KASB 100 Years of Service: Many of today’s issues the same as yesteryear

by Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Every Kansas child should have access to an equal education based on equalized funding and taxation. Does that statement sound familiar? That idea was the concluding statement of the minutes of a meeting of Kansas school leaders that took place in 1921. An association of school boards in Kansas dates back to 1917, but the earliest record of an association board meeting that we could find at KASB is from Jan. 20, 1921, just a little more than two years after the end of World War I.

The meeting was held in downtown Topeka at Pelletier’s Hall. The minutes of the meeting are written out longhand (remember writing?) in cursive (remember cursive?).

Dr. E.E. Brewer, a member of the Beloit school board, presided over the meeting and Bertha McCabe, County Superintendent of Rice County, was the secretary, writing the minutes in a legal-sized record book. Forty-three school board members and 31 school administrators attended the meeting. They must have all brought their spouses and some kids because a banquet later was attended by nearly 200 people at $2.50 per plate.

What is amazing about the meeting program as reflected in the minutes is that many of the topics of discussion at the heart of public education debates today were intensely discussed back then too. At that meeting nearly a century ago, they talked about taxes in support of schools, the need for physical education, for all students to be immunized, and a uniform teachers wage. State Superintendent W.D. Ross of Emporia spoke about problems in rural schools.

McCabe wrote of Ross’s presentation, “He did not criticize the work that the one-room school had done, but showed that educational work had not progressed in comparison with other things. The war brought to light many things which proved that there must be a greater interest taken in the betterment of rural school conditions; one out of every 5 of the boys could not read their own letters and 33 1/3 percent were rejected on account of physical defects caused largely by improper lighting, heating, seating and ventilation while they were schoolchildren. Eighty percent of the children raised in the city go on to high school while only 40 percent of those who attend rural schools go on to high school.”

McCabe concluded that society was not spending its money wisely. “Four times as much is being spent for movies and gum as for education.”

After the all day session, McCabe’s minutes stated: “The sentiment was strong for some methods of equalizing the taxation and methods of distribution so that each child might have equal educational advantages.”

So much has changed since that time, but that sentiment rings as true today as then.
Celebrating Public Schools

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  KASB’s newest LFT class started its session visiting numerous student programs in Hutchinson USD 308 and Stafford USD 349.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

KASB welcomes any articles on education. The article should be as brief as possible and written in a direct manner. Author name, title, address, phone and email should be included. Articles must be submitted electronically and will be edited to conform to KASB style. KASB reserves the right to refuse publication of any article. Email Scott Rothschild at srathschild@kasb.org for more information or to submit an article.

ABOUT KASB

The Kansas Association of School Boards is a not-for-profit organization located in Topeka, Kansas dedicated to serving members of governing boards for unified school districts, community colleges, area vocational-technical schools and cooperatives, interlocals and regional service centers. The association serves a membership base of close to 5,000 school board members and educational leaders.
President’s Perspective

Amy Martin, Olathe USD 233

In school finance, our children need us to be the adults

The Kansas Supreme Court’s decision in the Gannon school finance case reaffirmed what most of us always knew — the block grant funding system was a school finance method that failed to respond to the needs of our Kansas public schools and students.

Now, the Kansas Legislature and Gov. Sam Brownback have until June 30 to come up with a school finance formula that is constitutional.

It is frustrating and disappointing that so much time has been spent in litigation that could have been avoided if Kansas had followed prudent fiscal policies in coming out of the Great Recession. The bad tax policies of the past few years have resulted in years of K-12 underfunding our schoolchildren can’t get back.

But now that Kansas voters have produced a Legislature that is more knowledgeable about public education, we have the opportunity to make sure we put in place a school finance system that works for all Kansas children.

The Kansas State Board of Education wants Kansas to lead the world in the success of each child and the Kansas Supreme Court has referred to the Rose Capacities as the standard for determining suitable funding. The Rose Capacities say that for students to succeed in today’s society, they must have essential skills, such as being adept at communications, knowledgeable about the government, physical and mental health wellness and they must be prepared for post-secondary and career options.

As parents, school board members and Kansans, we know what our children need. They need us to put together a fair and equitable finance system so that all children have access to an equal and quality public school education. They need us to make sure children facing poverty, developmental or language obstacles are provided the assistance to lift them up. In short, our children need us to be the adults.

Legislators and the governor need to hear from school advocates from across the state to make sure they make the adult decisions for our Kansas children.

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LEADERSHIP VOICES

I’m From Kansas
KASB Executive Director
Dr. John Heim

A voice from the past envisioning our future

Volume 1, Number 1, of the KSBJ was published October 1930. We keep a framed copy of the first edition outside Scott Rothschild’s office. This is the third edition of our newly revived monthly edition, so I thought it might be interesting to revisit that 1930 edition.

The journal features State Superintendent of Public Instruction George Allen, Jr, who extends his greetings and identifies the major issues of the time. He starts by establishing the importance of Kansas education for the entire state and shares some data. I was surprised at some of the numbers:

1930

Students 500,000
Teachers 20,000
Board Members 30,000

Who knew there were that many students, that few teachers, and wasn’t simply amazed at the number of board members. Those who think we have too many districts now would be shocked at the number we had 85 years ago for about the same number of students. I was surprised at the number of teachers, until I considered the curriculum was severely limited and there were no special programs for special needs students.

Now we know some numbers, what else was happening in 1930?

Superintendent Allen considered the preeminent issue to be funding equality. He was concerned wealth disparity in the state caused some districts to be able to educate their students for less than one mill a year, while others had levies of over 60 mills.

He was also concerned about efficiency. He explained, “...in some cases where attendance is very small, or where other unfair conditions may exist it may be possible to transport to other schools.”

Superintendent Allen worried about equitable revenue sources as well. At the time, there was no Kansas income tax and he advocated for an amendment to allow it.

Over-reliance on property tax was of great concern to the superintendent of public instruction in 1930. He gave several examples of people who paid no tax because they didn’t own property, but had significant income. He said these people considered it unfair and wanted to pay their “fair share” for using public services.

In response to the issues identified, the superintendent offered a solution. Citing a group called the Tax Code Commission, he explained a proposed Act for Allocating New Revenue for Schools. Today we might call this a school finance formula.

Mr. Allen recognized and explained the different challenges in different districts and the impossibility of a simple allocation, as did the Commission. Its solution was complex and included an equalization formula to share between districts, counties, and the state; a formula that controls for school size by allocating units of instruction based upon enrollment; assistance for districts with transporting students; and a mechanism to go above the base state funded instructional units.

Yogi Berra might say this is deja vu all over again. Our court has told us we must abide by the constitutional requirements for equity and adequacy. We are all concerned about efficiency, and we have people who aren’t paying their “fair share” testifying their taxes should be increased.

As we proceed, we should heed the advice of the editors of the 1930 Journal who said:

“While most problems of teaching must be worked out by educators, the financial problems of the schools should be worked out by those who are entrusted with the business management of school affairs. The school board members should be the best informed and their opinions should have the greatest weighting deciding any changes in the method of raising school revenue and in the distribution of that revenue.”

The 2017 Legislature has been responsive to the work of school leaders who have participated in KASB and KSSA’s processes to identify key characteristics of a school finance formula. As this is being written, legislators are working hard to develop a plan that will work for all members of the state.

School finance is not a new issue, and it is more important than ever as our students compete and live in a more complex environment than ever. It is not an issue that will ever be solved, because our constitution calls for an ever-improving system. The kids of 1930 deserved it, and so do the kids of 2030, who will be starting Kindergarten next year.
Kansans Can and Kansans must

by Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Looking into the future of public education in Kansas, state officials say Kansas seems on the verge of taking advantage of many opportunities, but also faces numerous challenges.

First the opportunities.

The Kansas State Board of Education’s Kansans Can vision, the goal of which is for Kansas to lead the world in the success of each student, has gained broad, bi-partisan support.

The 2016 election produced a much more education-friendly Legislature than during the previous four years.

And the recent K-12 finance decision by the Kansas Supreme Court settled the question of whether schools are adequately funded — they’re not — and gave the Legislature a solid deadline — June 30 — to fix the system.

But the challenges are many.

Even with a more education-friendly Legislature, it will be difficult to find the revenue needed to provide adequate funding given the state’s severe budget problems. Cost estimates to increase funding range from $300 million to more than $800 million.

And Kansas needs to drastically increase the number of students who are seeking a post-secondary degree or industry training certificate after graduating high school.

Unveiling new data, Kansas Education Commissioner Randy Watson said approximately 65 percent of Kansas students who graduated in 2010 enrolled in college the next year. And tracking those high school graduates six years later, only 40 percent had earned a degree or training certificate.

The problem, Watson said, is studies show more than 70 percent of the jobs in Kansas in the near future will require some post-secondary education.

“What does K-12 need to do?” Watson asked during a recent joint meeting of the Senate Education Committee and House K-12 Education Budget Committee. “What does the Kansas Legislature need to think about and certainly what does higher education need to think about?” he said.

In addition, of that 2010 high school graduating class, nearly one-fourth did not seek any post-secondary work. And, Watson noted, approximately 14 percent of Kansas students don’t graduate high school.

Watson said the National Student Clearinghouse data will soon be available for every high school in Kansas and will likely prompt a lot of discussion at the state and local level.

State Rep. Larry Campbell, R-Olathe, who is chairman of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee said he believed legislators are ready to be good partners with the State Board and Kansas Department of Education in developing a school finance formula that will increase those postsecondary numbers.

“We are going to do everything we can to come up with a policy that is good for the kids,” Campbell said.

State Sen. Barbara Bollier, R-Mission Hills, said the State Board’s vision can be the foundation for a long term plan for public education in Kansas and that collaboration with the Legislature and all stakeholders is crucial.

“We have a great opportunity here. We better not blow it,” she said.

Learn more about Kansans Can on the KSDE Website at www.kasb.org/KSDE/KansansCan.
Federal Education Issues

What would Trump’s proposed cut to teacher funding mean for schools?

by Alyson Kline, Education Week

President Donald Trump has proposed getting rid of the Title II program, which has been around for more than a decade and aims to help districts and states pay for teacher and principal development, reduce class-size, craft new evaluation systems, and more.

The program, which is officially called the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grant program, or Title II, Part A, is the third largest in the U.S. Department of Education’s budget that goes to K-12 education. Zeroing out Title II could hamper implementation of the new Every Student Succeeds Act, lead to teacher layoffs, and make it tougher for educators to reach special populations of students, or use technology in their classrooms.

The Trump administration’s brief budget says the funds are, “poorly targeted and spread thinly across thousands of districts with scant evidence of impact.”

How are Title II funds used?

More than half of school districts use Title II funds to pay for professional development, and another quarter use it for class size reduction, according to an August 2016 report on the program by the U.S. Department of Education.

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, states can set aside Title II, Part A funds for things like mentoring and induction programs for principals and teacher-leaders and revising certification and preparation programs.

Who gets Title II funding?

The money flows through a formula that considers a state’s poverty levels, as well as its overall population. And in passing ESSA, lawmakers changed the formula to put an even heavier emphasis on poverty, as opposed to population.

What do educators have to say about the prospect of losing Title II?

Educators, from teachers to all the way up to state chiefs, have serious concerns about losing this money, even as some acknowledge it could be better targeted.

Delaware, for instance, uses some of the money to hire teachers, but also allocates a chunk to a new, multi-district effort aimed at helping teachers better personalize learning for their students, said Susan Bunting, the state chief.

If the Title II funding goes away, the reduction will come on top of budget challenges at the state level, she said.

Kevin Cormier, who teaches seventh and eighth grade math at Nissitisit Middle School in central Massachusetts, is helping to spearhead a new district-wide initiative aimed at getting teachers more comfortable with collecting data and analyzing it to improve their practice. The effort, which he’s hoping to ramp up over the course of three to five years, is funded with Title II dollars.

The El Paso Independent School District in Texas uses a portion of its $4 million for recruitment bonuses. It also directs Title II funds to reimburse teachers who are pursuing masters’ degrees, including those who are studying for a master’s in education administration.

What does the research say about Title II?

There has been plenty of research suggesting that Title II could use a makeover. Numerous research studies have questioned the impact of professional development on student achievement.

Overall, Chad Aldeman, a principal at Bellwether Education Partners who served in the education department during the Obama administration, said professional development can help boost teacher confidence and improve their content knowledge, but there isn’t a ton of evidence of that those benefits translate into student achievement gains.

But Deb Delisle, the executive director of ASCD, said professional development helps teachers stay on top of their craft.

“Attempting to define the success of professional development through the single measure of student achievement is flawed logic,” Delisle said in an email.

Will Title II really go away?

Probably not, guessed Aldeman, who noted that the money goes out to almost every congressional district. But the funding could be reduced.

Education Week Staff writer Denisa R. Superville contributed to this report.
What is KASB ROI?

KASB staff participate in planning and selection committees for Kansas Teacher of the Year, Kansas Master Teacher and the Westar Innovative Curriculum Grants.

400+ board members and administrators recognized each year through the KASB Leadership Academy.

Partnered with KSDE and USA Kansas to create #PutstudentsfirstKS campaign to provide input to the Governor on school funding.

500+ board members, superintendents and principals attend the 2016 annual conference filled with presentations and general sessions, plus largest vendor show for education in Kansas.

Special programs include annual School Board Member Appreciation.

Advice and trainings on media relations, PR and social media use.

Member resources include Back-to-school messaging kit; Kansans Can toolkit for Fall Summits; “Putting Students First” community meeting and messaging kit for statewide advocacy events focused on school funding.

Take a look at a few examples of these RESULTS on INVESTMENT

450 participated in new board member workshops in past two years.

94 awards in 2016 for print and digital communication in annual KASB-KanSPRA co-sponsored contest.

Monthly School Board Review includes legislative and legal analysis as well as research on school finance, school district spending and district survey results; stories on risk management, leadership opportunities and training, Kansans Can analysis and a wealth of other topics.

A D V O C A C Y

Provided a candidate endorsement tool for primary and general elections to assist voters in determining education-friendly candidates in an election.

KASB Board of Directors and advocacy staff attended yearly NSBA issue training and advocacy event in Wash., D.C.

18 Summer Advocacy Tour stops in May, June and July 2016

120 school leaders

107 board members

81 candidates

150 school leaders equipped to advocate for public education during January 2017 Advocacy workshop co-sponsored with USA Kansas.

Fall 2016 Regional Summits in partnership with USA/Kansas and KSDE with over 450 attending.

Friday Advocacy Webinars 20+ during legislative session

Meetings with newspaper editorial boards and news reporters throughout Kansas.

A voice for Kansas education

Advocacy and communications support the KASB website and electronic and print newsletters, news releases, promotions, messaging campaigns and social media support for all KASB’s services, programs and products.

400+ board members and administrators recognized each year through the KASB Leadership Academy.

80 school superintendents

40 incumbent state legislators and Kansas State Board of Education members

Provides testimony and advocacy during legislative session and through special session (such as the 2016 special session on school finance)
KASB ROI continued

LEADERSHIP

90% of all Kansas superintendent and leadership searches are conducted by KASB each year.

Workshop Sponsored: Aspiring Superintendents, Board Leadership Teams, New Clerks, Clerks/Treasurers Workshop, Efficiencies and Operations, Effective Supervisors, Changes in Juvenile Justice...to name just a few!

33 Leadership for Tomorrow graduates last year. And since program inception in 2004.

Prestigious Partners bring access to services and program leading to efficiencies and significant savings.

RISK MANAGEMENT

2016 Rebranding from “Insurance Services” to KASB Risk Management leading to service expansion to support membership needs.

Natural gas purchasing consortium – KJUMP – saves members thousands of each year.

Largest student accident insurance program in Kansas.

Added a new service in 2017 – Health Insurance Consulting.

Affordable Property and Casualty insurance program for KASB members.

LEGALE

15-16 school year Onsite Legal Trainings

12,300+ phone calls answered by six staff attorneys in 2015-2016.

Training for members in legal topics including Negotiations, Section 504, Records Retention, Hazing, Social Media, Student Discipline, Technology Evaluations, Human Resources, Suicide Prevention Workshop, Transgender Issues, School Law for Administrators.

LEGAL

150+ Onsite Strategic Planning and Whole Board Trainings over past two years.

Partnering with Greenbush Education Service Center to offer training on effective evaluation; site councils.

LEGAL

New LAF Webinars series in 2017 included topics for board members and building leadership.

LEGAL

18 produced annual and special reports showing statewide education trends in Kansas.

Improve Student Outcomes

1 out of 3 every building leaders in Kansas have received McREL leadership training through KASB in recent years.

Consultations with districts on facility planning, bond elections, efficiency studies for transportation.

KASB Legal Assistance Fund offers fast access to subject matter experts in the field of school law to participating members.

Culture of Collaboration and Service

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How my experiences with KASB made a difference for children in Coffeyville

By Dr. Jerry Hamm

There is no doubt in my mind a strong connection can be made between two KASB events of the past - Leadership for Tomorrow and the annual Governmental Relations Seminar - and the emergence of our early learning center that has attained a position of prominence across the state of Kansas.

KASB was the catalytic agent that played an important role with its inception. Early learning was always an area of interest to me. Locally, we had already started thinking more about early learning, and the topic was of interest across the state and nation at the time. I retired in 2000 and was elected to the school board in 2001. Not long after that I became involved in KASB. I went through the first Leadership for Tomorrow class and joined the KASB board of directors as our region’s vice-president. From there I also got involved with a group called KLFA, the Kansas Learning First Alliance.

There’s an energy that comes from collaboration with other people and discussing how to create change, which is a lot of what we talked about in the Leadership for Tomorrow meetings. And learning about things going on in other parts of the state opens your eyes to possibilities. When you put it all together – for me at least – it gave me a mindset and emboldened my thinking, though some may think it created a maniac out of me.

Then came the July 2007 flood in Coffeyville, devastating many homes and a significant number of the city’s businesses. Our community started thinking about not only recovery, but things we wanted to change. We started imagining our future. Economic recovery was foremost on our minds, but the lack of childcare was a hindrance. And the early learning piece became more predominant.

Other things came together, too. I went to Governor Sebelius’ Summit on Early Childhood in September of that year, and heard Barry Downing talk about his work with pre-kindergarten programs. I also heard Dr. Jack Shankoff, a Harvard psychiatrist talk about “toxic stress” as it related to early childhood. That had a big impact on me.

A turning point was at KASB’s Governmental Relations Seminar that next year. There was a panel about early childhood at the meeting, then anyone who wanted to continue the discussion was invited back to KASB headquarters that afternoon. Tom Krebs moderated the meeting. There were about eight or 10 of us. I shared what we were doing in Coffeyville. Gale Gruber of KSDE said it was the kind of pilot project they were looking for to begin allocating the tobacco settlement money.
And that was the final piece we needed to move forward in Coffeyville. We put together a group with head start and our local Tri-County Special Education Cooperative people and formed the early learning center. After we got established and a few years of getting successful results, we were able to begin forming partnerships with local businesses and corporate sponsors for donations and support. The school district and other government agencies did their part. Not long ago we physically expanded the building and added several classrooms thanks to a combination of public and private funds.

It’s called the “Dr. Jerry Hamm Early Childhood Learning Center,” and that is a great honor. But the whole program sprang from what I sometimes describe as a “perfect storm.” We had the terrible disaster of the flood, which pushed our community into making changes. I was able to become involved at the state level through KASB and then learn more about what others were doing through Leadership for Tomorrow. We now serve about 220 children from birth to five, wrapping around all kinds of support and services for them and their families.

Editor’s Note: Dr. Jerry Hamm is currently on the Coffeyville USD 443 Board of Education. He is a retired educator and served on the KASB Board of Directors as Region 2 vice-president. He is a graduate of the inaugural year of the KASB Leadership for Tomorrow program, graduating from the program in 2006.

Coffeyville’s innovating approach to universal pre-school continues to gain attention. The program was recently recognized by the National School Boards Association with an honorable mention in the 2017 Magna Awards. The program frequently hosts delegations from other communities interested in learning more about the partnerships and programs that make it such a success. KASB’s current Leadership for Tomorrow class will do an onsite visit of the program in May. Watch for more information about this unique universal pre-school program in upcoming issues of School Board Review.
‘SPURS’ road to success

By Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

At Wheatridge Middle School, teachers and staff strive to provide a family type atmosphere where students are supported while being challenged to excel academically and also make good choices.

“Two key mottos are heard and modeled throughout the school year; family comes first and there is no need to worry alone,” Wheatridge Middle School officials wrote in the school’s application to the 2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program.

Wheatridge Middle, a suburban school that serves the growing communities of Gardner and Edgerton in southwest Johnson County, was one of four Kansas schools recently designated a National Blue Ribbon School.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and recognizes outstanding public school and non-public schools in each state. Last year, 329 schools were designated National Blue Ribbon Schools.

Wheatridge Middle School was honored for being an “Exemplary High Performing School,” with students in the top 15 percent in English and mathematics, as measured by state assessments. Also to be recognized in this category, disaggregated results for student groups, including students from disadvantaged backgrounds, must be similar to the results for all students tested.
National Blue Ribbon School
Exemplary High Performing School:
Wheatridge Middle School
Gardner-Edgerton USD 231

“When you walk into WMS, whether it is during the school day or for an after school activity, the positive culture is evident. Staff and students are smiling and you instantly feel the sense of community.”

Culture and climate count
WMS has approximately 530 students from fifth- through eighth-grades and about 40 percent receive free or reduced meal prices.
At WMS, school culture and climate is based on engaging families and the community, party through special events and meetings.
Families look forward to the many events at the school, such as Muffins for Moms and Donuts for Dads, Family Literacy Nights, Incoming Fifth-Grade Parent Nights, Pizza Bingo Night, Building Brains and Bodies and more.
“WMS students and staff are aware of the thousands of students who have called the school home.

Pride, spirit and tradition foster educational achievement and create a positive and safe environment where all students are challenged academically and guided to make good decisions. Safety, Preparedness, United, Respectful, and Self-Control defines and leads all Mustangs down the SPURS road to success,” the school’s Blue Ribbon application said.

Focus on excellence
Above all, the focus and goal of the school is that every student and teacher strives for excellence every day.
Staff members are committed to professional development and also tirelessly donate their time to after school programs and clubs.
Students participate in numerous school activities and plan service projects through the Student Leadership Club.

The Site Council, which meets monthly, provides advice and counseling while a shared leadership model is used.
“When you walk into WMS, whether it is during the school day or for an after school activity, the positive culture is evident. Staff and students are smiling and you instantly feel the sense of community.”

This is the third of four installments on Kansas schools receiving the National Blue Ribbon designation. Besides Wheatridge Middle School, the other three schools are Chanute Elementary, Chanute USD 413 (featured in February’s issue of School Board Review), Challenger Intermediate, Goddard USD 265 (feature in the March issue), and McKinley Intermediate, Abilene USD 435.
Shawnee Mission USD 512 Principals Kevin Frick and Cory Strathman went skydiving to reward their students who recently read for more than 121,000 minutes in a week at Bluejacket-Flint and Rosehill Elementary Schools. The principals traveled 11,000 feet through the air before landing.

Todd Flory, a fourth-grade teacher at Wheatland Elementary School, Andover USD 385, had his students participate via Skype with a fifth-grade class in Irvine, California in a fake news challenge. The Wheatland students chose two real news articles and wrote one fake article and the California class had to determine which article was fake. The exercise was included in a recent National Public Radio report on how educators across the country are teaching about fake news.

Approximately 60 students from Dighton High School, Dighton USD 482, traveled to the Statehouse on March 13 to meet with legislators and voice their concerns about school funding and rural health care. “School funding has always been a concern for small schools,” Emily Sheppard, a sophomore, told the Topeka Capital-Journal. Sara Cramer, a senior, said, “If our school closes, then our town is going to disappear.”

Two teachers and 12 students from Northern Heights High School, North Lyon County USD 251, spent their spring break helping ranchers in Clark County, which was affected by recent wildfires, the Emporia Gazette reported. Emily Gilbert, a freshman FFA member at Northern Heights, helped set up the group’s lodging in Ashland. “It was really eye-opening,” Gilbert said. “We went to a ranch first and they were really nice people and we helped them take down fence and they were very thankful for that.” Jacob Lang, agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at NHHS, and Rick Bush, business teacher and Future Business Leaders of America sponsor at the school, co-sponsored the students who went to Ashland.

Deborah Ollek, cafeteria manager at Allison Traditional Magnet in Wichita USD 259, once spoke to a student who hadn’t eaten in four days. That’s when she came up with the idea of the Feed The Heart food drive where students and staff donate canned goods to go home with students while protecting their privacy. Student groups at Allison take turns by having a designated month to the stock Feed The Heart boxes.

Brian Hanni might not have become “The Voice of the Kansas Jayhawks,” without the help and encouragement of Topeka West High School teacher Corey Wilson. In the mid-1990s, Wilson “moved mountains,” Hanni said to help him learn how to call plays. “I count myself forever blessed to land at Topeka West, specifically in Corey Wilson’s class, where he fueled the fire for my broadcast career,” said Hanni, who calls KU’s football and men’s basketball games for the Jayhawk/IMG Radio Network. Wilson, a teacher for nearly 40 years, told the Topeka Capital-Journal that Hanni had a strong work ethic. “He just kept going,” he said.

KASB will accept submissions from our readers of items for our Taking Notes page. If you know of an educator or student helping promote education in Kansas, please send the information to Scott Rothschild at srothschild@kasb.org.
KASB legal summary of Kansas Supreme Court’s *Gannon* decision on adequacy

What did the Supreme Court decide?

The Classroom Learning Assuring Student Success Act (CLASS, also known as block grants) is unconstitutional in both structure and implementation.

The court determined that CLASS fails in structure because it is not a school finance formula, but rather a funding stopgap, and because it is only minimally responsive to financially important changes, such as increased enrollment.

The court makes clear that the Legislature has a myriad of choices available to perform its constitutional duty. However, the court cautioned that the Legislature must look at both inputs and outputs when determining whether funding is adequate.

The court continued to stress that “total spending is not the touchstone of adequacy” and that it is not the role of the courts to order a monetary remedy.

What did the Supreme Court order?

The court retained jurisdiction and continued to stay the issuance of its mandate until June 30 to “give the legislature the full extent of the opportunity it created with its own 2-years-plus deadline to craft a system of school funding that comports with the constitution.”

If the Legislature fails to enact a system capable of meeting the adequacy requirements of Article 6, “the state’s education financing system is constitutionally invalid and therefore void.”

So, what does this all mean?

The court has given the Legislature until June 30 to enact a K-12 public education financing system that is capable of meeting the adequacy requirements of Article 6, which also comports with equity mandates.

If the Legislature does act and does something that has yet to be tested by the courts, it is possible this will have to go before the court again.

It is unlikely that the Legislature will do nothing due to the expiration of CLASS.

However, like always, we must wait and see what the Legislature does regarding school finance.
Guidance from KASB Legal

Votes of the board and recording in the minutes

Several districts have inquired recently about board voting procedures and recording the vote in board minutes. Under the Open Meetings Act, any binding action taken by the board must be accomplished by a vote in open session at an open meeting. Citizens have a right to know how their elected representatives voted on a matter. The vote of each individual board member need not be recorded in the minutes, but citizens should be able to observe the vote, whether it is a voice vote, show of hands, roll call or a paper ballot vote.

Secret ballots cannot be used for voting on any issue at a board meeting. Paper ballots may be used only if each board member signs his or her ballot and the ballots are preserved and kept with the minutes of the meeting. The ballots become an open record, subject to disclosure upon request. Minutes should reflect the voting margin (4-3, 5-2, etc.), even though it is not necessary to record how each member voted on an issue.

Mandatory reporting of child abuse

Members should be mindful that teachers, administrators and other school employees are required by law to report any incidence in which they have reason to suspect that a student in the district is a victim of physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse. The report is made to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). If DCF offices are not open, the report must be made to law enforcement. Reports may be made orally, but a written report must follow if DCF or the law enforcement agency requests one. The report must include:

1. Names and addresses of the student’s parents or persons responsible for the child’s care;
2. Location of the child if not at the child’s residence;
3. Child’s gender, race and age;
4. Reasons why the person making the report believes the student may be a child in need of care; and
5. Any other information that the reporter believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of harm and the identity of the persons responsible for the harm.

Failure to make a report is a class B misdemeanor, and it is not a defense that another mandatory reporter made a report. Intentionally interfering with the making of a report or willfully and knowingly making a false report are also class B misdemeanors. Anyone who makes a report relating to a suspicion that a child may be in need of care or who participates in any investigation relating to the report is immune from civil liability even if the report turns out to be false, so long as the report was made without malice.

It is important to remember that school officials need not be certain of the truth of the allegation to trigger a reporting requirement. If there is “reason to suspect that a child has been harmed as a result of physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse,” the report to DCF or law enforcement must be made promptly. It does not matter whether the alleged abuse happened at school, during school activities, at home or elsewhere. It does not matter whether the alleged abuser is a staff member, family member or fellow student.

Any time a school official suspects a child is a victim of abuse or neglect, a report must be made. If there is any doubt, school officials should err on the side of reporting and allow DCF or law enforcement to investigate.

The statute concerning reporting of child abuse or neglect is K.S.A. § 38-2223. Please contact the KASB legal department if any question arises.
Enrollment of undocumented aliens

Immigration and citizenship issues have been the subject of news recently, and some suggestions have been raised about withholding education services from illegal immigrants. Refusing enrollment or denying equal educational access to the children of illegal immigrants is illegal, however, and has been for more than forty years. No law requires a juvenile to prove United States citizenship as a condition of access to public education. In fact, the United States Supreme Court has determined that K-12 students may not be excluded from school on the basis of nationality or citizenship status.

In 1975, the Texas legislature authorized local school districts to refuse enrollment in public schools to foreign-born children who lacked documentation of being legally admitted to the United States. Relying on the statute, the school district in Tyler, Texas began charging undocumented students tuition. The United States Supreme Court struck down this action. In Plyler v. Tyler Independent School District, 457 U.S. 202 (1982) the court determined that the practice violated the Equal Protection clause of the U.S. Constitution. That clause guarantees that no state will “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” The Equal Protection clause applies to all individuals within a state’s jurisdiction, without regard to race, color or nationality.

The Tyler school district claimed it should not be required to provide services to people who were in the state as a result of unlawful conduct. The Supreme Court rejected the argument, noting that the children had no means of affecting their parents’ conduct or their own resident status. The court also noted that the value of educating all of the children within a state’s boundaries far outweighs the cost to society of excluding foreign-born students. Various states have since tried to circumvent the ruling, and all attempts have been struck down as unconstitutional.

A school’s responsibility is to educate students, not to serve as agents for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Any action that discourages immigrant student attendance is unlikely to withstand scrutiny if challenged in court. In general, if a child of school age requests enrollment and meets the residency requirements of Kansas law, the student must be admitted to school.

These articles are provided by the KASB Legal Services team and are not intended to be legal advice. If you have any questions, please contact KASB at 800.432.2471. KASB Legal Staff: Donna Whiteman, assistant executive director of legal services/attorney; Lori Church, attorney; Sarah Loquist, attorney; David Shriver, attorney; Luke Sobba, attorney; and Angie Stallbaumer, attorney/policy specialist.
KASB Leadership for Tomorrow Class starts in Hutchinson, Stafford

By Leah Fliter, lfilter@kasb.org

KASB’s Leadership for Tomorrow (LFT) class started its 2017 session by learning about school-to-career options recently in two very different school districts, Hutchinson and Stafford.

The class kicked off its inaugural meeting on Thur. March 2 with group work about district culture and board leadership challenges at Hutchinson High School’s Career and Technical Education Academy. The facility features a state-of-the art auto repair shop as well as classrooms dedicated to the culinary arts, building trades and medical science. Class members toured the CTE building and the traditional HHS campus.

The Hutchinson USD 308 school district serves almost 5,000 students but is the state’s smallest school district geographically, at 14 square miles.

The class took a programming break in the afternoon to view KASB’s webinar on the Kansas Supreme Court’s ruling in the Gannon school finance case, which was released earlier that day. KASB’s Associate Executive Director for Advocacy Mark Tallman and Staff Attorney Lori Church reviewed the Court’s decision and offered talking points for our members to discuss with their elected officials.

Stafford High School medical science pathway student Katie prepares a blood smear slide as Moundridge USD 423 Superintendent George Leary and Topeka USD 501 board member Dr. Mike Morrison look on.

Top: LFT class members listen as a Stafford County High School student conducts a tour of the school’s greenhouse.
On Friday, March 3, the group traveled to Stafford USD 349 where it began the morning with a visit to the SEED (Stafford County Entrepreneurship and Economic Development) center. Class members met with Stafford High School students who use the center as a learning laboratory to jump-start careers in graphic design, printing, coding and other fields, enabling them in many cases to pursue high-paying jobs immediately after high school graduation. USD 349 serves 254 students.

At Stafford Middle/High School, the LFT members met with students who are pursuing class work and research projects in the fields of medical science, horticulture, and culinary arts. State senator Mary Jo Taylor, formerly the Stafford middle and high school principal and current school district superintendent, met with the LFT class as it toured the school.

Highly-engaged teachers and students demonstrated a medical science program that prepares high-schoolers to be certified phlebotomists and lab techs. Students led a tour of the school greenhouse, which hosts a hydroponics project that uses a readily-available ditch weed and cast-off materials (including plastic soft-drink bottles) to grow high-nutrient food for fish that in turn serve as a source of nutrient-rich protein. Other students demonstrated a water desalination project and a program that researches how mealworms consume plastics and other trash and recycle those wastes into organic matter.

The Staffor High School culinary arts classroom was the setting for a presentation on the school’s partnership with the Stafford County Flour Mill to produce a whole wheat flour blend that is more palatable to school-age children and exceeds federal school nutrition guidelines. Stafford students market the flour to food service businesses across Kansas. The LFT class and accompanying KASB staff enjoyed delicious dinner rolls prepared from the flour by the culinary arts students.

The LFT class will visit Coffeyville USD 445 and Parsons USD 503 in May.

Top: KASB Leadership Services staffer Gary Sechrist and LFT class member Steve Karlin of Garden City meet with building trades students at Hutchinson High School’s career and technical academy.

Bottom: Travis Riebel, director of Hutchinson High School’s Career and Technical Education Academy, gives a tour to the Leadership For Tomorrow class. The group is pictured here in the building trades classroom.
Looking at the Data
Ted Carter, KASB Research Specialist

Poverty and the Kansas assessments

KASB recently released a report that presents the results of a statistical analysis to determine the extent to which a school’s enrollment size and the percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch predict student performance on the 2015-16 Kansas State Assessments.

School-level assessment data was used to see how the assessment results, consisting of the percent performing “at grade level” (levels two, three, and four) and performing at “college or career ready” (levels three and four) for Math and English Language Arts (ELA) for students in the all, free and reduced lunch, self-paid lunch, ELL, Non-ELL, with disabilities, and without disabilities groups could be predicted based on a) the school’s total student enrollment, and b) the percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Accountability data was used (rather than report card data), and the analysis focused on the overall school results rather than grade-level-specific results.

For the 2015-16 data, there were 1374 schools included, 118 (8.588 percent) of which were private schools. Not every school was included in each analysis, as some schools did not have students in one or more of the student subgroups.

Simple linear regressions were used to determine whether the percent of free or reduced-price lunch eligible students in a school and/or the student headcount for the school were significant predictors of the percent of students at grade level (defined as the sum of the percent of students at Levels Two, Three, and Four) and the percent of students who were college ready (defined as the sum of the percents of students at Levels Three and Four) for the Math and ELA assessments.

Table One shows the means, Beta values from the regressions, and whether the results were statistically significant. Beta values indicate the relative predictive power of the percent free/reduced and school size on the student outcomes. Larger values indicate more influence. The table also indicates the number of schools included in each comparison group.

As the table shows, for every student group on both the Math and ELA exams, the percent of the school’s population eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and the school’s total enrollment were significant predictors of the percent of students at grade level and the percent of students at college or career ready.

The fact that all Beta values were negative indicate that as the percent free/reduced and/or the total number of students increases, performance on the state assessments decreases. Further, apart from the percent of ELL students at grade level, the percent of students eligible for free/reduced lunches was a stronger predictor of student achievement than overall school size. In other words, both overall student poverty and school size impact the school’s state assessment results, but student poverty has a larger impact than school size.

Chart One shows a scatterplot of the Percent Free/Reduced Eligible Students and the percent performing at Grade Level or above. As can be seen, the percent performing at grade level or above has a negative relationship with the percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Chart Two shows a scatterplot of the Percent Free/Reduced Eligible Students and the percent performing at College or Career Ready or above. As can be seen, the percent performing at college/career

### Table One: Regressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Group</th>
<th>At Grade Level</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>College Ready</th>
<th># of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pct FRL Beta</td>
<td>Size Sig.</td>
<td>Beta Sig.</td>
<td>Size Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>78.08 (0.63)</td>
<td>* (0.11)</td>
<td>42.65 (0.63)</td>
<td>* (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free and Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>71.20 (0.47)</td>
<td>* (0.19)</td>
<td>32.24 (0.43)</td>
<td>* (0.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Paid Lunch</td>
<td>85.31 (0.39)</td>
<td>* (0.10)</td>
<td>52.17 (0.39)</td>
<td>* (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>64.01 (0.46)</td>
<td>* (0.38)</td>
<td>24.02 (0.44)</td>
<td>* (0.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-ELL</td>
<td>79.28 (0.58)</td>
<td>* (0.08)</td>
<td>44.20 (0.58)</td>
<td>* (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>45.32 (0.53)</td>
<td>* (0.24)</td>
<td>16.74 (0.45)</td>
<td>* (0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Special Education</td>
<td>83.34 (0.59)</td>
<td>* (0.16)</td>
<td>46.70 (0.60)</td>
<td>* (0.12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ready decreases as the percent of free/reduced eligible students increases.

David Berliner, Regents’ Professor of Education Emeritus at Arizona State University, in a recent blog post, stated the following:

...on the mathematics portion of the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) to test, poor students (among those from lowest quartile in family income), who attended schools that served the poorest families (a school in the highest quartile of those receiving free and reduced lunch), attained a mean score of 425. But wealthy students (in the highest quartile of family income), who attended schools that served the wealthiest families (schools in the lowest quartile of students receiving free and reduced lunch), scored a mean of 528. That’s a one-hundred point difference!

In addition, KASB recently summarized the research we have done over the past three years to demonstrate multiple analysis from multiple data support the notion poverty has a negative impact on student outcomes.

The results of this analysis indicate this trend is also apparent in the results for the 2015-16 Kansas State Assessments for the 2015-16 school year, in terms of differences by student groups:

- 85.31 percent of students paying full price for lunch performed at grade level or above on the English Language Assessment, compared to only 71.20 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The numbers for the Mathematics Assessment were 81.97 percent and 68.42 percent respectively.
- 52.17 percent of students paying full price for lunch performed at college or career ready on the English Language Assessment, compared to only 32.24 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The numbers for the Mathematics Assessment were 43.91 percent and 25.76 percent respectively.

This means that whether an individual student was eligible for free or reduced-price lunch had an impact on how well he or she did on the Kansas State Assessments.

Further, this analysis shows across student groups, schools with higher poverty have lower percents of students at grade level and college/career ready. This means regardless of an individual student’s characteristics, the fact they are in a school with higher poverty means they are less likely to succeed.

This evidence is important to consider when looking at school funding formulas, and how to allocate funding based on poverty. Some have criticized the previous funding formula allowed districts to utilize some funding based on poverty levels for students who were not identified as in poverty.

To read the full report, visit https://kasbresearch.org/publications/ or email research@kasb.org and request a copy.
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4.10.17 Legal Assistance Fund Board Member Webinar: FMLA
4.10.17 Maximizing the Role of Site Councils for the KS Education Systems Accreditation, Eudora
4.13.17 Maximizing the Role of Site Councils for the KS Education Systems Accreditation, Greenbush
4.14.17 Maximizing the Role of Site Councils for the KS Education Systems Accreditation, Manhattan
4.17.17 Legal Assistance Fund Building Leader Webinar: Student Free Speech
4.17.17 Maximizing the Role of Site Councils for the KS Education Systems Accreditation, Topeka
4.18.17 Maximizing the Role of Site Councils for the KS Education Systems Accreditation, Wichita
*4.18.17 Trauma Smart: Become A Trauma-Informed School Community, Topeka
4.24.17 Maximizing the Role of Site Councils for the KS Education Systems Accreditation, Oakley

MAY & JUNE 2017

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- Student Discipline Requirements and Role of the Hearing Officer
- FERPA Requirements
- Service Animals, Allergies and Other Student Accommodations
- Teacher Due Process Update
- Background Checks, References, Reemployment Testing
- Avoiding School Law Pitfalls (FMLA, FLSA, Post-Employment Claims, Complaints)
- Responsibilities to Homeless and Foster Students and Mandatory Reporting
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TOPICS:
- Rubrics, Surveys & Data
- Aligning Needs to Goal Setting at Building Level
- Strategies for Improving Site Councils

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- April 13 Greenbush
- April 14 Manhattan
- April 17 Topeka
- April 18 Wichita
- April 24 Oakley

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