Olathe school board member Amy Martin new KASB President

Amy Martin, a member of the Olathe USD 233 school board, will become president of KASB on July 1.

She will take over from Don Shimkus, board member of Oxford USD 358, whose term expires June 30. The unofficial passing of the president’s gavel from Shimkus to Martin occurred at the KASB Board of Directors meeting on June 4. Dayna Miller, a member of the Basehor-Linwood USD 458 school board, is KASB president-elect designee. Her term as president will start July 1, 2017.

Referring to the standoff between the Kansas Supreme Court and Republican leaders over school finance, Martin said, “Kansas faces unprecedented times as I look toward the start of my term. I ran for the position of KASB president with the goal of empowering local communities to be stronger advocates for their schools. The showdown between the Legislature and the Courts reminds me there is no time to waste. If ever there was a time to reach out to our elected leaders and respectfully encourage them to set aside politics and work toward a solution that protects kids, it is now.”

In addition to serving on the Olathe school board, Martin has held a number of positions with KASB in addition to serving on numerous local, regional and national education-related boards. She also has been a leader in local community and professional areas. She and her husband, Derek, have 3 daughters.

Martin earned a bachelor of science degree from Creighton University and

School Board Member Spotlight: Janice Frahm, Colby USD 315

Janice Baughman Frahm is a lifelong Kansan and has had roles as an educator and in support of education. Following frequent moves in her grade school years, she attended and graduated from Longton High School in southeast Kansas. Her parents were both public school educators but her father “returned home” to Elk County to take over his deceased dad’s Angus cattle ranch. Grandfather Tom Baughman was also in his first term in the Kansas House of Representatives at the time of his death.

Janice chose Southwestern College for her baccalaureate degree in Home Economics. January Interterm courses were in-depth. She studied Fashion Merchandising, Anthropology/archeology work in Mexico, and did nutrition at Winfield State Hospital. Attending KSU for her Master’s degree, Janice was selected for the Education Professions Development Act grant. For her practicum Janice student-taught at Independence Community College, Hutchinson Community College and Colby Community College. In the fall she was hired as the Home Economics teacher at Colby Community College.

At Colby in the northwest - the opposite corner of Kansas from her teen years - Janice met her future husband Bruce Frahm, a wheat and corn farmer. Early on the couple enjoyed traveling and experiencing different cultures, a passion they have kept. In 1979 they circumnavigated the globe on Windjammer’s Yankee Trader, visiting 55 ports in 10 months. Bruce served as the radio operator. The
This is the time of year when boards of education across Kansas have to finalize some tough decisions. Budget decisions affect every aspect of a school district and tough choices have to be made every year. Education is a people business and these decisions always affect people.

Board members, if you have never experienced a gymnasium full of people there to defend funding for a program that is special to them, you will. Faced with tough budgets around the time of the great recession, the Emporia Board of Education was faced with choices about funding elementary orchestra classes. There was a crowd at the meeting.

A young college student standing in the back of the room took the long walk down the aisle carrying a viola case. As she approached the podium her head was down and her countenance revealed she was nervous. The first words she blurted out were, “When I was in school, my viola was my only friend.” It is hard to capture in words the reaction of the crowd and board except that there was a collective look of, “huh?” But she was serious.

Boards have to decide how to fund increases in employee health care costs, property and casualty insurance, building maintenance, textbooks, and the list goes on and on. Tough choices have to be made, and no graph can undo the effect of tough choices on students.

I think about that sometimes. Those decisions we make that look like numbers on a page can be life-altering for real people. How many decisions does a board make that either provides for, or takes away, an opportunity for a child to get through life? Countless.

Wichita was in the news recently because they are being forced to make tough choices. Every member of that board, and 285 other boards, knows that those decisions will affect students. Wichita was in the news, but those decisions are being made in every district in Kansas.

One can produce a graph or chart or numbers on a page that school funding is up, but those graphs, charts, and numbers do not show that the cost of doing business in schools has increased at a faster rate. Boards have to decide how to fund increases in employee health care costs, property and casualty insurance, building maintenance, textbooks, and the list goes on and on. Tough choices have to be made, and no graph can undo the effect of tough choices on students.

Policy makers in Topeka have to make tough choices as well. Choices made in the past are affecting boards of education now.

As the Legislature comes back for a special session to find a solution to how to open schools on July 1, we should all be thinking about long-term solutions to the financial trouble Kansas is now experiencing. We should be thinking about solutions that adhere to our constitutional requirement for an improving educational system, one that helps our students get better everyday.

Read more blogs from Dr. Heim online at http://heimkasb.blogspot.com.
A call for ‘bold leadership’ from Kansas Commissioner of Education

The KASB Board of Directors and Legislative Committee began a busy day on Saturday, June 4 by hearing an update on the vision for public education from Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson.

Watson discussed the Kansans Can initiative, noting that the new vision creates a more student-focused system that provides support and resources for the success of every child. The initiative has been endorsed by the KASB Board of Directors.

Watson noted the importance of strong leadership from boards of education across the state. Considering the turnover in superintendents and the challenges facing public education from various fronts, Watson said “school boards are the key to success.”

“We have this opportunity to lead in these extraordinary times, and we need to embrace it,” he said. “Never before have the kids in Kansas needed us to do something bold.”

Mark Tallman, KASB associate executive director, updated the board on legislation passed during the 2016 regular session. The board also discussed recent developments in the Gannon school finance court case.

Following the briefings by Watson and Tallman, the KASB Board of Directors continued its regular business meeting while the KASB Legislative Committee began its work on 2017 legislative priorities and recommendations.

Highlights from the regular business meeting of the board of directors included a report from Ted Carter, KASB research specialist, on revamping many of the surveys and data collection projects sponsored by KASB.

The board also reviewed budget information and employee benefits and held an executive session on personnel. Plans for the 2016 Fall Summits were shared with the board by Dr. Brian Jordan, KASB leadership services.

An NSBA report was presented by Frank Henderson, NSBA Western Region director and a member of the Seaman USD 345 board of education. Henderson is also a past president of KASB. Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

Leadership for Tomorrow starts meeting

The district’s blended learning approach gives students the opportunity to learn through both traditional and technology-based learning.

LFT was also briefed by Laurie Denk, information technology instructor, on Vision_Tek, an interactive computer and media class, which has its own YouTube channel with more than 1,000 followers and a million hits.

In addition, Cody Whetstone, director of Smoky Valley Virtual Charter School, provided information about that growing education pathway.

He explained that the majority of students in the program have multiple at-risk factors, such as academic or household issues. “When they do achieve, it is single-handedly the best part of our job,” Whetstone said. ~Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org
KASB employees recognized, honored by board

KASB employees and retirees were recognized and honored during the board of directors meeting earlier this month.

Recognized for their recent retirements were Kathy Tallman, executive assistant who retired in December; Pam Crossland, senior adjuster who retired in April; and Tom Krebs, governmental relations specialist, who will be retiring at the end of June.

Pam Schwartz, comptroller, was recognized for 30 years of service; while Naomi Franklin, custodian/maintenance; and Mike Pape, printer, were honored for 15 years of service.

Lori Church and Carol Pitts were recognized for five years with KASB. Church is an attorney, and Pitts is assistant executive director of communications and marketing.

New employees were also welcomed. Those include Melissa Holder, executive assistant; Rod Spangler, assistant executive director for insurance services; Leah Fliter, advocacy and outreach specialist; and Robert Gilligan, government relations specialist. ~Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

KASB’s new president

Martin continued from page 1

worked for many years as a programmer and systems analyst. In 1996, she left the workforce to stay at home with her children and over the years developed a passion for photography, which has developed into a successful portrait business.

Martin said KASB must continue to be the most trusted voice for education in Kansas. She said supporters of public education must improve communicating and networking in order to build support for schools. ~Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Education leaders prepared recently for a Webinar on the Kansas Supreme Court’s ruling in the school finance lawsuit. From left to right are G.A. Buie, executive director of the United School Administrators| Kansas; John Heim, KASB executive director; Lori Church, an attorney for KASB; and Mark Tallman, KASB’s associate executive director for advocacy. The officials reviewed the court ruling and discussed ways the Legislature could respond.

BoardDocs® provides a powerful, easy-to-use eGovernance solution

Save thousands of dollars by eliminating paper packets.

Reduce staff time spent on preparing and distributing board packets and documents.

Increase accountability and transparency of your board’s operations and processes.

Reduce paper waste and your organization’s carbon footprint.

Learn more... boarddocs.com or call BoardDocs 800.407.0141

Hear it from a Kansas Colleague! Contact KASB at 800-432-2471 or email cpitts@kasb.org. We’ll put you in touch with similar-size districts in Kansas currently using BoardDocs®
Occasionally we come across research from other organizations or researchers that we find interesting. These are posted to the research blog under the heading “For Your Consideration.” Recently we’ve come across several such publications. Below is more information on them.

It pays to improve school quality

Education Next recently released an article written by Eric Hanushek and others that indicates “states that boost student achievement reap large economic gains.” You can find the report and related resources at educationnext.org/pays-improve-school-quality-student-achievement-economic-gain.

Using 2013 NAEP basic achievement levels, Kansas is ranked 11th in this article in terms of student outcomes. This is very similar to the rankings KASB has calculated based on NAEP and other outcome measures; Kansas is typically in or just below the top 10 for student outcome measures across states.

In the article, Hanushek and his co-authors come to the following conclusions:

• “We find that state differences in student achievement and educational attainment account for 20 to 35 percent of the current variation in per-capita GDP (gross domestic product) among states.”
• “If all states improved their schools to the point where average student achievement matched that of Minnesota, the top state, the gains in GDP would allow even the most cash-strapped state to meet demands for public services and maintain a balanced budget.”
• “The largest gains would come from a coordinated improvement in performance - since states are all linked by flows of people over time. But even if states act individually, they can promote a better economic future for their residents through education reform.”
• “Realizing these gains does require a sustained commitment on the part of a state’s political leaders. ... If we are to achieve prolonged economic growth in our nation, we have no choice but to strengthen the skills of our people.”

So improving our students’ outcomes will improve our economy. The next question we should be asking is, “How can we improve the outcomes for Kansas students?”

Can More Money Fix America’s Schools?

In April, NPR ran a story called “Can More Money Fix America’s Schools?” The article is actually a jumping-off point for NPR’s “School Money: The Cost of Opportunity” series, which can be found at npr.org/series/473636949/schoolmoney.

The takeaways from the article, according to the author, are:

• Money isn’t pixie dust. If it were, there would be no school funding debate.
• Money does matter - especially for low income students.
• Money should reach those students who need it most.
• For extra money to have an impact, it can’t just be a one or two year boost; it needs to be a steady increase over many years.
• Money needs to be focused in the classroom instead of on support costs.

But the main point the author makes is this; the How You Spend versus How Much You Spend debate should not be a debate at all. Each depends on the other.

KASB does not necessarily agree with the notion that Kansas schools are all “broken” and need “fixing,” but we do agree that both how much is spent and how it is spent are important.

The Effects of School Spending on Education and Economic Outcomes: Evidence from School Finance Reforms

In January, a working paper with the title above was released by the National Bureau of Economic Research. You can find it at nber.org/papers/w20847.

The paper described an analysis conducted by researchers at Northwestern University and the University of California to determine the impact of court-mandated school finance reforms. They looked at “nationally-representative data on children born between 1955 and 1985 and followed through 2011” to see how the type and timing of school funding reform impacted the adult outcomes for these students.

The authors noted national studies that correlated school resources with student outcomes usually find little association, so they wanted to do a more targeted analysis to specifically determine how school funding reforms impact outcomes for students.

The study found that “a 10 percent increase in per-pupil spending each year for all twelve years of public school leads to 0.27 more completed years of education, 7.25 percent higher wages, and a 3.67 percentage-point reduction in the annual incidence of adult poverty.” They further found these effects were “much more pronounced for children from low-income families.”

The authors also found that “exogenous spending increases were associated with sizeable improvements in measured school quality, including reductions in student-to-teacher ratios, increases in teacher salaries, and longer school years.”

So what does this mean? The authors conclude the study with the following:

...many have questioned whether money matters, and whether increased school spending can improve the lifetime outcomes of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Our findings indicate that state school finance reform policies can improve student outcomes and help reduce the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Money alone may not be sufficient, but our findings indicate that provision of adequate funding may be a necessary condition. Importantly, we find that how the money is spent may be important. As such, to be most effective it is likely that spending increases should be coupled with systems that help ensure spending is allocated toward the most productive uses.

For more info, visit kasbresearch.blogspot.com or contact tcarter@kasb.org
KASB Prestigious Partner k12itc gains top award from Greater KC Chamber

KASB’s Prestigious Partner k12itc was recently named the 2016 Small Business of the Year by the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. The company also received the Mr. K Award, named after the late Ewing Marion Kauffman, founder of Marion Laboratories and the original owner of the Kansas City Royals. The Mr. K Award is based on business growth or sustainability, exemplary employee relations and a commitment to community service.

A visit in early June to k12itc’s headquarters in Northland Kansas City provided KASB staff a look at the operations of the growing company and a chance to learn more about their commitment to public education.

k12itc delivers customized services for K-12 school districts, no matter the size. With a philosophy of “educate first, sell second,” k12itc staff focus on gaining an understanding of the school’s vision for technology and the results they are seeking. Their approach is not a one-size-fits-all plan. Instead, they offer several levels of support, from consulting to serving on planning committees, completing a one-time assessment or providing full time onsite technology support.

“We can improve service processes and save costs,” said Brad Sandt, founder and CEO, “but it’s also an equity thing.”

The company leverages a special mix of cloud computing and on-site support, enabling districts to achieve better technology support at a lower cost. Sandt said access to technology shouldn’t be determined by location.

“We are trying to teach kids for jobs that don’t even exist now,” Sandt said. “Many of those jobs won’t matter where you live, but you do have to have the skills.”

For additional information on the benefits of working with k12itc, please contact Randy Weseman, KASB assistant executive director for operations. ~Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

July 15 deadline for $3,000 grants from Westar Energy

Three $3,000 grants to support innovative project-based instruction in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are available from Westar Energy. The funds can be used to increase student interest and academic achievement in the STEM disciplines as applied to electrical energy. A focus on increasing the diversity of students involved in STEM education is of particular interest.

The awards are a partnership between Westar Energy, Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) and Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE).

The deadline for grant submissions is July 15. Awards will be announced July 29 and funding presented by September 1. All grant recipients are recognized during the KASB Annual Conference and asked to present a breakout session on their project.

For more information and the online application, see www.kasb.org/WestarSTEM. ~Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

Education advocates urged to stay up-to date on developments during special session

With the Legislature set to return June 23 for a special Legislative Session on school finance, KASB is urging education advocates to reach out and express their wishes to their legislators and to keep abreast of what will probably be fast-moving developments during the session.

In addition to monitoring media reports about the session, you can keep up to date by following KASB on Facebook (KASB.Topeka) and Twitter (KASBTopeka) and checking on our website, www.kasb.org.

In May, the Kansas Supreme Court ruled the law approved by the Legislature during the regular session continued inequities in school finance the court had already ruled unconstitutional. The court has stated: “School districts must have reasonably equal access to substantially similar educational opportunity through similar tax effort.”

In addition, the court said that after June 30, the last day of the fiscal year, school funding couldn’t be raised, distributed or spent unless there was an equitable finance system.

While equity funding is the primary issue in the case, legislators can venture into other areas during the special session as a way to get votes to pass a bill.

In 2014, this is exactly what happened — the Legislature increased school funding to comply with a court decision but also approved controversial policy initiatives advanced by the Kansas chapter of Americans for Prosperity. These initiatives included repeal of tenure protections for teachers and providing tax credits to corporations that donated funds to send low-income students to private schools.

An indication on the direction the Legislature may take this time around may appear when legislative committees meet to lay the groundwork for the special session. ~Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org
Frahms’ first son Jon was born in 1981. Janice was on the Methodist church committee that organized Puddleduck Preschool. Because of interests developed in travels, Janice and Bruce became active in Colby’s American Field Service Club. Since the 1950s AFS has been arranging school year and shorter exchanges for foreign students to attend high school in the USA, and US students to go abroad. Because of skilled national and regional staff and local volunteer support, AFS is recognized as a leader in exchange programs. Janice served as Colby’s president many years. The Frahms have hosted boys from Japan and Hungary, a girl from Japan and two girls from Thailand. They remain in contact and occasionally can arrange a visit – either welcoming their “kids” to Colby or traveling to see them.

Janice has a knack and intense interest in guiding kids to making sound decisions. For 12 years the Frahms were a foster family. They had typically one, but as many as three foster children at a time. They had kids from age four months up to high school graduation, and parented a dozen foster children over the years.

Janice maintained membership in the Kansas Association for Family and Community Education for 35 years. She has been the Northwest Kansas District Chair and International Chair on the state board. She helped organize state conventions and attended national ones as a state officer. As International Chair she got the support of KAFCE to do two bus trips for foreign students – giving them a week at the end of school to see interesting places around Kansas and spend time together learning of other cultures.

Janice’s sister-in-law Sheila Frahm started public service with seven years on the Colby USD 315 board, was elected to the Kansas State Board of Education and then the Kansas Senate. She was asked by Bill Graves to run as Lieutenant Governor and ultimately was appointed by Governor Graves to replace Bob Dole when he resigned the US Senate.

This helped inspire Janice to run for the USD 315 school board in 2005. She is now in her third term, serving as Vice President for four years and then as board president for seven. She enjoys attending KASB Annual Conferences and often is the district Assembly Delegate.

She has been on administrator search committees as well as calendar, negotiations and building committees over the years. In addition she has served on the Northwest Kansas Educational Services Center Board.

Janice served two three year terms on the Special Education Advisory Council. This is a subject close to her; the four month-old foster boy mentioned earlier is on the autism spectrum. Janice and Bruce adopted Karlyn at age three. Through IEPs and skilled support and intervention Karlyn made progress and advanced socially. Inclusion in the classroom was critical to Karlyn’s social development and fostered valuable connections and appreciation between him and his classmates. Karlyn was an especially proud graduate when he received his Colby High School diploma from his mom. He now works at Walmart and is one of two recipients this year of the Council for Exceptional Children’s National Yes I Can award in the category of Transition. Her SEAC position also afforded Janice the opportunity to visit with her Southwestern College classmate Sally Cauble who serves the 10th District on the Kansas State Board of Education.

Janice’s interest in education, culture and travel was passed down. Son Jon traveled to Thailand to teach English as a Second Language for a year. That was nine years ago! He teaches at the 11th and 12th grade level at the boy’s school (which is 15 percent girls…) Jon’s wife Teay has a degree in early childhood education. They teach semester-long weekly classes in their home for students from age 5-17. These are of varying size and format. Jon interviews AFS exchange aspirants at the provincial level. Jon and Teay’s three year-old daughter Aliyah is comfortably bilingual.

If you’d like to read more school board member spotlight profiles, visit www.kasb.org/NewsBriefs.

~Shaneice McNabney, smcnabney@kasb.org

**KASB hires two to help advocate, communicate**

**Gilligan**

KASB has hired two new individuals to help us advocate and communicate our message.

Leah Filter is joining KASB as an Advocacy and Outreach Specialist. She is a member of the Manhattan USD 383 school board, a former Leadership for Tomorrow participant, previously a reporter for the Manhattan Mercury newspaper, and former director of Advocacy and Outreach for the Kansas Farm Bureau.

Robert (Rob) Gilligan will join KASB as a Government Relations Specialist. He is currently a station manager of a radio station in Emporia, a member of the Emporia City Commission and is serving as mayor of Emporia. He has previous experience at the Emporia Gazette newspaper and student body president at Emporia State University. ~Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org
Increase participation in KASB training and save money!

For the second year KASB is offering a season pass.

$1200 for an entire year of unlimited participation in seminars and workshops (some exceptions apply).

Learn more at kasb.org/training, order online at kasb.org/seasonpass1617 or contact KASB for details.
785.273.3600/800.432.2471email sfincham@kasb.org