikipedia is “the belief that someone is being truthful.” A word that is common to both definitions is truth. I find that truth, or honesty, is a necessary ingredient to building trust.

■ Truth

Deep levels of trust are built by being truthful and predictable. Being clear and unambiguous with your communication is important. It is equally important that your actions reflect what you are messaging with your words. Constituents who know what the board and the superintendent value tend to trust their actions. A high level of trust is key to promoting change and encouraging innovation. On the flip side, the lack of trust will lead to disengagement. As a WASB Organizational Con-

sultant working with school boards, I have been part of numerous conversations about trust. There are countless books written on the topic. My view of trust is grounded on four key points: relationships, communications, listening and honesty. This is not an all-inclusive list but it does represent some critical components needed to build trust.

■ Relationships

Schools are a people intensive business. As much as 85 percent of a school budget is dedicated to staffing. Staff members are there to meet the needs of the children we are educating. In a school setting, it truly is all about relationships at all levels. Relationships, like friendships, are built over time and they need to be nurtured. Mutual respect, consistency and empathy deepen relationships as they demonstrate that those around you are valued.

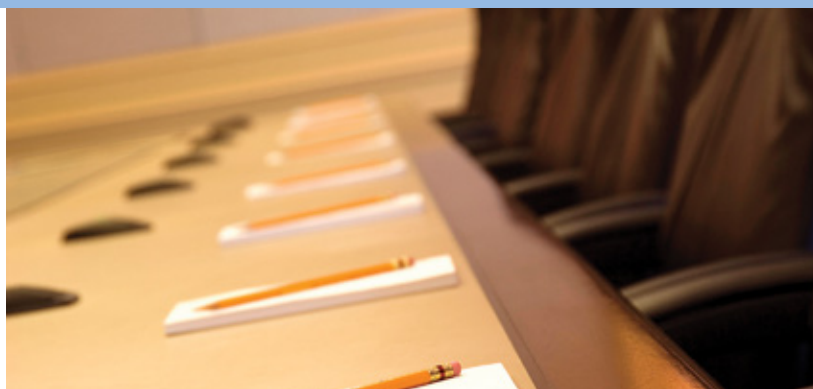
When I think about relationships, I’m reminded of the golden rule:

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” What a great thought to wake up to and to guide your actions each and every day.

■ Communications

The importance of communications cannot be overstated. I find that a lack of open, two-way communication usually exists when boards and superintendents find themselves struggling. Effective communication strategies are necessary as a means of building working relationships and lead to elevated levels of trust. Although we live in a world of email, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and other social mediums, I believe the most effective communication strategy you have available to help build trust is a face-to-face meeting.

Direct communication offers the richness of the verbal message plus the nonverbal cues such as facial expression and body language that are absent when using electronic



HERE TO HELP:

WASB Organizational Consulting Services

The WASB Organizational Consulting Services provides member school districts with a wide range of services in analyzing and evaluating systems and programs, developing master and strategic plans, and resolving unique challenges. The WASB Organizational Consulting Services is designed to provide experienced, objective and non-biased assistance to member school districts on any issue before them.

For more information, contact Guy Leavitt, director of the WASB Organizational Consulting Services, at gleavitt@wasb.org or 608-864-0631, or Barry Forbes, WASB Associate Executive Director and Staff Counsel, at bforbes@wasb.org or 608-512-1707 or visit wasb.org/customized-leadership-services



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You will find that as the level of trust increases over time

there will be a corresponding increase in morale, productivity, loyalty, commitment and positive outcomes.

means to convey your message. I recall instances where I felt I had clearly communicated a message to others through email only to find that the message was not received at all as it was intended. Email can be a great way to communicate in some instances, however, if there is room for misinterpretation of the message, a face-to-face conversation will likely be far more effective in building and maintaining trust.

■ Listening

Active listening enhances trust. How is this defined? One form of listening is listening to respond. When listening to respond, I invariably miss key points in the conversation. I find myself turning my focus to formulating a response rather than truly listening to the message being conveyed. In many instances, a person is not seeking a response to what they are saying. They simply want the

opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings.

The more effective form of listening is listening to understand. This is active listening. Being an active and empathetic listener builds trust and conveys your sense of caring to the speaker. You are giving the speaker your undivided attention and are focused on understanding their message completely.

Author Stephan Covey writes, “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.” Practice the skill of listening to understand if you want to elevate the level of trust in your organization.

■ Transparency – Honesty

Think of how much we hear the word transparency today. To me, transparency can more simply be termed as honesty. Leaders who are honest in their interactions with

others will build far more trust. You are what others perceive you to be. If the perception of others is that you are honest and that you are consistent in your interactions with others, you will elevate their sense of loyalty and trust. If your words do not square with your actions, others will be skeptical of your motivations and trust levels will be diminished.

■ Rebuilding Lost Trust

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, you may experience a loss of trust. If it is caused by something you did, the first step is to acknowledge the mistake and sincerely apologize. Then you need to get back to the basics of rebuilding relationships, clarity in communications, active listening and honesty in your words and actions. Continue to make small but consistent deposits into your trust account and over time you can rebuild the trust that has been lost or damaged.

■ Conclusion

Building and maintaining trust in your school takes time and constant attention but it is worth the effort. You will find that as the level of trust increases over time, there will be a corresponding increase in morale, productivity, loyalty, commitment and positive outcomes. On the flip side, a lack of trust leads to employee skepticism, loss of productivity, lack of commitment and internal stress within the organization. Practice the golden rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” ■

Guy Leavitt is the director of the WASB Organizational Consulting Services. He can be reached at 608-864-0631 or glevitt@wasb.org.

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GCHJUJDN 1017



Seeking Entries for the Student Art Competition and Student Video Team

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards, in conjunction with the Wisconsin Art Education Association, is seeking student artwork for the annual Wisconsin Art Exhibits and Awards, sponsored by Liberty Mutual Insurance, at the 2019 State Education Convention. Selected artwork is displayed at the convention and the winner is honored during a general session. The contest is open to Wisconsin public school students in grades 7-12. Entries are due Nov. 9.

The WASB is also looking for a team of students to produce a video that highlights some of the exciting events, sessions, and performances at the State Education Convention. The deadline to enter is Nov. 9.

For details on how to enter the art contest or student video team, visit: wasb.org/meeting-and-events/convention/request-for-proposals.



WASB Legal Services

The WASB Legal & Human Resources Services staff offers assistance to school board members and administrators throughout the state. Staff attorneys can assist with a variety of employment, human resources, school and labor law issues to help your district make sound management decisions.

Contact the WASB today to work with an experienced WASB attorney.



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Get ready for Convention.

Important dates and deadlines for the 98th Joint State Education Convention

January 23-25, 2019

DOWNTOWN MILWAUKEE



Important Upcoming Convention Dates:

- **AUG. 29** — Convention hotel rooms became available. Book your room now!
- **NOV. 1** — Convention registration opens.
- **NOV. 9** — Deadline for art competition and student video team.
- **DEC. 1** — Convention app releases.
- **DEC. 15** — Deadline for early bird registration.
- **DEC. 17 - JAN. 8** — Convention room blocks close (check with your hotel). Please try to cancel unneeded room before this date to allow other districts to access the special convention rates.

For more information, visit:
wasb.org/convention





Safety: Don't Forget the Basics

For the first half of 2018, you — our school leaders throughout Wisconsin — have focused on meeting newly mandated state safety statutes and regulations. We know you have made applying for Wisconsin's school safety grants a priority to make sure you have funding to add vital security to your buildings.

However, with all of this happening, you shouldn't lose sight of the safety basics that all teachers and staff should be aware of. Consider the following areas during your reviews.

■ Building Security

Your buildings are the cornerstone of your safety program. Think about these basics of building security when reviewing your safety procedures:

Building conditions: The condition of your facilities is the ground floor of your safety procedures. Check the condition of your doors and windows as they are a vital entry/escape point in the event of a safety incident. Make sure they are in working order, locks are functioning properly, and that windows can be easily opened from the inside when unlocked.

Technology: This has become an important part of the way we operate. Have your technology experts double check the systems that you'd use during an emergency.

Make sure your systems for phone, texting, online communications and/or radios are working properly, and your staff know how to use them. Even basics on how to get to an outside line should be communicated to all staff, especially new employees and substitute teachers. Don't be afraid to do regular and scheduled tests of these systems.

Landscaping: You want your facility to look nice and good landscaping can be part of a safety program. All bushes, shrubs and trees should be trimmed so there is a clear viewing area outside of the school building. This clear zone also allows passing pedestrians, police and firefighters to clearly see the building and activities inside and outside the building.

■ Security Measures

There are regular components of your safety program which are directly focused on security. Consider the following areas to be a focus of your security measures:

Building Access: Make sure you know who enters your building and make sure your visitor procedures are followed for every visitor. All visitors should wear a distinct badge that can be clearly seen by staff. Empower staff to question individuals they do not believe should be in the school building. No staff member should be embarrassed to call 911 if they feel staff or students are in danger.

Staff Badges: All staff identification badges must be maintained on their person or secured so that no other staff member, student or visitor can use them. Your staff should wear their identification badges as it easily distinguishes school employees from visitors to the building.

School Resource Officer: Make sure your memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement is up to date to reflect the expectations of your safety program and all staff and community members understand the role of the school resource officer.

■ Keep Locked Entrance Doors

Locked: It may seem simple, but staff and teachers need to be reminded that under no circumstances are locked building entrance doors to be propped open. All doors should be locked and checked by a designated staff member at the end of each school day.

Supervision: One of the best methods to control violence in a school is supervision. Ensure that your staff is mobile and moving. Continually monitor hallways, bathrooms, locker rooms and any other locations that students may assemble in your buildings.

■ Staff Training

Having great facilities and safety measures is a start. Having a trained staff who understand how to act in a

The [safety initiatives] basics are the building blocks to making sure you remain safe and successful.

safety incident is even better. Think about the following items:

Planning: Make sure your crisis plan is updated after you've implemented any changes in the past year. And make sure that all teachers (including substitute teachers) and staff understand the plan and know where that plan is located in every room.

Drills: Make sure you comply with all Wisconsin statutes regarding conducting safety drills and track and report them on the proper Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) forms.

Lockdown Training: Confirm with staff that they understand how to lock doors and open windows. Have your staff identify an object in the classroom that can act as a secondary barrier to entrance during a lock down.

Threat reporting: Ensure that all applicable staff understand the most

up-to-date regulatory rules for reporting threats of school violence. It can help identify a safety issue before it occurs.

■ Mental Health Support

Your safety program is at its most optimal when you also address the area of mental health. Consider the following items within your efforts:

Health services: Conduct a review of your health services to understand whether your district has resources in place for students and staff with mental health issues. Mental health is the root cause of many school violence events. This issue is so vital that the advanced initiatives to bolster student mental health are one of the major funding sources of a second round of grant funding by the Department of Justice.

Bullying programming: Make sure you have a comprehensive program in place for bullying prevention

and reporting.

Preparing and implementing safety initiatives can be taxing for any organization. Sometimes when implementing new initiatives, it's easy to overlook the basics. In this case, the basics are the building blocks to making sure you remain safe and successful.

I encourage you to keep in mind that you have great resources in the areas of government agencies, law enforcement and your insurance partners, who want to help make sure you have a safe environment. Don't be afraid to reach out to your partners to identify potential resources to help you meet your safety goals. ■

Marty Malloy is an Account Executive and Education & Government Practice Group Leader at M3 Insurance in Madison, Wisconsin.

M3 Insurance is an endorsed agency through the WASB Insurance Plan. For more information, visit wasb.org.



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ENDORSED AGENCY PROGRAM

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards Insurance Plan **Endorsed Agency Program** includes four insurance agencies specializing in serving the property & casualty and employee benefits insurance needs of Wisconsin school districts and CESAs.

For more information, visit wasb.org.



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Legislative Advocacy Continues in Preparation for New Legislative Session



The 2018 general elections are fast approaching and the 2019-20 legislative session will begin in just a few short months. The WASB Government Relations (GR) team is staying busy preparing for the next session.

Plan to join us at one of the upcoming events this fall to become a more effective advocate for your district.

During the Fall Regional Meetings, the WASB GR team will preview the fall election and the candidates for state and federal office with a focus on the races for governor and the state Legislature as they will have the most impact on K-12 education.

Following the elections in November, the WASB GR team will host a series of legislative advocacy workshops at CESAs around the state. At those workshops, the WASB GR team will use their experience as former legislative staff to train board members on how to communicate effectively with legislators and build relationships with them. For more information, see page 25 or visit WASB.org.

In the meantime, if your district hasn't already scheduled one, now is

the perfect time for your district to partner with neighboring districts and/or your municipal boards to hold a candidate forum. See the June-July 2018 *Capitol Watch* for detailed tips on how to set one up. Feel free to contact Dan Rossmiller or Christopher Kulow of the WASB GR team for assistance.

School Funding Commission Update

Through membership on the Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding, the WASB will be submitting comprehensive recommendations for improvements to our school funding system. The WASB's recommendations, along with recommendations from the other commission members, will be analyzed by the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau staff.

Once the analysis is complete, the commission, co-chaired by Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay), a former member of the Sturgeon Bay School Board, and Sen. Luther Olsen (R-Ripon), a former member of the Berlin Area School Board, will reconvene to determine what will be included in the commission's final report. It is possible the final report may not be released until after the

November general election.

Legislative Council Study Committees

Each even-numbered year, the Joint Legislative Council selects subjects for study from suggestions submitted by legislators. For each subject, the council appoints committees of legislators and public members to study the subject in depth per the council's direction and propose legislation for the upcoming session. The WASB GR team is actively monitoring three of the 2018 Legislative Council Study Committees: Identification and Management of Dyslexia; Investment and Use of the School Trust Funds; and Property Tax Assessment Practices.

The **Dyslexia Study Committee** will be chaired by state Rep. Bob Kulp (R-Stratford) with state Sen. Patty Schachtner (D-Somerset), a former Somerset School Board member, as vice-chair. Other legislators named to the panel are Rep. Mike Rohrkaste (R-Neenah), Rep. Amanda Stuck (D-Appleton) and Sen. Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst).

Also named to this committee is current Green Bay School Board President Brenda Warren. Warren,

During the fall WASB Regional Meetings, the WASB GR team will preview the fall election and the candidates for state and federal office [who] will have the most impact on K-12 education.

a pediatrician and the mother of an adult son who struggled with dyslexia, is a doctoral candidate in educational leadership. Her dissertation research centers on the barriers preventing scientific reading research from being applied in the classroom and what it will take to close the science-to-practice gap in reading instruction.

Other public education representatives on the panel include: Nancy Dressel, an instructional coach/curriculum specialist in the Hudson School District; Donna Hejtmanek, a reading specialist in the Northland Pines School District; and Michael Weber, district administrator of the Port Washington-Saukville School District.

The committee is directed to:

- Review current screening, identification, school intervention, and treatment protocols for dyslexia in K-12 schools;

- Examine the effects of current state statutes and regulations on literacy outcomes for students with dyslexia;
- Evaluate the effects of dyslexia on literacy outcomes in the state;
- Study recent research on evidence-based instructional techniques for students with dyslexia;
- Determine the components and costs of successful dyslexia education practices and laws in other states;
- Identify institutional obstacles to academic attainment for these students; and
- Consider legislation to:

Implement screening for characteristics of dyslexia in early grades;

Ensure that reading instruction and intervention practices incor-

porate relevant research findings from the University of Wisconsin;

Improve the partnership between parents, educators, counselors, and others on early identification and effective interventions for dyslexic learners; and

Enhance statewide access to updated resources and training on dyslexic education.

The **School Trust Funds Study Committee** will be chaired by state Rep. Terry Katsma (R-Oostburg) with state Sen. Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) as vice-chair. Other members of this panel include state Sen. Ducey Stroebel (R-Saukville), a former Cedarburg School Board member, state Rep. Don Vruwink (D-Milton), the current vice president of the Milton School Board, and Kim Bannigan, learning information systems coordinator for the



Legislative Update

Stay up-to-date on the latest state and national legislative news by following the WASB Legislative Update website. The mobile-friendly site is regularly updated by WASB staff and includes a “Follow” tool that allows you to receive email updates when a new item is posted.

Visit the WASB Legislative Update website by visiting wasb.org. Select “Advocacy & Government Relations” and then “Legislative Update.”



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DeForest Area School District.

In the recently concluded 2017-18 legislative session, Stroebel authored legislation to change the way the school trust funds are invested. That bill would have eliminated the authority of the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL), the governing body that administers the Common School Fund, to make loans through the State Trust Fund Loan program. Instead, the BCPL could delegate authority to the State of Wisconsin Investment Board (SWIB) to invest these moneys in the same manner SWIB invests the moneys belonging to the other funds it manages. The legislation was not advanced out of committee.

The study committee is directed to:

- Review the statutes governing the investment of the trust funds administered by the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL), including the Common School Fund, the income from which is paid to schools as Library Aid;
- Examine the loan programs administered by BCPL;
- Assess whether current statutes adequately ensure the effective investment and appropriate use of the proceeds of the funds; and
- Recommend legislation for necessary changes.

The WASB helped to organize a panel of school leaders who testified at the study committee's first meeting on August 16. Panelists testified from their districts' perspective as users of Library Aid and as borrowers from the State Trust Fund Loan Program. They included Baraboo School Board Vice President Doug Mering, Gillett District Administrator Todd Carlson,

Menomonee Falls Business Manager Keith Brightman, and Brian Krey and Jon Novak, the director of academic services and business manager, respectively, for the River Valley School District.

The **Property Tax Study Committee** will be chaired by Sen. Olsen, with state Rep. Scott Allen (R-Waukesha) as vice-chair. Other legislators named to the panel are Rep. Dave Considine (D-Baraboo), Sen. Rob Cowles (R-Green Bay), Rep. Rick Gundrum (R-Slinger) and Sen. Janice Ringhand (D-Evansville).

This committee is directed to:

- Review current property tax assessment practices, including the review of statutory, administrative, and judicial directives on assessment practices and the consistency of assessment practices throughout the state; and
- Recommend legislation to revise and clarify property tax assessment practices, including recommendations regarding the role of comparable sales and market segments in assessments and the assessment of leased property.

A key concern for this study committee is attempting to resolve the "dark store" issue, which involves the assessment of "big box" retail stores. Critics, including many local governments, allege "big box" retailers are increasingly successful at reducing their property tax obli-

gations by arguing that fully operational stores should be assessed in the same manner as abandoned, obsolete, or vacant stores — "dark stores." Critics say this practice shifts a portion, often significant, of the property tax burden to other taxpayers, including homeowners and small businesses.

For continuing coverage of the work of these committees follow the WASB Legislative Update blog. ■

Dan Rossmiller is the WASB's director of government relations.

Christopher Kulow is the WASB's government relations specialist.

WASB Resolutions Due Sept. 15

A reminder that resolutions to be considered by the WASB Policies and Resolutions Committee are due Sept. 15. The committee will select resolutions to go before the WASB Delegate Assembly during the 2019 State Education Convention. For more information, visit WASB.org. Select "Services & Resources," "Advocacy & Government Relations" and then "Delegate Assembly."

Connect with the WASB!



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Legislative Advocacy Workshops

Join the WASB Government Relations (GR) staff for a hands-on, evening workshop on how to develop the kind of relationships with lawmakers and their offices that will make you better, more effective legislative advocates for your students and schools. As a former legislative staff member, the WASB GR team member will describe the inner workings of legislative offices with tips on how to make efficient and effective contacts. They will also highlight resources the WASB provides that can help you, discuss challenges you may have experienced in communicating with your state lawmakers, and give practical advice on how to address those challenges.

AGENDA

(all locations)

6 pm – Dinner

6:30 pm – Program

LOCATIONS

Nov. 8 – CESA 10,
Chippewa Falls

Nov. 13 – CESA 4,
West Salem

Nov. 14 – CESA 6,
Oshkosh

Nov. 15 – CESA 8,
Gillett



Governance Workshops a Success The WASB would like to thank those school board members and school administrators who were able to attend our Governance Workshops that took place at CESA offices across the state in August. We have received positive feedback on the workshops and will continue to look for new ways to deliver school board training opportunities at various locations in Wisconsin. Special thanks to CESAs 2, 3, 9, and 11 that partnered with the WASB for these workshops.

UPCOMING WEBINARS

The WASB hosts a series of webinars throughout the year. Here is a look at the upcoming webinars from the WASB.

■ PUPIL EXPULSION

Sept. 12, 1:30 – 2:30 pm | *Presenter: Bob Butler, Associate Executive Director and Staff Counsel*

This webinar presentation covers state and federal laws relating to pupil expulsions. The presentation will provide a roadmap for considering the expulsion of pupils and to help avoid common pitfalls when doing so. The presentation will focus on procedures for administrators as well as for boards that conduct their own expulsion hearings.

■ ADMINISTRATOR CONTACTS

Oct. 10, 12 – 1 pm | *Presenter: Ben Richter, Staff Counsel*

This presentation covers all aspects of administrator contracts, including the drafting of contracts, contract terms, application of section 118.24 Wis. Stat. to administrator nonrenewals and more. State and federal court decisions on administrator contracts, including the *Klaus v. Eau Claire School District* case will be covered.

(continued on next page)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Regional Meetings & Workshops

Network with area colleagues

Join us as at your Regional Meeting this fall to recognize school board members, hold elections for the WASB board of directors, discuss activities of the WASB and more.

The meetings will include an in-depth legislative update from WASB Government Relations staff. The meetings also give us an opportunity to recognize school board members who have reached a new level in the WASB Member Recognition Program. School board members earn points by attending WASB and National School Boards

Association (NSBA) programs and activities.

WASB Executive Director John Ashley will wrap up the meeting with the Executive Director's Report, which will inform members about the future activities and direction of the WASB.

Please note, the date for the Regions 11 and 15 meeting is now Oct. 25 in Pewaukee to allow for an election in Region 15 due to an unexpected vacancy on the WASB board of directors. □

Region 1	Oct. 3 - Trego*
Region 2	Oct. 4 - Minocqua
Region 3	Oct. 16 - Green Bay
Region 4	Sept. 27 - Eau Claire*
Region 5	Sept. 25 - Rothschild
Region 6	Sept. 26 - Whitehall
Region 7	Oct. 17 - Neenah
Region 8	Oct. 18 - Kiel
Region 9	Oct. 10 - Fennimore*
Region 10	Oct. 9 - Wis. Dells*
Region 11	Oct. 25 - Pewaukee
Region 12	Oct. 23 - Monona
Region 13	Oct. 24 - Elkhorn*
Region 14	Sept. 20 - Milwaukee
Region 15	Oct. 25 - Pewaukee*

* Denotes regions with elections for WASB Board of Directors



2018 FALL REGIONAL MEETINGS & WORKSHOPS

SUPPORTING, PROMOTING AND ADVANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION

DATES: SEPT. & OCT. – VARIES PER LOCATION

LOCATIONS DETERMINED BY REGION



WEBINARS (CONTINUED)

■ ELECTION NOTICES & PROCEDURES

Nov. 7, 12 – 1 pm | Presenter: Dan Mallin, Legal and Policy Services Counsel

Wisconsin school districts must comply with numerous statutory obligations related to elections, and this presentation will cover key deadlines, required notices, and post-election processes. This webinar will be of particular interest to school district clerks and to superintendents' administrative assistants (who often assist with election duties).

■ FMLA – STATE & FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

Dec. 5, 12 – 1 pm | Barry Forbes, Associate Executive Director and Staff Counsel

This webinar will review requirements under the Wisconsin and federal Family and Medical Leave Act, including eligibility for leave for birth or adoption, serious health conditions of employees, parents, spouses and children, and the various leaves available to military service men and women and their families. Employer notice and documentation requirements will be covered along with employer and employee rights and obligations during and after FMLA leaves.

Please note: These and all previous webinars are recorded and available on demand. WASB members can purchase any webinar and watch when their schedule allows. Upcoming live and pre-recorded webinars are listed on the WASB Webinars page at WASB.org. In addition, links to past webinars are available in the Policy Resources Guide.

PRE-REGIONAL MEETING WORKSHOP

Coming to Order: How to Plan and Conduct Effective School Board Meetings

All school boards conduct their business in similar meetings. However, the effectiveness of their meetings can vary widely. How a board sets its agendas and plans for and conducts its meetings can impact the board's success in moving the needle on student achievement. In this workshop, a WASB attorney will review the legal requirements for meetings and board member roles as well as how to

structure meetings to achieve different purposes, conduct an effective board meeting, record meetings appropriately, and accommodate public participation.

Workshops will be held immediately prior to the Regional Meetings from 4:30-6 pm at the same facility. Members are welcome to attend workshops in any region. Regional Meeting registration is not required. Registration begins at 4 pm, the workshop starts at 4:30 pm. □

Mischler Joins WASB Organizational Services

The WASB is excited to announce that Ken Mischler is joining the staff as an Organizational Services consultant.

Ken began his career working as an auditor in a CPA firm for 10 years. Over the course of the past 30 years, Ken worked as a school comptroller (four years) and school business manager (26 years). He earned his master's degree in business administration from UW-Oshkosh and his master's in school business management from UW-Whitewater. Ken has been the chair and co-chair of the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials (WASBO) for the past 15 years. He received the "Shining Star" award and the Wally Zastrow award from WASBO.

Ken specializes in all phases of school business operations including budgeting, accounting, technology, cash management, food service and risk management. You can contact Ken at kmischler@wasb.org or 920-323-8150.



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The WASB has prepared a kit, which includes a sample press prelease, activities, and more to help school districts recognize their school boards. Find the kit at WASB.org. Select "Services & Resources," "Communication Services" and then "School Board Week."

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

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	Total No. Copies (Net press run)	4,525	4,418
	Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	3,989	3,927
	Paid/Requested In-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541	263	258
	Other Classes Mailed through USPS	0	0
	Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	4,252	4,185
	Free Distribution by Mail-Other Classes Mailed through USPS	13	10
	Free Distribution Outside the Mail	178	140
	Total Free Distribution	191	150
	Total Distribution	4,443	4,335
	Copies not Distributed	82	83
	Total	4,525	4,418
	Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	96	97



Service and Emotional Support Animals: Knowing the Difference

Increasingly, districts are being asked to allow students to bring animals to school to assist them in various ways. To respond appropriately, districts must understand the distinction between service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and animals used for emotional support. The ADA requires districts to allow students with disabilities in school to use “service animals,” a term which is narrowly defined under the ADA as dogs that are individually trained to do work or tasks for individuals with disabilities.¹ These dogs may be trained to pull a wheelchair, alert a student to an impending seizure or need for insulin, prevent an anxiety attack, or stop a student from engaging in self-harming behavior. Districts must permit a student with a disability to bring a service animal to school, unless one of the ADA exceptions applies.

Animals requested solely for the purpose of providing a student emotional support or comfort are excluded by the applicable ADA regulations.² Accordingly, in most cases, districts will not be obligated to modify their policies or practices to accommodate such requests. The obligation only arises in the uncommon circumstance when the animal is a necessary related service for a student with a disability eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 (Section 504).³

This *Legal Comment* will distinguish service animals under the ADA from animals sought only for emotional support, discuss a district’s obligations under the ADA with respect to service animals, set forth the steps to follow when a student asks to bring an animal to school, and identify obligations under the IDEA and Section 504 with respect to requests for animals in school.

■ Definition of “Service Animal” under the ADA

To qualify as a “service animal,” under the ADA, a dog must be individually trained to perform work or tasks that are directly related to the individual’s disability. The regulations provide a non-exhaustive list of work or tasks including: (1) assisting navigation for individuals with sight problems, (2) alerting the deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, (3) pulling a wheelchair, (4) assisting during a seizure, (5) providing nonviolent protection or rescue work, (6) retrieving items, (7) providing physical support for balance and stability, (8) alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, and (9) preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors of individuals with psychiatric and neurological disabilities.

Dogs used to provide emotional support, companionship, comfort,

improve well-being, or serve as crime deterrents do not meet the definition of service animal under the ADA. Likewise, dogs that recognize when an individual is in distress do not qualify as service animals unless the dog is trained to respond in some specific way. The regulations make clear that to qualify as a service animal, a dog must perform actual work or tasks, as opposed to simply being a calming presence for an individual. Accordingly, a “psychiatric” service animal that is trained to sense that an anxiety attack is about to happen and take specific action to prevent the attack or lessen its impact would qualify as a service animal under the ADA, whereas an animal that merely calms an individual by its presence, would not.

■ Rights and Responsibilities

Under the ADA, when a student with a disability asks to be accompanied by a service animal, a district may make only two inquiries, and may make them only if the answer is not readily apparent. A district may ask the student if the animal is required due to a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform. The student may not be asked about the nature or extent of the student’s disability, nor is the student required to provide documentation that the animal is certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal. Individuals with dis-

Dogs used to provide emotional support, companionship, comfort, improve well-being, or serve as crime deterrents do not meet the definition of service animal under the ADA.

abilities may train their own dogs to be service animals. A district may ask a student to provide documentation that the service animal meets local licensing and vaccination requirements.

A student with a disability must be allowed to be accompanied by the student's service animal in all areas of the school where students or members of the public are allowed. The service animal must have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless the handler is unable to use one due to a disability, or if the use of a harness, leash, or tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks. If a harness, leash, or tether cannot be used, the service animal must be under the handler's control through voice control or signals or another method. A student can be required to pay for damage caused by the animal if the district normally charges other individuals for damage caused by an animal.

Under the ADA, a district is generally not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal. These responsibilities generally fall upon the handler. However, a board must make reasonable modifications in its policies, practices, or procedures when necessary to avoid disability discrimination, unless the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the district's program. Therefore, it may be a "reasonable modification" under the ADA for a district employee to assist or monitor a student when using the student's service animal at school, such as assisting the student in tethering and untethering the service animal, giving commands to the animal, or escorting the animal on campus.⁴

■ Excluding a Service Animal

A district may ask a student to remove the service animal under several circumstances. A district may ask that a service animal be removed if the animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it. A district must give the handler a reasonable opportunity to gain control of the

animal when it misbehaves or responds reasonably to a provocation or injury. Before requiring removal of a service animal, a district should conduct a factual inquiry to determine if the animal was provoked or injured; if so, the district should take effective steps to prevent the same from happening again.

A district may also exclude a service animal if the animal would cause a "fundamental alteration" to the service or program being performed. To determine whether a service animal can be excluded on such grounds, a district should consider how to address comparable situations not involving a service animal. For example, it may not be acceptable to exclude a service animal that barks in an environment where other loud noises are tolerated. In general, federal guidance makes clear that, in most situations, a service animal will not constitute a fundamental alteration to a service or program.⁵

A district may also exclude a service animal if the animal "poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by reasonable modifications."⁶ A "direct threat" is a significant risk to the health or safety of others, based on an individual assessment. The individual assessment should consider the nature, duration, and severity of the risk, the probability that the potential injury will actually occur, and whether reasonable modifications could mitigate the risk. Decisions to remove a service animal cannot be made on generalizations or reputations of particular breeds — specific facts must exist to support removal.

Finally, service animals may be excluded if they are not housebroken. An isolated incident, however, will typically not be a basis to exclude the animal. If a service animal is excluded for any reason, the district must give the student an opportunity to participate in the program or activity without the animal.

■ Emotional Support Animals

Districts have received requests to allow animals to accompany students

for the purpose of providing emotional support and comfort because the animal's presence may calm a student, help a student who has been bullied feel less alone and afraid, be a companion for a student struggling with reading, or be an incentive for a student with challenging behavior. An animal used solely for these purposes is not a service animal under the ADA. Accordingly, in most cases, a district will not be required to agree to such a request.

However, if a student is eligible under the IDEA or Section 504, a district may need to consider additional factors before refusing the student's request for an emotional support animal. Under the IDEA, all students with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE)⁷, which includes an individualized education program (IEP). The IEP must include special education and all "related services" that are necessary to help a student receive educational benefits.⁸ "Related services" vary depending on the student.

Section 504 requires districts to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to the programs and benefits offered by the district. Like the IDEA, Section 504 also requires public elementary and secondary schools to provide FAPE to qualified children, including an individualized program and "related services" designed to meet their needs.⁹

When a student with an IEP or a Section 504 plan requests the use of a service animal under the ADA, the district is obligated to honor the request, but does not need to include the service animal in the IEP or the Section 504 plan unless the animal is determined to be a related service necessary for FAPE.

When a student with an IEP or Section 504 plan requests the use of an animal for emotional support or comfort, and the animal does not meet the definition of service animal under the ADA, the district must engage in further inquiry and analysis to determine whether the district has

an obligation to accommodate the request under the IDEA or Section 504. The district must convene the student's IEP or Section 504 team to consider whether the animal is a necessary related service, *i.e.*, whether the animal is necessary for the student to receive FAPE. This analysis should involve a consideration of several individualized factors: the nature of the student's disability; the specific needs of the student; how the service animal would meet those needs; whether the district could meet the student's needs without the use of a therapy animal; and whether the request would pose any risks or dangers to others in the school.

Often, a district can meet a student's needs with the use of other supports and interventions. For example, if a student asks to bring an emotional support animal to school to calm the student when the student becomes dysregulated, a district can often identify positive supports and interventions that achieve the same result. These interventions may include things such as offering the student fidgets or other distractions, allowing the student to listen to music or use sound-proof headphones, allowing the student to go to a designated quiet space, redirecting the student to alternative activities that the student enjoys, or allowing the student to spend time with an aide who can assist the student in calming down. The law does not require a district to provide the student with the student's requested support, as long as the district provides a support which allows the student to receive FAPE.¹⁰

■ Responding to a Request

When a district receives a request to use an animal at school from a student with a disability, the district should take several steps. First, a district should determine if the animal is a service animal under the ADA by assessing whether the student's dis-

ability and need for the dog is readily apparent. If not, the district should ask the two questions permitted by the ADA. If the answers demonstrate that the dog is needed for a disability and has been trained to perform work or tasks related to the disability, the student should be allowed to use the dog in school (assuming there are no grounds for excluding or removing the dog as discussed above). If a question arises as to whether the dog meets the ADA's requirements, it would be prudent to allow the dog in school on a trial basis to observe whether the dog is performing specific work or tasks related to the student's disability. If so, the dog should be allowed to remain in school.

If the dog is not a service animal under the ADA and the student is eligible under the IDEA or Section 504, a district should determine if the student is requesting an animal to provide emotional support. If so, the district should assess whether any district policies address the use of animals in school for emotional support. If not, the district generally will not be required to grant the request, unless an IEP or Section 504 team determines the dog is a related service necessary for the student to receive FAPE. If the team determines that the student's request should be granted, the terms of such accommodation should be carefully drafted to ensure that the student and the district have a clear understanding of when and where the animal may be used; the person responsible for handling, feeding, toileting, and caring for the animal; and the basis for removing the animal from school.

■ Conclusion

To appropriately respond to a student's request for the use of an animal at school, districts must have a clear understanding of their obligations under the ADA, the IDEA, and Section 504. Accordingly, districts should train staff who work with students with

disabilities to recognize the distinction between a service animal and animals requested for emotional support, and be able to engage in the requisite analysis under the law. To this end, board policies should clearly define service animals, explain when they are allowed in school, and distinguish animals sought solely for emotional support. Because of the complexities of these laws, districts confronted with the request for an animal in school may wish to seek the advice of legal counsel to ensure that they are in compliance with the laws and to develop appropriate policies to address these issues. ■

■ End Notes

1. Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government Services, 75 Fed. Reg. 56,164 (September 15, 2010) (codified at 28 C.F.R. pt. 35). References in this Legal Comment regarding requirements under the ADA regulations are found in 28 C.F.R. ss. 35.101 to 35.139 and Part 35, Appendix A. The ADA also allows the use of miniature horses. This Comment focuses on dogs, but the analysis is largely the same.
2. 35 C.F.R. s. 35.104.
3. For additional information on related topics, see *Wisconsin School News*, "Student Eligibility under Section 504" (April 2002) and WASB Legal Notes "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act" Parts 1 and 2 (Spring and Summer 2005).
4. Gates-Chili Central School District (DOJ April 13, 2015).
5. *Frequently Asked Questions about Service Animals and the ADA*, Questions 25 and 26 (July 2015), ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html.
6. 28 C.F.R. s. 35.139.
7. 20 U.S.C. s. 1412(a).
8. 20 U.S.C. s. 1401(a)(26).
9. 34 C.F.R. s. 104.33(a) - 104.33(b)(1).
10. See *Wisconsin School News*, "The Andrew F. Standard for a Free Appropriate Public Education" (September 2017).

This Legal Comment was written by Michael J. Julka, Steven C. Zach, and M. Tess O'Brien of Boardman & Clark LLP, WASB Legal Counsel.

Classroom Technology and Student Privacy

SERVICE ASSOCIATE Q & A

Q. Which laws are implicated by the use of technology in the classroom?

A. Each year, technology plays a more significant role in schools and classrooms. For example, most school districts use a web-based student information system to manage student data. Additionally, school districts that provide 1:1 devices for students will often pre-install apps on the devices that have been approved by the district. Many teachers are also encouraging students to download free apps on their devices for use in the classroom without first seeking approval from the district or reviewing the terms-of-use agreements for provisions that could compromise student privacy.

Q. Can a school require parents/guardians to agree to a technology provider's terms of agreement?

A. Not if the terms-of-use agreement is inconsistent with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) recently issued a complaint decision which reinforces the importance of ensuring that a vendor's terms-of-use agreement is consistent with FERPA. The complaint involved a virtual charter school and alleged that, as a condition of enrolling children in the school and receiving educational services, parents were required to agree to an online technology provider's terms-of-use agreement that violated FERPA by allowing the contractor to disclose personally identifiable student records to any third party.

The FPCO found that requiring parents to agree to such terms was tantamount to requiring parents to waive their rights under FERPA.

The FPCO further found that by requiring parents to waive their rights under FERPA as a condition of enrollment and receipt of services, the school violated FERPA.

Q. What steps can be taken to help prevent violations of student privacy laws?

A. Board policy or administrative guidelines should be adopted, prohibiting staff from installing apps on student devices or using a web-based student information system without the advance approval of the district. The policy or guidelines should contain procedures for requesting and granting district approval.

As part of the review/approval process, the terms-of-use agreements and/or privacy policies should be reviewed for the following:

1. The type of information collected by the service provider and whether it includes any personally identifiable information;
2. How the service provider uses, or is permitted to use, the information it collects;
3. To whom the service provider may disclose personal information,



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tion, and under what circumstances it will potentially disclose personal information;

4. Whether the service provider will give advanced notice prior to disclosure;
5. The timelines and protocol for destroying any personally identifiable information collected; and
6. Obligations regarding parental consent.

Finally, a notice and an opportunity to opt out should be provided to parents, as required by law. ■

The WASB Service Associates Program includes businesses and organizations that have been recognized by the WASB Board of Directors as reputable businesses and partners of public education in Wisconsin. For more information, visit wasb.org and select "Service Associates."

► Laws Related to Student Privacy

Wisconsin's Pupil Records Law and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Prohibits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from student records without the consent of a parent or adult student, with certain limited exceptions.

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) Federal law that applies when a student's personal information is collected or

used for marketing purposes. With certain limited exceptions, the PPRA requires parental notice and an opportunity to opt out.

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) Federal law that imposes parental notice and consent requirements regarding what information may be collected, used, or disclosed by commercial operators of apps and other online services directed at children under age 13.



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- Legislative Update
- Executive Director's Report

Pre-Meeting Workshop (Optional):
Coming to Order: Planning and Conducting Effective School Board Meetings



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- Nov. 14 - CESA 6, Oshkosh
- Nov. 15 - CESA 8, Gillett

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