Students brainstorm at KASB Conference

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C. Patrick Woods elected KASB president-elect Designee, calls on districts to stay united

by Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

C. Patrick Woods, president of the Topeka USD 501 school board, was elected without opposition as KASB President-Elect Designee during KASB’s Delegate Assembly earlier this month.

“I firmly believe that every child in Kansas has the right to a first-class public education,” said Woods. “These are the convictions of our association.”

Woods said he will work to ensure KASB advocates for public schools in the Statehouse, provides training services and serves as a conduit between the business community and the public education system.

Woods noted the steep revenue challenges ahead for the state and schools, saying it was important for school districts to remain united for the common cause of providing top-notch education opportunities for all Kansas students.

Woods and his wife Anna have two children, Zen and Itzel. Woods works at Westar Energy as Director of Talent, Management and Diversity.

He has served as director of advancement for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Kansas; education policy adviser and legislative liaison for Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and director of government affairs for the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. He has a master’s degree in public administration from KU and a bachelor’s degree from Friends University in political science-history with a minor in Spanish.

Woods was nominated by Tim Cruz, Garden City USD 457, and Shannon Kimball, Lawrence USD 497.

Current KASB President Amy Martin, Olathe USD 233, will serve in that position until July 1. Then President-Elect Dayna Miller, of Basehor-Linwood USD 458, will become president. Woods is scheduled to become president July 1, 2018.

Regional VPs elected in regions 1, 4, 5, 6 & 10

by Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

The KASB Delegate Assembly elected Regional Vice Presidents earlier this month.

Those elected were Region 1: Shannon Kimball, Lawrence USD 497; Region 4: Curt Herman, Manhattan-Ogden USD 383; Region 5: Lori Blake, Southeast of Saline USD 306; Region 6: Susan Walston, Haysville USD 261; and Region 10: Lara Bors, Garden City USD 457.

Regional Vice Presidents serve a 3-year term as a member of the KASB Board of Directors. Members are eligible to serve two consecutive terms on the board. The board meets five times a year at the KASB office in Topeka.

ON THE COVER

High school teams from Derby, Hays, Kansas City and Ottawa competed during the Student Innovation Challenge at the KASB Conference. The students had to come up with solutions to four problems posed by a natural disaster in Haiti. Those problems included ensuring access to clean water, a safe food supply, shelter and the prevention of disease outbreaks. Conference goers and students interacted frequently over the weekend. Hays High School was selected as the winner of the challenge, which was coordinated by the DLR Group.
LFT session focuses on aligning systems

by Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

School leaders are adept at juggling competing priorities, and with a new accreditation system (Kansas Education Systems Accreditation), the Kansas State Board of Education’s Kansans Can vision for education and the current focus on funding and budgets, there is more than enough on everyone’s ‘to do’ list.

However, instead of viewing each as a separate priority competing for a top spot, the 33 members of the KASB’s Leadership for Tomorrow class spent an afternoon connecting how KESA and Kansans Can complement each other and what that means for a new funding formula for our state.

KASB’s Leadership for Tomorrow class met for its fourth session the day before the kick-off of the association’s annual conference in Wichita. Working in small groups, the board members, superintendents, district and building leaders first reviewed the five outcomes identified by the state board: Kindergarten readiness; individual plan of study focused on career interest; high school graduation rates; post secondary completion/attendance; and social/emotional growth measured locally.

The class then discussed why and how each of these contributes to student success and identified examples of some of the outstanding programs they have observed during the group’s site visits and presentations. An important part of the afternoon was connecting the state board’s vision to their own district’s vision of success for its students.

Members then turned their attention to how schools will be accredited in Kansas. Dr. Brian Jordan, KASB assistant executive director/leadership services and one of the coordinators of the group, shared details of KESA, the state’s new accreditation system. Jordan has been serving in an advisory role to the state department for the past five years while the new system has been under development.

“It’s not about hitting a certain mark,” Jordan said. “It’s about how consistent your process is with your identified goals and plans, and if you are making systematic progress.”

The focus on the system rather than individual schools is a significant departure from past accreditation processes in Kansas.

The Kansans Can vision lends itself to a systems approach, he said, since the focus is on all areas of preparing each student for a successful future, including academic preparation, cognitive preparation, technical skills, employability skills and civic engagement.

“All of the schools in your district have to be working towards your common focus and goals,” he said.

The afternoon concluded with a discussion of how school leaders can use data to monitor and measure progress, but that alone won’t lead to the vision of success for each student.

“We have to change behaviors to accomplish new goals,” Jordan said. “As leaders, we have to become more intentional about connecting our vision to how we use our time and resources.”

This year’s Leadership for Tomorrow class has one more session. The group will meet January 11, 2017 for an afternoon visit to a Topeka area school, and conclude the evening with dinner and graduation.

Nominations and applications for next year’s leadership class will be accepted starting January 1. More information is available at kasb.org/LFT

KASB accepting nominations for LFT Class of 2017

by Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

The Kansas Association of School Boards is accepting nominations for the Leadership for Tomorrow Class of 2017. Any past graduate of the program can nominate colleagues. Individuals can self-nominate and current KASB members can also submit a nomination. Once nominated, an application and further instructions will be sent to the nominee.

Applications are due Jan. 31, 2017. Participants will be notified by Feb. 8.

The program is open to any KASB member district’s school board member or school administrator. Participation is limited. Building-level leaders are encouraged to apply. Board members and district-level administration will be given first priority.

For further information about the program, please see kasb.org/LFT or contact program coordinators Carol Pitts, KASB assistant executive director for public relations and marketing; Brian Jordan, KASB assistant executive director for leadership services; or Gary Sechrist, KASB Western Kansas leadership specialist.

KASB’s Advocacy in Action workshop Jan. 12-13

by Leah Fliter, lfliter@kasb.org

KASB’s Advocacy in Action workshop will be Jan. 12-13, 2017 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel & Kansas Statehouse in Topeka. On Thursday, Jan. 12, attendees will learn the latest on school finance and the state budget outlook before visiting with their legislators.

Thursday evening will feature a reception honoring current and former board members and administrators in the 2017 Legislature. Please consider inviting your local lawmaker to the reception and help us identify all school leaders in the legislature so we may honor them Thursday evening.

Friday’s session will feature remarks from legislative leadership and briefings on federal issues, school safety/juvenile justice, KPERs and other hot topics.

KASB members are encouraged to bring parents or other local stakeholders who may benefit from attending the workshop.

Register at www.kasb.org/Advocacy011216 or call 800-432-2471 and ask for Shaneice or Andrea.
The Kansas Coalition of Innovative School Districts (CISD) is looking to the future with plans to focus on its vision, branding and outreach.

The coalition was established by state law in 2013 to allow up to 10 percent of Kansas school districts to opt out of most state laws, rules and regulations in order to improve student achievement. Member school districts are diverse in population and size and are scattered across the state. They are Blue Valley USD 229, Concordia USD 333, Fredonia USD 484, Hugoton USD 210, Kansas City USD 500, Marysville USD 364 and McPherson USD 418.

The Coalition meets monthly, either in person or via Zoom.

The CISD was plagued by controversy at the outset. The Kansas State Board of Education (SBOE) expressed concern that the coalition was an attempt to make an end-run around its authority over Kansas public education. The Kansas chapter of the National Education Association opposed the CISD’s ultimately successful push for alternative teacher licensure provisions on the grounds it will lower standards for the profession. The Kansas Policy Institute’s support for the Coalition added fuel to the controversy; KPI is often critical of public school performance in Kansas and supports public funding for a wider range of educational options for students, such as private schools and independent charter schools.

Leadership flux has been a fact of life for the Coalition. Concordia Superintendent Bev Mortimer has retired and been replaced by Quentin Breese; Blue Valley Superintendent Tom Trigg took a job in Texas and has been replaced by Mike Slagle; Superintendent Mark Crawford moved from Hugoton to fellow CISD school district McPherson, but recently left that post. McPherson’s Superintendent prior to Crawford was former CISD Chair Randy Watson, who left the school district to become State Education Commissioner. Superintendent Bill Mullins of Marysville leads the coalition now.

The Coalition’s status has stabilized over the past several months under Watson’s mentorship and State Board members recently expressed approval of CISD’s new focus. “Randy’s (Watson) coming in (as Commissioner) has lightened the load,” Concordia’s Breese said.

Coalition Chair Mullins said “fear of the unknown” hampered the group’s reputation with the State Board and others, but Watson “has done a good job grounding and organizing us.”

Mullins says the CISD spent its second year getting to know the member school districts and what they’re doing to improve student achievement, which he considers a positive step following the early controversy. “We went after some things we knew we needed, but they were controversial and not necessarily innovative,” he said.

While Mullins is careful not to give the CISD sole credit for recent changes on the state level, he contends the Coalition and its work have helped drive some movement.

“The State Board of Education has made some positive changes because of conversations initiated by the Coalition, and there have been significant changes at KSDE,” that now support some of the group’s goals around licensure and the accreditation process, Mullins said.

Mullins and Breese say the Coalition’s work on State Board outcomes — specifically how students earn high school credit and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) — are bearing fruit within the group.

While Breese’s initial concern was finding teachers, Concordia is now focused on SEL, which, he noted, aligns to the State Board’s vision for the success of each student. Breese finds value in getting input and counsel from other Coalition districts.

“Working with Blue Valley really helps, because they have resources Concordia doesn’t,” Breese said. “It’s been lots of professional development for me; I’d like to apply what they’re doing to Concordia.”

Blue Valley’s Slagle echoes Breese’s assessment of the coalition as a learning tool. “The coalition has evolved in Year 3 into a professional learning community,” Slagle said. “The conversation has been beneficial and enlightening for us to see what colleagues are doing across the state.”

Mullins says the Coalition’s focus on alternative ways for high-schoolers to earn credit dovetails with the State Board’s outcomes for graduation requirements, individual plans of study and career pathways. And he says the group is taking a systems approach to ensure students can smoothly progress to the next level in their educational program.

As the CISD looks to its future, Blue Valley’s Slagle sees its challenges as “inherent in who we are. We come from diverse backgrounds but I think we’re heading in the right direction. I appreciate Dr. Mullins and his willingness to take this on.”

Concordia’s Breese sees funding, particularly of Social Emotional Learning supports, as a roadblock. “It’s also a challenge to move beyond conversations to an action plan,” he said.

Mullins is proud of the Coalition’s success in helping inspire change in the state. “We’ve been able to keep the issue of state assessments in the forefront,” he says. “I think the change (to placing less emphasis on state tests as a measure of student progress) would have happened anyway, but the Coalition helped that process.”

The chair notes, however, that the seven Coalition districts haven’t cornered the market on innovation. “We want to reach out to others to see what they’re doing that’s best for kids.”
KASB recently released the 2016-17 Central Office Staff Survey Report.

One of the key findings in the report is the fact that over the last twenty years, the average age for all central office staff has increased approximately 2 years. The average age for Board Clerks increased from 47.7 to 50.3, Treasurers from 47.6 to 51.6, and all other positions from 48.1 to 49.5. However, looking at the chart you can see that many of these positions saw a decline in the average age in the past few years - as shown in the graph on the right.

Other key findings indicate that from 1995-96 to 2015-16:

- Central Office Staff reported as of 2015-16 included Board Clerks (23 percent), Treasurers (17 percent), Directors of Support Functions (26 percent), Directors of Educational Functions (15 percent), Coordinators (10 percent), Supervisors (10 percent), Assistant Superintendents (7 percent), and Assistant Directors (3 percent).
- Areas of focus reported for Central Office Staff in 2015-16 included Operations (21 percent), Curriculum (8 percent), Technology (7 percent), Central Services (6 percent), Food Service (6 percent), Special Education (6 percent), Transportation (5 percent), School Support Services (4 percent), Instruction (2 percent), Student Support Services (2 percent), Instructional Staff Support Services (1 percent), Professional Development (1 percent), and Vocational (1 percent).
- Board Clerks report being in their current position an average of 11 years, and in any position in the district an average of 12 years.
- Treasurers report being in their current position an average of 12 years, and in any position in the district an average of 11 years.
- Other Central Office Staff report being in their current position an average of seven years, and in any position in the district an average of 12 years.
- Less than 10 percent of Board Clerks and Treasurers report having Master’s degrees, and less than 5 percent report having Doctorate or Specialist Degrees.

Between 1995-96 and 2015-16:

- The percent of Board Clerk positions held by women increased from 86 percent to 92 percent.
- The percent of Treasurer positions held by women increased from 78 percent to 87 percent.
- The percent of other Central Office Staff positions held by women increased from 45 percent to 51 percent.
- The average age for all central office staff has increased from 48 to 50.
- Board Clerk salaries increased 53 percent from $29,828 to $45,638.
- Treasurer salaries increased 95 percent from $18,147 to $35,438.
- Other Central Office Staff salaries increased 78 percent from $42,849 to $76,225.
- Board Clerk fringe benefits increased 270 percent from $1,706 to $6,312.
- Treasurer fringe benefits increased 224 percent from $1,707 to $5,528.
- Other Central Office Staff fringe benefits increased 189 percent from $2,671 to $7,719.

From 1999-00 to 2015-16:

- Other Central Office Staff reporting Master’s degrees decreased from 47 percent to 43 percent.
- Other Central Office Staff reporting Doctorates decreased from 14 percent to 11 percent.
- Other Central Office Staff reporting Specialist degrees decreased from 9 percent to 7 percent.
- The percent of Master’s degrees earned by Central Office Staff at a Kansas postsecondary institution increased from 86 percent to 89 percent.
- The percent of Doctorates earned by Central Office Staff at a Kansas postsecondary institution increased from 82 percent to 85 percent.
- The percent of Specialist degrees earned by Central Office Staff at a Kansas postsecondary institution increased from 87 percent to 93 percent.

You can find the report, data and an interactive tool to explore local data at kasbresearch.org. If you have questions or require assistance, you can contact research@kasb.org.
New leaders in mix as Legislature confronts massive budget problems, school finance challenges

by Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Moderate legislators recently broke the four-year lock that conservatives held on legislative leadership to usher in what is being called a “shared leadership” situation.

It might better be described as “all hands on deck” situation as the Legislature faces a nearly $350 million budget hole, a possible re-write of the school finance law and a stagnant state economy.

Here are the legislative leaders elected by their respective caucuses earlier this month who will be in place when the 2017 session starts Jan. 9.

Senate President Susan Wagle, R-Wichita

Wagle stiff-armed a charge from her right in Ty Masterson, R-Andover, and won re-election 23-7. Although a leading conservative during her long tenure in Kansas politics, Wagle has disagreed with Brownback on several occasions and drawn the ire of some ultra conservatives. During the leadership debate, Sen. Steve Fitzgerald, R-Kansas City, complained that Wagle bottled up an education overhaul bill last session, composed by the House and Senate education committee chairs, that would have increased the statewide school property tax to 35 mills compared with the current 20 mills, prohibited state funding of extracurricular activities and food services, and allowed tax dollars to be used to send students to private or home schools. Wagle said she will allow debate with the current 20 mills, prohibited state

Senate Majority Leader Jim Denning, R-Overland Park

Denning voted for Brownback’s tax cuts and the block grant school finance system but has since spoken in favor of eliminating the tax loophole for LLCs and other possible tax increases to help close the budget deficit.

Assistant Majority Leader Vicki Schmidt, R-Topeka; Majority Whip Elaine Bowers, R-Concordia.

Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka

The longest-serving legislator in state history (40 years and counting), Hensley has been a constant critic of Brownback’s tax and education policies. Hensley will try to maneuver his 9-member caucus with moderate Republicans to thwart conservative efforts.

Assistant Minority Leader Laura Kelly, D-Topeka; Minority Whip Oletha Faust-Goudeau, D-Wichita; Agenda Chair Marci Francisco, D-Lawrence; Caucus Chair Tom Hawk, D-Manhattan.

House Speaker Ron Ryckman, R-Olathe

Ryckman easily defeated moderate Russ Jennings, R-Lakin, after another conservative, Jene Vickrey, R-Louisburg, dropped out of the speaker’s race.

Ryckman has been chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and was co-author of the block grant school finance system. While doing the bidding of conservative leadership, he has also been willing to listen to education advocates and is not seen as ultra-conservative as his predecessor, Ray Merrick, was. Merrick didn’t seek re-election to the Legislature.

House Majority Leader Don Hineman, R-Dighton

Hineman is one of the leaders of the moderate Republicans and is a well-spoken and respected legislator who has been a frequent critic of Brownback’s tax and education policies.

House Assistant Majority Leader Tom Phillips, R-Manhattan.

Phillips is also considered a moderate Republican. Both he and Hineman won their leadership contests by identical 44-41 margins.

House Speaker Pro Tem Scott Schwab, R-Olathe

Schwab is considered a conservative but during one election cycle got crossways with the Kansas Chamber of Commerce.

House Majority Whip Kent Thompson, R-Topeka; GOP Caucus Chair Susan Colcannon, R-Beloit.

House Minority Leader Jim Ward, D-Wichita

Ward unseated Tom Burroughs of Kansas City. The first ballot was a 20-20 tie and then Ward won on the second ballot, 21-19. Ward has been among the most aggressive Democrats in criticism of Brownback and other conservatives.

House Assistant Minority Leader Stan Frommelt, D-Kansas City; Minority Whip Ed Trimmer, D-Winfield; Caucus Chair Barbara Ballard, D-Lawrence; Agenda Chair Brandon Whipple, D-Wichita, and Policy Chair Adam Lusker, D-Frontenac.

Find more legislative information online at www.kslegislature.org or visit kasb.org.

Holiday Wishes from KASB

The KASB offices will be closed from Dec. 26 through Jan. 2.

KASB wishes everyone a happy and safe holiday and we look forward to working with you in 2017 to further the cause of public education and student success.

If you have a legal question and need to visit with a KASB attorney please call Donna Whiteman at 785-817-3031 or email her at dwhiteman@kasb.org. Other staff members can also be reached and their contact information is on the KASB website at www.kasb.org.

Merry Christmas
KASB annual conference concludes

Approximately 500 education leaders from across the state converged on Wichita earlier this month for KASB’s 99th annual conference.

The conference featured 80 exhibitors, more than 40 breakout sessions, visits to schools, the Delegate Assembly, national speakers, the election of key officers and approval of KASB’s legislative policies. Conference goers gained important information as we head into the 2017 legislative session and the state starts work on major issues affecting public education.

KASB stands ready to assist education leaders throughout the year and hopes to see you again at the association’s 100th conference next year.
LAF webinar series starts Jan. 2017

KASB Legal and Policy Services has added a series of monthly webinars starting in January 2017 for members of the KASB Legal Assistance Fund. Registration for each webinar will be open approximately four weeks prior to and will be promoted through KASB digital publications.

Board Members and District Leaders

- Jan. 9, 2017 6-7 p.m. KASB Policy Updates
- Feb. 13, 2017 6-7 p.m. Negotiations Training
- March 13, 2017 6-7 p.m. Employee Leave Issues and Military Family Medical Leave
- April 10, 2017 6-7 p.m. What School Board Members Need to Know about Special Education and Section 504

Principals and Building Leaders

- Jan. 23, 2017 1-2 p.m. Addressing Employee Performance: Documentation and Certified and Classified Evaluations
- Feb. 20, 2017 1-2 p.m. Section 504 Accommodations for Students: District’s Legal Responsibilities
- March 20, 2017 1-2 p.m. Student Discipline Basics: Suspension and Expulsion and Student Rights
- April 17, 2017 1-2 p.m. Student Free Speech Issues: Dress Codes and Social Media

Negotiations training in 2017

Practicum in Negotiations - Full Day Session

*01.20.17 - Topeka - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Topeka

The KASB Practicum in Negotiations is a full day of training for board teams and administrators. Teams are asked to bring their current negotiated agreement as a reference guide. The day will begin with negotiation basic training and expand into addressing the specific issues of participants. This day gives the board team the opportunity to discuss and plan prior to delivering their March 31 notice letter.

Prepping for Negotiations | Two-Hour Sessions

This training includes the basic negotiations training outcomes and gives participants time to ask questions of KASB attorneys.

- *01.11.17 - Lyons - 6-8 p.m.
- *01.12.17 - Clearwater, 10 a.m.-Noon*
- *01.24.17 - Spring Hill - 6-8 p.m.
- *01.26.17 - Cloud CO CC - 2-4 p.m.

Negotiations Workshops | Three-Hour Sessions

This training includes negotiation basic training outcomes in an expanded format, giving more time for specific questions. These workshops will also include additional strategies and best practices. (Registration Opens approximately four weeks prior to each date:)

- *04.11.17 - Hays - 9 a.m.-Noon
- *04.18.17 - Topeka - 9 a.m.-Noon

*Season Pass Eligible