Professional Negotiations Act changes subject of upcoming meetings

KASB, KSSA and KNEA have agreed to participate in a series of meetings during the summer and fall of 2013 to discuss potential changes to the Professional Negotiations Act, a law governing collective bargaining between teachers and school boards. United School Administrators of Kansas will also likely participate in the discussions.

Representatives from the three state associations met with Representative Marvin Kleeb, Representative Gene Suellentrop and House Speaker Ray Merrick on March 21, to discuss the status of two bills and a process for moving forward. The discussion included the status of HB 2085 and Sub for HB 2027. These bills proposed significant changes to the Professional Negotiations Act, and the issues and changes under discussion created significant controversy.

KASB, KSSA and KNEA representatives agreed it was time to start anew. To that end, Representative Kleeb, Chairman of the House Commerce Committee where the bills now reside, assured all parties that HB 2085 and Sub for HB 2027 were no longer under consideration. By sponsoring a series of meetings, Representative Kleeb will provide a process for input from all parties. The intent is to produce recommendations by Dec. 2013.

Find the full statement on the KASB website under Advocacy/Research.

Building a new board team, beginning with the “nuts and bolts”

The Leadership Services Department has been sharing information about the election and new board members making the transition to the district leadership team. Several articles have focused on what boards and superintendents can do in preparation for the transition.

In our experience with most new board members they are excited about “making a difference” in their new role. We have met very few that did not have good intentions related to serving the students in their district. New board member struggles almost always revolve around learning how boards work and their role on the board. The following list represents some of the questions and anxiety that might be associated with beginning their new duties.

- Will I be welcome?
- Will I be equally included?
- What is happening in the district now?
- Who are these people? Can I trust them?
- What is the job?
- How do I get my ideas on the agenda?
- Will my ideas be accepted?
- How can I do things “right”?

When a new team is formed, it is important time is allotted to discuss the “nuts and bolts” of how the board works. The New Board Member Workshops this spring will allow new members a chance to understand boards in general but it is up to the current board to ensure a quality transition for all members of the new team.

Our experience has been that effective boards are built on the concepts of good communication, trust among members that intentions are focused on the right work, and relationships among members. New team members may experience issues with inclusion and isolation, which are associated with change but how long a team struggles often depends on how willing experienced board members are helping to create a culture that is open, welcoming, and supportive of change.

Take the time to support the new team, it will be time well spent.
Thirteen years ago, Robert Putnam wrote a book called “Bowling Alone.” In it he described the increasing disconnect in something he called ‘social capital,’ an idea that was new at the time. When Putnam wrote his book, there was no Facebook, no Pinterest, no Twitter, LinkedIn, Skype, go-to-meeting, and most of us had not even heard the term social media. Putnam described a world in which people connected by joining clubs like Rotary and Lions, bowling leagues, or just by hanging around on the front porch. Face-to-face networking was the most effective means of “networking” at the time.

The digital age has changed ‘social capital,’ an idea that was new at the time. We may not say it is just for old people. The point is, Twitter is a distant monthly visitors. As Yogi Berra might Facebook has 750 million unique means of “networking” at the time. When Putnam wrote his book, ‘social capital,’ an idea that was new at the time. There was no Facebook, no Pinterest, no Twitter, LinkedIn, Skype, go-to-meeting, and most of us had not even heard the term social media. Putnam described a world in which people connected by joining clubs like Rotary and Lions, bowling leagues, or just by hanging around on the front porch. Face-to-face networking was the most effective means of “networking” at the time.

The latest estimates show that Facebook has 750 million unique monthly visitors. Twitter is a distant second at ‘only’ 250 million unique visitors each month. As Yogi Berra might have said, ‘no one goes to Facebook anymore, it’s too crowded.’ My kids say it is just for old people. The point is, Putnam did not foresee that the human need for interaction would manifest itself in whole new ways. We may not sit on our porches and interact with our neighbors, but we chat with our digital neighbors from anywhere and everywhere.

The digital age has changed associations as well. People used to flock to Topeka to learn the latest about what is happening in the Legislature at KASB’s GRN Seminars. Now they follow Mark Tallman and Tom Krebs on Twitter, read the Tallman Education Blog on Google, and get a daily email summarizing what happened that day. Phone calls or letters (remember those?) used to be the most common form of communication with the KASB legal staff. Now the primary means for getting an answer to a legal question is email.

Like society, association members have come to expect information immediately and in usable form. Associations have to deliver not just information, but what the information means to its members. New tools and methods are necessary to meet the needs of a society overwhelmed with information and seeking individual meaning.

At KASB, we are changing to meet new expectations from members. Leadership staff are on the road more than ever before, meeting with individual districts and boards to help them apply what they know about effective strategies for improving. Legal staff are traveling more and interpreting the law in writing for individual cases and situations in every district. Advocacy is not just about immediate information, but helping individual districts understand how they are affected. Insurance support and service is individualized and localized. Communication is constant, and ever-changing.

At the same time, members desire the irreplaceable experience of face-to-face networking. Surveys and evaluations show that the constant “best” thing about conventions and seminars is learning from each other in individual conversations with other board members from other districts. The process of getting to know people face-to-face won’t be replaced by a screen, at least for members of my generation.

Service to our members is KASB’s reason for being. We are constantly working to improve our means and methods of service while maintaining all of the good from our past. We want to create a front porch for everyone, whether it is digital or in person.

### Data available from KASB Research department

How many districts have all-day kindergarten? How many students are enrolled in all-day every day kindergarten? Are we the only district in the state not doing this? If you’re asking yourself these questions, as you start to think about budgets and teachers and enrollments for next year, KASB Research has a report for you. A complete listing is available of all districts in the state showing how many of their buildings and how many of their students are attending kindergarten in the various formats. Just email research@kasb.org or call Jim Hays at 800-432-2471 to receive this report.

### Whole Board Training and Professional Staff Development opportunities in your district

Whole board training is one of the most effective board development opportunities offered by KASB. Whole Board Training is on-site customized training to meet your district’s specific staff development and board training needs. Whole board training works with an individual board (or in some cases, a group of boards in a region) to discuss issues, provide information and establish policies and procedures addressing individual board needs.

KASB has a staff of experts available to travel to your district and work with your board. On-site training is advantageous to the district because more individuals from the district are able to participate. Time constraints and travel costs are significantly reduced when training can be conducted in the district.

As you plan school staff development activities and board training, look at what KASB can offer. The topics listed on the KASB website are just a sampling of KASB training topics and what we can do for your district. The staff will work with you to make the program best fit your specific needs. We will also work with you to coordinate meetings in your region to help share the cost among districts.

Visit www.kasb.org/wbt to find out more or call KASB for information on whole board training and staff development in your district.
They’ve been elected to the board, now what?

After the election, the new board member should receive communication from the board president and the superintendent inviting them to a meeting (suggested length of no more than 2 hours) where school district issues and data would be presented. The following list includes items that could be used in this meeting.

**District Vision and Goals**
- Assume that persons running for school board seats don’t know the existing district vision, or goals. Take the time to explain both to the new candidates.
- Student achievement
- Current focus on College and Career Readiness
- MTSS discussion with focus on the “whole child”
- Evaluation processes utilized to ensure high quality instruction throughout the system

**Student Demographics Profile**
- Achievement data
- Attendance rate
- Graduation rate
- ACT scores
- Vocational/technical participation
- At-risk numbers
- Co/extra curricular participants in district activities

**Personnel Profile**
- Number of administrators and the duties assigned
- Number of teachers and alignment to curriculum expectations
- Number of classified staff

**Budget**
- A brief presentation on how schools are funded, specifically, base budget per pupil, weightings and the state 20 mill levy.
- A brief review of easy-to-read documents specific to your district from KSDE’s web site. Distribution of the Budget Profile and the Budget-at-a-Glance would be good for persons who have filed. Both of these documents can be found at http://svapp15586.ksde.org/k12/k12.aspx

**District Facilities Profile**
- Configuration and building alignment
- Explain the number of buildings within the district, the age and utilization of each.
- Discuss briefly, any additional building needed in the future or potential restructuring in the use of buildings.
- Transportation structure including total miles covered, buses/vehicles utilized, and average daily ridership.

**Upcoming training for new board members**

Now that new board members have been elected it is an ideal time to help them transition to an active board member. A great way to assist with that transition is to have them attend the New Board Member Workshops around the state this spring. At these workshops we will work with your new board members to build an effective “district leadership team.”

Please inform your new board members about the opportunity to attend the New Board Member Workshops and provide the dates.

We hope to see you and your new board members in attendance at these workshops. These are a great way to build a relationship with your board members, and give them insight into the key work of school boards. We also encourage you to assign new board members mentors from your board to help build the bonds that create a positive board culture.

- April 16 - Garden City, Garden City USD 457
- April 17 - Oakley, NW KS Education Service Center
- April 18 - Beloit, North Central KS Technical College
- April 20 - Kansas City, Kansas City USD 500
- April 23 - Girard/Greenbush, SEK Ed Service Center
- April 24 - Clearwater, The Service Center @ Clearwater
- April 25 - Topeka, KASB Office
- May 4 - Hays, Hadley Center
- June 22 - Hutchinson, ESSDACK
McREL Principal Evaluation Training available for your staff

This training is intended for districts planning to utilize the McREL principal evaluation instrument. Principals and their superintendent should plan to attend this two-day training as a team to learn about how to properly use the principal evaluation system and develop an understanding of the Balanced Leadership framework that is the foundation for the McREL principal evaluation.

DATES NEAR YOU:

- May 1-2, Concordia, Hosted by Smoky Hill Ed Service Center
- May 9-10, Hutchinson, Hosted by ESSDACK
- May 13-14, Topeka, Hosted by KASB
- May 15-16, Eudora, Hosted by Greenbush
- June 12-13, Girard, Hosted by Greenbush
- June 17-18, Hays, Hosted by Smoky Hill Ed Service Center
- July 1-2, Eudora, Hosted by Greenbush
- July 8-9, Girard, Hosted by Greenbush
- July 23-24, Salina, Hosted by Smoky Hill Ed Service Center
- July 25-26, Hays, Hosted by Smoky Hill Ed Service Center
- August 6-7, Hutchinson, Hosted by ESSDACK

Cost is $175 per participant. Register on the KASB website at www.kasb.org/store.