Many attend School Finance Summit to discuss future funding

More than 100 people attended the KASB School Finance Conference and engaged in spirited discussions about what the next school funding formula should include to help drive student success.

“Any day when we can get this many people together for the cause of public education is a good day,” said KASB Board President Don Shimkus, who is president of the Oxford USD 358 school board.

The summit was attended by school officials, legislators and advocates.

At Saturday’s meeting of the KASB board, board members who attended the School Finance Conference said they appreciated the diversity of opinion expressed during table discussions.

They also said they would try to reach out and continue the conversation about school finance with policymakers and try to build a better understanding with those with whom they may disagree.

Mark Tallman, KASB’s associate executive director for advocacy, said he hoped continued discussion and debate about the next school funding system would be based on solid information.

“There are many groups and efforts that will be looking at these issues. We want the conversation to be driven by data,” Tallman said.

During the school finance conference, participants reviewed studies by KASB Research Specialist Ted Carter that identified and analyzed states similar to Kansas, those states whose student outcomes surpassed Kansas and what are called high-impact states, or states where students perform better than their demographics and funding would suggest that they perform.

There are only five states that surpass Kansas in a majority of student outcome measures. They are New Hampshire, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Vermont and Minnesota.

Participants at the school finance meeting noted that those five states all spend more per pupil on education and they all have a higher level of adult education.

“No matter how you slice and dice it, those five states spend more than Kansas,” said state Rep. Don Hineman, R-Dighton.

In addition, participants said Kansas could also learn from the so-called high-impact states.

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My name is Trevor and I weight 38 pounds!

I’M FROM KANSAS

Dr. John Heim, KASB Executive Director

A year has passed since I was traveling through Western Nebraska on my new motorbike and encountered a nasty thunderstorm. Riding in the rain is never fun. Riding in a thunderstorm with lightning and hail is scary and painful. Western Nebraska is not a good place to be caught in such circumstances. I couldn’t help but think of scenes from “Lonesome Dove” in the same general area. Blue Duck is scary, but a Western Nebraska thunderstorm is no Sunday afternoon ride.

There are a whole bunch of Trevor’s out there who don’t know what they can’t do, they only know that they are ready for anything. Our job is to give them a lever and a place to stand so they can move the world.

As I scanned the horizon for shelter, it quickly became apparent that no one lives in Western Nebraska. I finally spotted a grain elevator and weigh house on the side of the road. I pulled up under the eyes of the shack and waited out the storm. When it cleared off, I had another problem. In my haste to get under cover, I had pulled up too close to the building to back out. There was a small dip in front of me so I decided to plow ahead.

Wheat chaff floats on the top of water. If you are in a hurry, you might think the chaff is solid ground, but you will soon learn it’s like quick sand. Once the front tire went in, there was no getting out. The bike was high-centered and the front tire and wheel were buried in muck.

An Indian Chief Classic weighs 812 pounds with a full tank of gas. I’m old and broken down, but nothing if not determined when the stakes of not getting this bike unstuck are years of ridicule. Even with all of that motivation, I couldn’t budge it. Searching the area, I found a short 4”x 4” post, a 6’ length of angle iron and a 1’X6.” Like Archimedes, I was able to move the load, but not keep it upright and out of the hole.

Just when I was ready to curl into a fetal position and cry, a young woman and her son rolled up in their car. The folks of Nebraska are as helpful as Kansans, and without mocking me she told me she had called her husband when she saw my plight and he was 20 minutes away. Just then the youngster hopped out of the car and announced: “My name is Trevor and I weigh 38 pounds!”

Can’t you hear the conversation in the car? “Mom, I can help him.” “Trevor, you weigh 38 pounds.” But Trevor didn’t hear it that way, and bless his little heart, he was ready to help. Trevor manned the lever, I pushed, and mom helped keep the bike upright and we got that bike out of the hole. If Trevor had heard “You can’t do it,” I would probably still be stuck 15 miles north of Sidney, Nebraska. Trevor heard that he weighed 38 pounds and that was plenty enough for him.

Around 450,000 kids start school in Kansas this August. There are a whole bunch of Trevor’s out there who don’t know what they can’t do, they only know that they are ready for anything. Our job is to give them a lever and a place to stand so they can move the world. Have a great school year.
In 2014 the Kansas Legislature adopted K.S.A. 72-1127 which directed the Kansas State Board of Education to ensure the subjects and areas of instruction taught by local schools are designed to “achieve the goal established by the legislature of providing each and every child with at least the following capacities: (1) Sufficient oral and written communication skills to enable students to function in a complex and rapidly changing civilization; (2) sufficient knowledge of economic, social, and political systems to enable the student to make informed choices; (3) sufficient understanding of governmental processes to enable the student to understand the issues that affect his or her community, state and nation; (4) sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of his or her mental or physical wellness; (5) sufficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate his or her cultural and historical heritage; (6) sufficient training or preparation for advanced training in either academic or vocational fields so as to enable each and every child to choose and pursue life work intelligently; and (7) sufficient levels of academic or vocational skills to enable public school students to compete favorably with their counterparts in surrounding states, in academics or in the job market.”

Long before the Kansas Legislature codified these Rose Standards and the Kansas Supreme Court adopted these standards as the test for determining a constitutionally suitable education, elected official and educational leaders recognized the importance of public education in creating responsible citizens and that the role of education went way beyond providing “reading, writing and arithmetic.”

The concept that all children should be educated for their own success and the public good grew out of the Age of Enlightenment and was supported by elected and educational leaders such as Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush, Horace Mann and many others.

In 1818, Thomas Jefferson noted that the important role of public education is:

“To give every citizen the information he needs for the transaction of his own business; To enable him to calculate for himself, and to express and preserve his ideas, his contracts and accounts in writing; To improve, by reading, his morals and faculties; To understand his duties to his neighbors and country, and to discharge with competence the functions confided to him by either; To know his rights; to exercise with order and justice those he retains, to choose with discretion the fiduciary of those he delegates; and to notice their conduct with diligence, with candor, and judgment; and, in general, to observe with intelligence and faithfulness all the social relationships under which he shall be placed.”

In 2013, the Kansas Legislature passed a law, K.S.A. 72-1129 establishing “Celebrate Freedom Week” which requires students in grades K-8 to receive lessons in the history of the founding of our country, and the “original intent, meaning and importance of the declaration of independence and the United States Constitution, including the bill of rights of the United States constitution in their historical contexts.”

The State Board has authority to adopt rules and regulations and states to: “provide that the study of the declaration of independence include the study of the relationship of the ideas expressed in that document to subsequent American history, including the relationship of such ideas to the rich diversity of our people as a nation of immigrants, the American revolution, the formulation of the United States constitution and the abolitionist movement, which led to the emancipation proclamation and the women’s suffrage movement.”

The week of September 17 was designated as “Celebrate Freedom Week” as September 17th is Constitution Day.

The legislative purpose stated in establishing “Celebrate Freedom Week” is “…to educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values about which this country was founded…”

“Celebrate Freedom Week” is yet another example of the value and importance of public education as stated in 1832, by Abraham Lincoln "Upon the subject of education...I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in."

“Celebrate Freedom Week” resources available

The Law Related Education Committee of the Kansas Bar Association provides a variety of resources to schools on the differences between the three branches of government, rights and responsibilities of students, the role of laws in a democracy and the role of courts in protecting individual rights. These include:

LawWise: An educational newsletter distributed to Kansas teachers and available online. LawWise includes legal topics, court cases, technology tips and lesson plans for elementary and secondary grades.

On Your Own: This is a 36 page booklet that explains legal issues that young people need to be aware of as they prepare to leave school and enter the workplace. It is also available in Spanish.

For the Record: This booklet is geared toward middle school students and focuses on the rights students have under our democracy and their responsibilities that come with those rights.

Celebrate Freedom Week: When the Legislature passed Celebrate Freedom Week in 2013, the Law Related Education Committee produced two videos to provide ideas and materials for Kansas Bar Association members who are invited to speak during Celebrate Freedom Week. The committee also provides packets including the following:

1. Bookmark that includes resources for teachers and students.
2. Copy of LawWise front page and how to subscribe.
3. Pocket size USA Constitution.
4. Copy of teaching materials provided by KBA attorneys and judges organized by grade level -available on line also.
5. One copy of On Your Own and For the Record.

To access any of these resources and other resources see www.ksbar.org/?educator_resources.
The KASB Board of Directors meeting Aug. 29 included updates on advocacy initiatives, staff goals and NSBA. This was the first meeting presided over by Don Shimkus who assumed the presidency July 1 for KASB.

The KASB Legislative Committee joined the Board of Directors for a report by Mark Tallman, associate executive director for advocacy and communications. Tallman discussed results from the May and June 2015 Advocacy Tour and preliminary feedback from Friday’s School Finance Summit. The Legislative Committee then adjourned to a separate room to continue discussions of KASB’s legislative priorities for the 2016 Legislative Session.

The board of directors received a report from Executive Director John Heim on staff goals for 2015-16.

The board also approved the appointment of a new trustee to the Workers Compensation Fund, Inc. Trustees, Mike Carney, Leavenworth USD 453; and approved the 2015-16 Administrator Contract for the Fund. The Trustees met to for orientation of new members, approval of the annual budget and election of officers. Paul Bruggeman, Golden Plains USD 316 was elected Chair and Marty White, Morris County USD 417 was elected vice-chair.

Reports included the following:

- Brian Jordan, assistant executive director for leadership services, updated the board on plans for the Fall Education Summits scheduled for September and October, emphasizing the focus continues to be developing a school finance plan based on a united vision for student success in Kansas.

- Randy Weseman, assistant executive director for operations, reviewed the reorganization of office space at and noted the insurance department has moved to the third floor and USAJ/Kansas became a tenant July 2015. He also reviewed other tenant arrangements and organizations using office space and gave a report on the KASB budget.

- David Shriver, assistant executive director for insurance, reviewed the status of insurance and KJUMP.

- Kathy Tallman, executive assistant to John Heim, reviewed the board seats up for regional election,. Regions 2, 3, 7, 11 and 13 will require elections this year.

### KASB Legislative Committee discusses school finance policies

The KASB Legislative Committee met recently to discuss policy positions and set out a roadmap for advocacy for the 2016 legislative session, which begins in January.

The KASB Legislative Committee develops recommendations to the full KASB Delegate Assembly for a vote in December at the 98th annual conference in Wichita.

At its meeting on Saturday, Aug. 29, the Legislative Committee made several proposed policy initiatives dealing with school finance and revenue sources, which will be widely disseminated to KASB members for input and comment. The text of committee recommendations will be released after members review the working draft.

As the state develops a new school finance formula to replace the block grant system, the committee’s proposed report states: “We believe the school finance system should provide additional funding through mechanisms for higher cost students. All such mechanisms should be based on evidence-based research, not political expediency.”

The proposed reports also says, “We support local funding authority for both operating and capital costs, providing such authority is equalized with an appropriate mix of tax resources.”

The committee addresses several issues from the 2015 Legislative Session. It recommends the association formally endorse changes in teacher bargaining law adopted by the Legislature based on an agreement between KASB, the Kansas National Education Association, United School Administrators and the Kansas School Superintendents Association.

It also calls on the legislature to monitor implementation of new working after retirement restrictions and consider changes if needed to address staff shortages.

The committee will put together a draft report that will be presented at the KASB Fall Summits and a proposed final report in November, which again will be submitted for comment. ~Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

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**KASB Board, Workers Compensation Fund, Inc. Trustees meet**

**KASB Legislative Committee discusses school finance policies**
For better or worse, the current block grant school finance system is here, but since it is only temporary, school leaders want to lay the groundwork for what Kansas does next in funding public schools.

“The ending desire is to best support our students,” said John Allison, superintendent of Wichita USD 259, the state’s largest school district with more than 50,000 students.

Today’s students “are our future employees and consumers. If we don’t do well for them now, the outlook for our state doesn’t look positive,” Allison said.

Allison and approximately 25 school district officials from across the state met recently to talk about the current block grant finance system and what the future finance system should include.

Allison and KASB Deputy Executive Director Doug Moeckel presented a report from what was called the “base camp” meeting to the more than 100 people who attended the KASB school finance meeting held Fri. Aug. 28.

The base camp group represented a wide variety of districts by size and geography.

Allison said the group discussed both the positive and negative aspects of the block grant system, which essentially freezes for two years the level of operating budgets for school districts.

Gov. Sam Brownback and other supporters of the block grant said it would stabilize funding and reduce complexity in the formula until legislators could decide on a permanent formula.

School leaders said there are some positive aspects of the block grant law, including more flexibility in transferring funds and holding schools harmless for declining enrollment.

But they also said the block grant system failed to address changes in student demographics through the loss of targeted weightings and that the overall funding amount was inadequate to serve the needs of Kansas students. A three-judge panel has declared the block grant law unconstitutional for failing to provide enough funding and the state has appealed that decision to the Kansas Supreme Court.

In addition, Allison said, “transparency became more complicated” under the block grant law because the state counted school funding differently, which made it appear schools were getting a large funding increase when they weren’t.

Allison said those attending the base camp meeting agreed that the state’s future school finance law should equalize funding between wealthy and poor districts and respond to changes in student demographics and enrollment.

**School Finance Summit continued from page 1**

For example, Arkansas’ students scores, while lower than Kansas’, are higher than their demographics and income levels would suggest.

Mark Desetti, a lobbyist for KNEA, noted that Arkansas has a high percentage of children enrolled in preschool and teacher salaries there are more competitive with the private sector than in many other states. This probably means more experienced teachers stay in the profession in Arkansas, he said.

During the last Legislative Session, Brownback and top Republican legislators repealed the former school finance formula, which provided funding on a per pupil basis, and replaced it with a two-year block grant that essentially froze the level of state operating funds available to schools. Since then, a three-judge panel has declared the law unconstitutional. That decision has been appealed by the state to the Kansas Supreme Court.

Some education officials say the state should start work now on the next school finance system.

Eric Hansen, director of business and finance for Bonner Springs-Edwardsville USD 204, said the previous finance formula while not perfect had been “tried and tested” over 22 years through the legislative process.

Earlier in the conference, Brad Neuenswander, deputy education commissioner, presented results of the Kansas State Department of Education’s statewide listening tour.

The tour found that by a 7-to-2 ratio, Kansans said non-academic skills, such as collaboration and conscientiousness, were more important in driving student success than academic skills.

State Rep. Melissa Rooker, R-Fairway, said the current “obsession with assessments” makes it difficult to find time in the classroom to teach the so-called soft skills.

Neuenswander said the results of the tour will help the Kansas State Board of Education form an education plan that will be unveiled in October. ~Scott Rothschild, srathschild@kasb.org
2015 Westar Energy STEM Grants Awarded to Topeka, Olathe, Goddard school districts

Three projects – “Women in Engineering, Science and Technology,” “Wind Energy: EmPOWERing Girls into STEM Careers” and “Biofuels: Finding Real World Solutions” – have been selected to receive Westar Energy STEM Innovative Curriculum grants in the second year of the grant program.

The awards were announced Aug. 14, 2015. Each project receives a $3,000 grant from Westar Energy aimed at increasing student interest and academic achievement in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines as applied to electrical energy. A focus on expanding the diversity of students involved in STEM education is of particular interest in the grant program.

The project is jointly sponsored by Westar Energy, KSDE and KASB. The three projects will be showcased during the 2015 KASB Annual Conference in December. To read more about the awards and projects, see www.kasb.org/wcm/_NB/15/NB0814.aspx.

New KASB Regional Vice President appointed to fill Region 2 vacancy

KASB President Don Shimkus has appointed Kevin Schasteen from Paola USD 368 to the KASB Board of Directors for Region 2.

The position became vacant when Region 2 Vice President Brent Windsor, Emporia USD 253 resigned from his local board effective August 19. He is leaving Emporia to pursue business opportunities in Arizona. In addition to his local board service, Brent served on the 2010 KASB Committee on Funding Public Education, the KASB Legislative Committee and the KASB Board of Directors.

Kevin is a member of the KASB Leadership for Tomorrow class of 2014-15 and is currently serving on the KASB Legislative Committee. He will serve the remainder of Brent’s term on the KASB Board until the Region 2 annual business meeting at the KASB Convention, December 4-6, in Wichita. Region 2 boards will elect a Regional Vice President for a three-year term at that meeting.

2015 KASB Nominating Committee appointed to review applications

KASB President Don Shimkus, Oxford USD 358, has announced appointments to the KASB Nominating Committee. The committee will meet September 12 to interview candidates and recommend one or more nominees for the position of KASB President-Elect Designee.

The committee members are: Region 1 - Shannon Kimbell, USD 497 Lawrence; Region 2 - Susan Brinkman, USD 253 Emporia; Region 3 - Wes Smith, USD 366 Woodson; Region 4 - Keith Bramhall, USD 380 Vermillion; Region 5 - TinaRae Scott, USD 417 Morris County; Region 6 - Jackie Glasgow, USD 353 Wellington; Region 7 - Kevin Milner, USD 109 Republic County (Chairman); Region 8 - Joyce Carter, USD 428 Great Bend; Region 9 - Janice Frahm, USD 315 Colby; Region 10 - Tim Cruz, USD 457 Garden City; Region 11 - Stacy Obringer-Varhall, USD 229 Blue Valley; Region 12 - Patty Mach, USD 512 Shawnee Mission; Region 13 - Dr. Evelyn Hill, USD 500 Kansas City; Region 14 - Sheri Logan, USD 259 Wichita; Region 15 - Shannon Wickliffe, USD 233 Olathe.

Dr. Chavez chosen as General Session speaker for KASB annual conference

Dr. Cile Chavez, a leadership consultant and motivational speaker, will be the featured speaker during the General Session of KASB’s 98th Annual Conference, which will be held Dec. 4-6 in Wichita.

Chavez is president of Cile Chavez Consulting Inc. of Littleton, Colo.

She is a former educator and school administrator, having served as superintendent of Littleton Public Schools in Colorado.

An energetic and impactful speaker, Chavez has presented keynote addresses to more than 35 state board and administrator conferences and has worked in other countries as well.

Her passion is to guide others in realizing their skills, talents and potential.

In her talk about leadership and developing the human potential, Chavez said, “All of those who touch the lives of students hold the promise of enhancing human potential. But, whom must adults become in order to fulfill this promise? What must organizations look like in order for ‘the possible’ to unfold? What is the real ‘hidden curriculum’?”

KASB 98th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

DEC. 4, 5, 6, 2015

WICHITA, KANSAS

HYATT REGENCY & CENTURY II CONVENTION CENTER
Superintendent and Executive Leadership Search Services

Choosing a new leader for any organization is a momentous decision for a governing board. KASB Leadership Services has a long history of providing superintendent and other executive-level leadership search and placement services to our members. We conduct the majority of searches each year in the state.

Supportive Partnership

Our process is an on-going supportive partnership, and we are dedicated to creating successful and long-term professional relationships. By using KASB’s search service, members can also draw upon KASB legal, research and communications to support the process. And once the new leader is hired, KASB provides follow-up support to both the new leader and the board.

Contact KASB Leadership Services to learn more about our process. 800-432-2471 or edservices@kasb.org.

KASB Staff Spotlight: Attorney Angie Stallbaumer brings experience to help boards

KASB has dedicated staff members who each bring a level of specialization and expertise to their respective departments to better serve our members. Policy specialist and staff attorney Angie Stallbaumer is one such staff member who brings a wealth of expertise to the legal and policy services department.

Angie was born and raised on a farm near Monument in northwest Kansas. After attending neighboring Oakley High School, she earned a Bachelor’s degrees in Political Science and Psychology at Kansas State University. She then attended the University of Kansas School of Law.

Following her completion of law school, Angie started her legal career at KASB as a staff attorney, where she worked for three years. She then worked for the Kansas Department of Agriculture as a staff attorney and legislative liaison for two years before returning to KASB as its policy specialist.

As the Policy Specialist, Angie answers questions that administrators and board members have regarding school policy, law, and pending legislation. She also keeps school boards informed and updated on changes in the law regarding policy. She performs audits and reviews on policy manuals and handbooks to make sure they are legal and useful tools to aid in the operation of the school districts and sufficiently protect the board’s, staffs’, and students’ rights.

Getting to work with the KASB staff and our members is what Angie enjoys most about working at the association. She says members are very appreciative of the work KASB staff does, and this makes the job very rewarding. She says you’ll “never find better people to work for.” She also enjoys getting to practice preventative law and getting out of the office to meet the members while presenting at KASB seminars and staff trainings.

Her positive experiences at KASB are numerous, with most of them involving the people she gets to work with every day. She describes the staff as a “fun bunch” and says she has enjoyed the opportunity to grow as a professional, to connect with great people in education, and to be able to specialize in school law at KASB. In summary, she says, “Everyone [at KASB] is goal-oriented, and the motivation of the staff is admirable. Everything we [KASB] do is for the kids.”

~Shaneice McNabney, smcnabney@kasb.org

Five Great Reasons

1. Set Direction and Priorities
2. Clarify Expectations and Empower Staff
3. Drive Organizational Excellence
4. Align District Operations with Community Values
5. Provide Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Contact KASB Leadership Services for details!

2015 Fall Summits

- 9/29/15 Sublette Service Center
- 9/30/15 Oakley Service Center
- 10/01/15 Salina/Webster Conf. Center
- 10/06/15 Olathe TBA
- 10/07/15 Girard Greenbush
- 10/08/15 Clearwater Service Center

Watch your KASB communications for more information and registration details.
September At-A-Glance

7   Labor Day/KASB Office Closed
8-9  Kansas State Board of Ed Meeting, Topeka
9   School Safety and Security Workshop, Topeka
     McRel Principal Eval Training, Greenbush
10  New Superintendent’s Day with KASB
12  KASB Nominating Committee Meeting, Topeka
14  KASB Attorney on Call, 6-9 p.m.
15  Special Education Advisory Council Meeting, Topeka
16  Certified Staff Eval Workshop, Sublette
17-18 KASB Leadership for Tomorrow
22  Becoming an Effective Supervisor Workshop, Hays
24  Becoming an Effective Supervisor Workshop, Topeka
29  Fall Summit, Sublette
30  Fall Summit, Oakley

Join us for the Kansas Association of School Boards
New Board Member Workshops Session²

Six Dates/Locations
(Same as 2015 Fall Education Summits)
See page 1

We’ll build on knowledge gained during Spring 2015 Sessions - and take it to the next level for student success!