What can Kansas public schools expect?
This is an election year for local boards of education in Kansas! KASB encourages current board members to seek another term. Your experience makes you an invaluable asset to your community. KASB also encourages other committed, visionary community members to seek election and serve in this important voluntary role in your community!

See Page 20 for additional guidance from KASB legal staff. Information is also available on the KASB website.

kasb.org/SchoolBoardElections2017

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KASB’s goal is to serve you by bringing you access to advocacy, research and information on state and national education issues. We also provide a number of products and services that can save you time and money!
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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 srothschild@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.
Secretary DeVos: Learn as much as possible and keep an open mind

Dear Secretary Betsy DeVos:

Now that your confirmation battle is over and you are in charge of the U.S. Department of Education, I would like to extend to you an invitation.

Please, on a daily basis or as often as possible, visit a public school. It is imperative as the person in charge of our federal education agency, that you learn as much as possible about how our schools operate and experience as much as possible the challenges that our students face.

Public school students need from you exactly what they need from every teacher, parent, adult, administrator, staff member and school board member. They need individuals who are kind, intelligent and dedicated and who have both high expectations of students and the ability to inspire and cheer them on to success.

As you expand your knowledge about public schools, please consider a visit to Kansas and our schools.

In Kansas, we don’t have mountains and we don’t have the ocean, but we have a tradition of solid public education. In many instances, our schools are the very heart of our communities.

And just like schools everywhere, Kansas schools are meeting the challenges of a changing world. We are raising students to higher standards while at the same time seeing more students who are coming from poverty and facing other disadvantages.

It would be good during your school visits to talk with and observe our special education teachers who are working to help students overcome enormous obstacles.

Secretary DeVos you have been given a great opportunity. Please approach it with an open mind.

President Martin
President, Olathe USD 233
marinathome@me.com
Some advice for the United States Secretary of Education

Kansas has long been recognized as a national leader in education. Compared with other states, Kansas public schools have high levels of student success for relatively low levels of spending. Of course, part of being a leader is pushing the envelope and sometimes the envelope pushes back when mistakes are made. We have had those moments as well.

The Kansas Association of School Boards celebrates its 100th year of service this year, but one only has to go back about a decade to see that Kansas was ahead of its time with a decision that did not work out as well. Writing for the Lawrence Journal World in 2005, KASB’s own Scott Rothschild reported that the state board hired “…a conservative activist with no educational background who lobbied against school funding to be education commissioner.”

Hired on a 6-4 vote by a conservative majority, the new commissioner was a controversial figure who advocated strongly for more charter schools and vouchers. By most accounts, the new commissioner was bright and friendly, but his ideas did not take hold, and a little over a year later, the Topeka Capital Journal wrote an editorial giving the commissioner credit for “gracefully stepping down.”

So, when Kansas educators hear about a new U.S. Secretary of Education, hired on 51-50 vote, who is described by the Washington Post as a “conservative activist with no educational background,” we can say, ‘been there, done that, bought the t-shirt.’

As usual, Kansas was ahead of its time educationally and Kansans are uniquely qualified to offer some advice based on that experience. Here are some things for Secretary DeVos to think about, offered in the humble spirit of some guy from Kansas who is a second-generation educator and has spent a little time in schools over the past 58 years:

1. **Spend some time in public schools.** I know your first foray didn’t go well, but do it anyway. Don’t just do the smile and wave visit. Sit in some classrooms for an hour or two. Visit different schools in different places. Your predecessor did a bus tour, but no one will judge you for flying (coach, of course, with the rest of us common folk.) If you are feeling brave, put your name in to substitute teach a few times a year. I did this as a superintendent, and it is an eight-hour master’s degree in education. Visit rural and urban and suburban schools all over the country. I will personally take you on a tour of any school in Kansas. Just give me a call. You have a lot of making up to do. Most of us spent 12 years in a public school, but try to share at least some our experiences.

2. **Ask teachers and students questions and listen to their answers.** Ask them how education needs to improve.

3. **Be wary of having a solution in search of a problem.** Twelve years ago, the Kansas education commissioner, who wanted more charters and vouchers, was never able to explain why. Like any people business, public schools can improve. But are our communities clamoring for charters and vouchers or do they want less federal intrusion and improved resources. You can let me know what you hear.

4. **Do your homework.** America has a proud history of student success that is rooted in public schools. Take the time to learn what we do well, and pay attention to the details of laws like IDEA that have forever changed the lives of millions of people for the better.

5. **Whenever you hear someone’s great new idea, first answer, should this decision be made by the local level, by a locally elected school board?** If the answer is no, maybe ask again. For the sake of the children of America, and more specifically the children of Kansas, I wish you great success. Learn from our mistakes, and all our children will benefit.

If you listen carefully, you will learn so much about the challenges faced by educators and students. Then make it your business to help them address those challenges.
An influential, vocal critic of schools is now head of the U.S. Department of Education

by Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Get ready for more school choice on the federal level.

U.S. Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said recently at CPAC, an annual political conference attended by conservative activists and elected officials, “We have a unique window of opportunity to make school choice a reality for millions of families.”

A billionaire, DeVos has spent much of her adult life and tens of millions of dollars to promote using tax dollars to send children to private schools and other alternatives to traditional public schools.

After being picked by President Donald Trump as education secretary, her nomination generated a storm of opposition from parents, educators and others who said they saw her as a threat to public schools. In addition to frequently criticizing public schools, her opponents pointed out DeVos never attended public school, never taught, did not have any education training and never sent her children to public school.

Before her confirmation vote, hundreds of thousands of telephone messages and emails jammed up Senate offices, including those of Kansas’ U.S. Senators, Pat Roberts and Jerry Moran, both Republicans.

Both voted for DeVos’ nomination, which resulted in a 50-50 tie in the Senate that was broken in her favor by Vice President Mike Pence. It was the first time a vice president had to break a tie in the Senate for a presidential Cabinet nominee.

Roberts said in response to the concerns of Kansans, he personally spoke with DeVos and that she strongly supported the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). During her nomination hearing before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, DeVos seemed not to understand IDEA, which requires public schools to provide education to all students with disabilities.

Roberts also said, “In addition, I also had an opportunity to speak with her about improving the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and she committed to implementing the legislation as Congress wrote it. It is also important to note that Secretary DeVos was very clear that she will not use her position as secretary to force states to adopt voucher programs, and that she will
fully respect state authority over education.”

Trump has proposed taking $20 billion in federal funds from unidentified areas to use toward a grant program for states to expand private vouchers and charter schools. He has also said that he wants to persuade states to devote another $110 billion toward vouchers.

Research on voucher programs has shown mixed results. Public school advocates, including KASB, say redirecting dollars from public to private schools weakens public education while private schools don’t have the same obligation to serve all students, including those with special needs, and are not subject to the same legal requirements as public schools.

DeVos on ESSA

In an interview with conservative columnist Cal Thomas, DeVos said giving states the opportunity to expand private school vouchers and charter schools will be a “bigger picture goal” but that her main priority at this point is to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act. “There’s a small piece in the legislation that will allow states that are particularly innovative to implement some course choices on a very local level,” DeVos said in the interview. “And I am very much going to encourage them to take the ball and run with it as far as possible.

DeVos expects DeVos “will adhere to the new ESSA law and give states maximum flexibility in designing plans that best fit their state. This flexibility is critical for Kansas as we work towards our vision for education. We have to be able to adjust our systems to fit the unique needs of each child.”

Kansas Education Commissioner Randy Watson said he expects DeVos “will adhere to the new ESSA law and give states maximum flexibility in designing plans that best fit their state. This flexibility is critical for Kansas as we work towards our vision for education. We have to be able to adjust our systems to fit the unique needs of each child.”

Transgender issues

Recently, the Trump administration declared that states should be in charge of determining what bathroom transgender students can use in schools. The decision reverses guidance from former President Barack Obama’s administration that told schools transgender students should be allowed to use bathrooms corresponding with their gender identity. According to news reports, the new guidance letter was a point of contention between DeVos and U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Sessions, who has opposed expanding transgender rights, pushed for the letter, while DeVos objected. Trump told DeVos to back down and she did, according to the New York Times and other media outlets.

But at CPAC, DeVos said she thought the transgender guidance provided by Obama’s administration was “a huge example” of Obama’s overreach.

www.ed.gov
KASB Risk Management works to maximize funding

By Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

KASB’s Risk Management Division continues evolving to help school districts reduce their risks and maximize their dollars so they can provide more funding in the classroom.

In 2016, KASB Risk Management re-branded, changing its name from Insurance Services, and also changed the way it marketed products. In addition, KASB Risk Management added a new service — health consulting to help members better manage health care costs.

The division also offers workers compensation insurance, property and casualty insurance, student accident insurance, a natural gas consortium called KJUMP and Section 125 & voluntary insurances.

Most recently, KASB Risk Management created the position of Customer Service Specialist and hired Jamie Slack for the job.

“We are hoping to streamline all our member service operations,” said Risk Management Director Rod Spangler.

“Instead of marketing products, we market the agency, then inside the agency we have products that our members can access,” said Spangler.

Fifteen percent of districts’ operating funds are spent on benefits and that figure has doubled in the last 15 years.

The Risk Management Team helps districts review their insurance options, creates strategic partnerships, and monitors the regulatory climate and changes in the insurance industry.

KASB has 107 educational entities in its workers compensation pool; 65 in property and casualty and 177 in the gas consortium. KASB estimates school entities have saved $28 million in natural gas costs over 15 years by joining the consortium.

Many school administrators advanced through the classroom and educator ranks and lack the expertise needed to assess risk management options.

Spangler said he will perform a five-minute risk assessment for districts.

“For most superintendents, their knowledge is built around the curriculum and classroom or building administration side of education. Business operations is typically an ‘on the job’ training effort that many go through,” Spangler said.

“What they need is that strategic risk partner, and unbiased voice that can educate them and support them. For many, the lack of understanding causes a ‘let’s just keep it the same’ approach, which could potentially cost their districts some significant savings. On the other hand, over managing their risk management or insurance programs also can come with some potential pitfalls as well.

“In the end, business operations and expenses on the business side of school business continue to trend up. With school funding always a concern, the need to manage every dollar to ensure most resources are pointed to the classroom, should cause all our members to look for support. In Risk Management arena, my division can provide that for them,” Spangler said.
Health Insurance consultant adds up to big savings for Vermillion

by Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

Facing a possible 40 percent increase in health insurance costs for her district, Vermillion USD 380 Superintendent Mischel Miller faced a dilemma.

“Under our current financial circumstances, I didn’t know how we could continue to provide good coverage for our teachers and staff,” she said.

She needed answers, and made a call to KASB’s Risk Management Director Rod Spangler to explore the Association’s new health insurance consulting program.

As a former consultant, Miller recognized the advantages using outside subject matter experts.

“They just come in and give you an opinion, based on fact,” she said. And that is exactly what happened with the McGinnis representative, she said.

“The entire process was pressure-free and professional,” Miller said. “As superintendents, we are asked to know a lot about everything, but it was a great help to have someone to turn for help in exploring and investigating our possible cost increase.”

They started with a phone conversation with Miller, Spangler and a representative from the McGinnis group. Miller said this gave her a chance to ask questions of someone whose only motive is to help you learn about the world of health insurance. Following that initial conversation, Miller met with a consultant who then began to explore the pros and cons of other insurance market options and ask questions on behalf of the school district.

Miller said once the consultant finished their work, over about a three-month period, their report indicated there was no justification for such a large increase. Using information provided by her work with McGinnis, she met with their local insurance provider and asked for clarification and additional information.

“In the end, we stuck with the health insurance plan we had, but without the 40 percent increase,” Miller said.

McGinnis Group is KASB’s endorsed health insurance consulting partner. The agency is based in Fairway, Kansas and specializes in helping clients structure employee benefit packages. Costs of the consulting service are based on three options, from an upfront consulting fee to a fee based on the percentage of premium or overall savings. An initial consultation is offered at no cost to the KASB member district.

“KASB has a good pattern of getting you in touch with the right people,” Miller said.

New customer service specialist helps members find best options

by Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Jamie Slack is the new customer service specialist with the KASB Risk Management Department. She will be working with individual clients to find their best options in the risk management product line-up.

When a member has a question or concern, Jamie will work to find the best answers and coordinate what the next steps will be.

Jamie is from Cedar City, Utah and has been in the Topeka area for many years now. She attended Washburn University and recently graduated with a Business Management degree from Rasmussen College.

Jamie recently attained her life and health insurance license and is actively working on her property and casualty license. She’s eager to get to work with the many great clients that take part in the insurance programs KASB Risk Management department has to offer. The Risk Management department at KASB has grown and Jamie is meant to bridge the gap to ensure clients are getting the attention they need. Jamie will be the point person to answer any questions that clients may have.

Should you work with a Health Insurance Consultant?

Health insurance contracts and offerings are very complex. The initial review and consultation are the first steps to see what areas of this service would be valuable for your specific needs. One thing is clear: With costs rising and benefits declining in some cases, our members have not had the quality “consultative” approach to this process. Ideally, we will reach impactful savings like we did for Vermillion. That is certainly not guaranteed, but the courage to take on this process, the education surrounding it, are decisions I hope our members can more easily make now with this service. In the end, while this service is tied to a fee, the hope is that savings gained, or the negotiating power our members get with the carriers actually reduce or eliminate high renewals or pricing like the ones USD 380 faced, and those savings can be used to pay for this valuable service.
KASB has posted its 2017 Enrollment Projection Report to the KASB Research website (www.kasbresearch.org). This year, along with the report showing statewide trends, members can generate tables, graphs, and maps at the district level broken out by grade level and lunch status. KASB uses county-level birth data and historical headcount enrollment data to predict public school enrollment for the next five school years.

The following are major findings from this year’s report:

- Total headcount enrollment will see modest increases from 2016-17 through 2018-19, then a slight decrease in 2019-20, virtually no change in 2020-21, then a modest decrease in 2021-22.
- The average annual change in total enrollment from 2016-17 to 2021-22 is expected to be a 0.13 percent increase.
- The five-year change from 2016-17 to 2021-22 is projected to be a 0.66 percent increase.
- 160 districts, or 55.9 percent, are projected to see a decline in enrollment during this period, with all the growth happening in 125, or 43.7 percent of the districts. The chart on the next page shows the predicted change for all districts.
- Eleven districts are expected to see an increase of 20 percent or more. These are displayed in Chart 1. The largest projected increase is 89.70 percent (USD 314).
- Six districts are expected to see a decline of 20 percent or more. These are displayed below. The largest projected decrease is 41.19 percent (USD 390).
- The average district is expected to see a 0.41 percent increase during this time.
- Grades K through five will all see decreases in students, while grades six through 12 will see increases.
- The percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch is not predicted to change substantially between 2016-17 and 2021-22.
KASB added a new analysis to the enrollment projections this year - average age. The average student age for a district is calculated by assigning an age to each grade level (K = 6, 1st = 7, etc.), then multiplying the ages by the number of students in each grade level, and finally dividing the total by the total number of students in the district.

The resulting age provides some indication as to whether the districts should expect increases or decreases in enrollment potentially beyond the five-year projection. Districts with lower average student ages could expect to see their population grow in the future, whereas districts with higher average student ages might see declines.

The following were the key findings of the average age analysis.

- Statewide average student age is likely to increase slightly, suggesting that a decline in enrollment might be on the horizon.
- 122 districts, or 42.7 percent, are expected to see a decline in average student age.
- 162 districts, or 56.6 percent, are expected to see an increase in the average student age.

Districts can run these analyses for their own district, or can even look at the data by KASB Region, High School League, and a variety of other factors.

It is important to note that this analysis is based solely on two pieces of demographic information; county live birth data and public school district enrollment data. There are a variety of other factors that could impact future student enrollment numbers. These results should be used in conjunction with other information available to school districts and communities when planning and looking towards the future.

That being said, this data indicates the student population enrollment trends for the next five years should be very similar to what we have seen in the past five years. The total student population is expected to increase slightly overall during that time, but this will come in the form of increases in the next few years followed by slight decreases leading up to 2021-22. Information on grades and average ages does not suggest the nature of the student populations will change dramatically during that time.

To read the entire report and interact with the data tools, visit https://kasbresearch.org/survey-data/#EnrolProj

KASB member benefits now include customizable enrollment projection

KASB members can now access enrollment projection data online and customize reports to fit local needs. Previously a paid service through KASB, this is now a membership benefit.

Access to the data comes through the KASB Research Department's Tableau Portal. Go to kasb.org/research and click on "Enrollment Projection Report and Data (Members Only)" The full report and data tools are listed under "Enrollment Projections. This year, along with the report showing statewide trends, members can generate tables, graphs and maps at the district level broken out by grade level and lunch status.

The customizable reports are password protected. If you need assistance, please contact Debbie Dyche, KASB Research Assistant, at ddyche@kasb.org or call 785.273.3600 or 800.432.2471.

All Districts

![All Districts Map](https://kasbresearch.org/survey-data/#EnrolProj)
Challenger is not just the name of a fifth- and sixth-grade school in Goddard. It’s a mission.

Recently, Challenger Intermediate School, Goddard USD 265, was designated as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2016.

“It’s who we are. We are the challenger of status quo. We believe in becoming better, brighter and meaningful. We believe in Challenger,” school staff members wrote in the school’s Blue Ribbon application.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes outstanding public and non-public schools. Last year, 279 schools received the honor nationwide, including four in Kansas.

Challenger Intermediate School was recognized for being an “Exemplary High Performing School” with students in the top 15 percent in English and math as measured by state assessments.

Community and traditions

“Our students put their best foot forward each and every day,” Principal Jess Herbig told the Wichita Eagle.

The school lies west of Wichita in a fast-growing suburb where many of the residents commute to Wichita for work.

There is a lot of community pride and many of the school’s teachers graduated from the school district and maintain a family-type environment in the classroom.

Students participate in numerous community and national causes, such as putting together soldier care packages and weaving “plarn” (plastic yarn mats for the homeless) and raising funds for the American Heart Association.

Of the school’s approximately 400 students, about 80 receive special education services and approximately 135 receive free or reduced-price meals.

Each day, students are greeted by their teachers with a handshake and each day there is 30 minutes of Pride Time when students can strengthen their foundational skills or try more difficult academic challenges.

The teachers create clubs and every six weeks, students can choose to participate in a new activity, such
as gardening, running, comic books and whiffle ball.

There are a lot of traditions, such as annual field trips to the Kansas Cosmosphere in Hutchinson, tailgating, book fairs, anti-bullying week, movies, bowling and cookouts.

An affirming place

The school works hard to stay in touch with students on a personal and emotional level as well as keeping them focused on academics.

Students and teachers affirm students’ good deeds and outstanding efforts through “Affirmation Friday” and post good deeds and announcements in “Affirmation Alley.”

The school utilizes Capturing Kids’ Hearts to help students take on responsibility and to assist in building self-managing classrooms.

In some areas, as funding has tightened, the Parent Teacher Organization has stepped up to help provide supplies and field trips.

Professional development for teachers, student leadership, high expectations and engaging families and the community all have a top priority in helping students achieve academic success and solid character traits.

This is the second of four installments on Kansas schools receiving the National Blue Ribbon designation. Besides Challenger Intermediate, the other three schools are Chanute Elementary, Chanute USD 430 (which was featured in the February issue of SBR); McKinley Intermediate, Abilene USD 435 and Wheatridge Middle School, Gardner-Edgerton USD 231.

About the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

An important part of the U.S. Department of Education, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes outstanding public and non-public schools. In identifying several hundred outstanding schools annually, the program celebrates school excellence, turn around stories, and closing subgroup achievement gaps. The Award is both a high aspiration and a potent resource of practitioner knowledge. National Blue Ribbon Schools represent the full diversity of American schools. They are urban, suburban, and rural, large and small, traditional and innovative, and serve students of every social, economic, and ethnic background.

Recognizing Great American Schools Since 1982

Learn more at: https://nationalblueribbonschools.ed.gov

“`It’s who we are. We are the challenger of status quo. We believe in becoming better, brighter and meaningful. We believe in Challenger!”`

~school staff members wrote in the school’s Blue Ribbon application.
Q: What is your background in education?
A: I began my career in public education as a K-12 vocal and instrumental music teacher. In that school district I was promoted to assistant secondary principal and then principal. I then became a superintendent of schools for a 34-year period with a brief interruption to serve as an assistant director of a Regional Professional Development Center. I have served on numerous committees and boards as well as serving as an adjunct instructor in both music and education at several universities and colleges.

Q: Why did you run to be a member of the Kansas State Board of Education?
A: I have always believed in community service. I believe that it is the responsibility of citizens to give back to their communities. However, my decision to run for the State Board of Education was somewhat impulsive. When Jana Shaver decided not to stand for re-election I was asked by several people to run and decided to do so, basically at the last minute.

Q: What is the biggest challenge facing the State Board?
A: There seems to be a disrespect for public education and teachers and other personnel by some segments of the community. The challenge is to support teachers and schools in this difficult time. We must attract the highest quality teachers and staff to educate the children of Kansas. We must rebuild respect and trust.

Q: What is the best part about serving on the State Board?
A: The best part of being on the State Board is visiting schools and interacting with students and school district personnel.

Q: What do you do outside of your board duties?
A: I am recently retired and spend as much time as possible with my 4 pre-school aged grandchildren. We are also doing some traveling that we put off while I was working and I still serve on several boards and committees.
Jim Porter was recently elected chairman of the 10-member Kansas State Board of Education. Porter, of Fredonia, has served on the board since 2015 and represents District 9, which covers southeast Kansas.

Q When you were a child, who did you look up to?
A My mother was a first grade teacher who taught until she was 77 years old. She was absolutely dedicated to her students. I also attended a large and active church and there were many leaders in my church who inspired and influenced me.

Q Who inspires you now?
A A lot of people inspire me now. I am inspired every time I visit a kindergarten classroom and see the amazing progress students are making under the direction of outstanding teachers. I am inspired by the passion and dedication of my colleagues on the State Board. I am inspired by our Commissioner of Education and the Deputy Commissioners, along with other dedicated professionals of the Kansas Department of Education. I am inspired and proud of my immediate family, all of whom are working to make their communities better. I am inspired by all of the dedicated education professionals who are working hard to assure that “Kansas Leads the World in the Success of EACH Student.”

Q Was there a teacher or someone in the education community who made a difference in your life?
A Gertrude Crawford was my 8th grade history teacher. I didn’t like her as a smart aleck 8th grader. She had high expectations for all of us and held our feet to the fire. In retrospect, I see now that my life long interest in history is a direct result of her influence. Miss Crawford was nearing the end of her career when she was my teacher almost 60 years ago. I wish I could go back and thank her.

The mission of the State Board of Education is to prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student’s gifts and talents. The Kansans CAN Vision is to Lead the World in the Success of Each Student.

The board consists of 10 elected members, each representing a district comprised of four contiguous senatorial districts. Board members serve four-year terms with an overlapping schedule.
High school students often become attached to their school lockers. But few look at a locker and think of an invention.

That’s what Blake Hawkins, a senior and student body president at Valley Center High School in Valley Center, Kansas, did. Hawkins built inside a locker a vending machine that dispensed cans of Mountain Dew or Dr. Pepper for 75 cents each. He called it The Soda Locker. Word has spread about the invention and has gone viral around the Internet.

PBS went to two schools in Kansas — Eisenhower Middle School in Topeka USD 501 and Wichita West High School in Wichita USD 259 — to report on new ways to resolve conflicts in school and reduce student suspensions and expulsions and help them learn peace-making skills. Since the use of conflict resolution circles and restorative justice at the schools, fighting and disruptive behavior has dramatically decreased and academic performance has increased. The process includes the teacher, students, mediator and sometimes parents to discuss problems and sign agreements about how they will resolve the conflict that has arisen.

To read or view the full story, go here: [www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2017/02/10/conflict-resolution-public-schools/34528/](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2017/02/10/conflict-resolution-public-schools/34528/)

Lansing USD 469 had a graduation rate of 96 percent, which was the highest graduation rate in Kansas, according to the education website, StartClass.com. The data for the 2014-15 school was provided by EdFacts, a service of the U.S. Department of Education. Lansing High School Principal Steve Dike said the high school has flexible programs to target the needs of students. He also said he feared possible funding cuts could hurt those programs.

Kansas City USD 500’s efforts to help homeless students and their families was the focus of a PBS NewsHour story. The story showed how school officials and local community advocates work together to make sure that homeless families with school-age children get the support they need to keep the students in school and get an education. To view the story go to [http://newsvideo.su/video/6084624](http://newsvideo.su/video/6084624)

Concerned parents of students in Shawnee Mission USD 512 have formed a group that they hope will be an effective voice for public education.

Jennifer Howerton said during the political season last year she noticed the influence that Stand Up Blue Valley had in helping elect state legislative candidates viewed as more supportive of schools.

“So I started talking to other parents who were interested in lobbying on behalf of Shawnee Mission schools,” Howerton told the Shawnee Mission Post.

She and nine other parents across the district have formed Education First Shawnee Mission, founded a political action committee and started social media accounts. The group will be strictly nonpartisan.

“We don’t care about what letter you have after your name. All we want to do is make sure public education is a primary concern for this community and our elected officials, and that no one is supporting inappropriate funding measures, privatization or vouchers,” she said. The full story on the new group can be found at [http://shawneemissionpost.com/2017/02/15/education-first-shawnee-mission-looks-to-replicate-model-of-stand-up-blue-valley-in-smsd-area-will-focus-on-school-board-races-60792](http://shawneemissionpost.com/2017/02/15/education-first-shawnee-mission-looks-to-replicate-model-of-stand-up-blue-valley-in-smsd-area-will-focus-on-school-board-races-60792)

Dr. Kelly Gillespie, chief executive officer of the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center in Sublette, recently received a national award for her design of the Digital eWalkThrough® System. The web-based tool is supporting school districts statewide with collection of real-time instructional data coupled with instantaneous feedback to teachers. These data serve as valuable evidence for the new Kansas Education Systems Accreditation process. Gillespie received the prestigious E. Robert Stephens Award from the Association of Educational Service Agencies.
KASB announces Leadership for Tomorrow Class of 2017

by Carol Pitts, cps@kasb.org

The Kansas Association of School Boards is pleased to announce our Leadership for Tomorrow Class of 2017. The 25 participants were chosen through an application process based on individual leadership in public education and participation in activities that promote effective governance and raise student achievement.

The Class of 2017 is comprised of board members and superintendents from across Kansas, representing schools of different sizes, geographic location and demographic enrollment.

“Leadership for Tomorrow gives everyone a chance to learn more about who we are and what we have in common,” said Dr. John Heim, KASB executive director. “It’s also a way to gain perspective on our shared challenges and how schools across the state are meeting the needs of the kids in their schools.”

Heim said part of the program focuses on expanding skills to become more effective advocates for improvement and change, benefiting not only the participant’s local school district, but also Kansas public education.

“This year’s class will be in the front row as our state grapples with education funding and policies that will impact every district in our state,” Heim said.

Four sessions will be held in various locations: Hutchinson, Stafford, Coffeyville Parsons, Ness City, Garden City and Wichita. Through these onsite visits, presentations and class discussions, participants expand their knowledge of leadership skills and education key issues by learning about the unique challenges and opportunities in schools across the state.

The 2017 KASB Leadership for Tomorrow Class includes:

• James Adams, Board of Education, Seaman USD 345;
• Art Baker, Superintendent/High School Principal, Clifton-Clyde USD 224;
• Rick Behrens, Board of Education, Kansas City, Kansas USD 500;
• Chad Burman, Board of Education, Cimarron-Ensign USD 102;
• William Cook, Board of Education, Erie-Galesburg USD 101;
• Aaric Davis, Superintendent, Royal Valley USD 337;
• Jeff Ellis, Board of Education, Mulvane USD 263;
• Kelly Franke, Board of Education, Paola USD 368;
• Angela Handy, Board of Education, De Soto USD 232;
• Penny Hargrove, Superintendent, Hiawatha USD 415;
• Janell Harman, Board of Education, Inman USD 448;
• Adrian Howie, Superintendent, Hugoton USD 210;
• Steve Karlin, Superintendent, Garden City USD 457;
• George Leary, Superintendent, Moundridge USD 423
• Brian Leighty, Board of Education, Dighton USD 482;
• Karl Matlack, Board of Education, Burrton USD 369;
• Mike Morrison, Board of Education, Topeka USD 501;
• Eric Norstrom, Board of Education, Canton-Galva USD 419;
• Steve Richards, Board of Education, Newton USD 373;
• Bill Rinkenbaugh, Board of Education, Augusta USD 402;
• Sara Smith, Board of Education, Vermillion USD 380
• Chris Vignery, Superintendent, North Ottawa County USD 239;
• Scott Wilson, Board of Education, Andover USD 385;
• Jason Winbolt, Board of Education, Spring Hill USD 230; and
• Tim Winter, Superintendent, Wamego USD 320.

The KASB Delegation discussing Federal support for IDEA as part of the NSBA Advocacy Institute.

Pictured: Senator Jerry Moran, Gail Billman, Region 3 Vice President, Labette Co USD 506; Rod Stewart, KASB Past President, Washington Co USD 108; Parker McGowan, son of Gina McGowan, Region 7 Vice President, Ellsworth USD 327; Evelyn Hill, Region 13 Vice President, Kansas City USD 500; Leah Fliter, KASB Advocacy/Outreach Specialist; Dayna Miller, President-Elect, Basehor-Linwood USD 458; and C. Patrick Woods, KASB President-Elect Designee, Topeka USD 501.
Kansas Teacher of the Year team members work to help each student

Providing a daily change of clothes for a young girl who is growing up in an unsanitary home, getting a severely autistic child to sing and allowing a student with a tumultuous background to nap in class.

These are what members of the Kansas Teacher of the Year team talk about when reflecting on their combined 125 years of classroom experience.

In addition to being on fire to teach children, these teachers are on fire to help their students on a one-to-one basis.

“Good education is a messy endeavor,” said Jason Sickel, the 2017 Kansas Teacher of the Year.

“Students are not a product. They are humans. Every student we have is different,” said Sickel, who is a vocal music teacher at Blue Valley North High School, Blue Valley USD 229.

The eight team members support the State Board of Education’s Kansans Can vision, which focuses on the individual needs of each student and how to prepare every student to succeed in life.

The team members said to fulfill this vision, the state needs to increase early childhood education, increase partnerships with businesses to work with students and increase the number of school counselors and reading programs.

The teachers say more students today are facing more stress, such as poverty. And this results in students having trouble mastering social skills, such as getting along with others and regulating emotions.

Jennifer Farr, a fifth-grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary School, Geary County USD 475, said teaching is the greatest profession, but teachers as a rule “are our worst advocates” because they often are just too busy. She urged policymakers to visit classrooms and observe firsthand the teaching occurring every day in Kansas schools.

Crystal May, a fourth-grade teacher at Pray-Woodman Elementary School in Maize USD 266, said policymakers should seek input “of those closest to students” when deciding what to do for public school education.

Past Kansas Teacher of the Year winners:

- 2016 — Justin Coffey, Dodge City High School mathematics.
- 2015 — Shannon Ralph, Dodge City High School biology.
- 2014 — Jeff Baxter, Leavenworth High School, language arts.
- 2013 — Dyane Smokorowski, Andover Middle School, language arts.
- 2012 — Tiffany Richard, Olathe East High School, biology and chemistry.
- 2011 — Curtis Chandler, Wamego Middle School, language arts.
- 2009 — Cindy Couchman, Buhler High School, mathematics.

“Students are not a product. They are humans. Every student we have is different,” said Sickel, who is a vocal music teacher at Blue Valley North High School, Blue Valley USD 229.

About the Program

The Kansas Teacher of the Year Award recognizes and utilizes representatives of excellent teaching in the elementary and secondary classrooms of the state. Its mission is to build and utilize a network of exemplary teachers who are leaders in the improvement of schools, student performance, and the teaching profession.

For more information about this program, please contact Sherry Bukovatz at sbukovatz@ksde.org.

You can also find information including the 2018 Teacher of the Year Application online at: www.ksde.org/Agency/Fiscal-and-Administrative-Services/Communications-and-Recognition-Programs/Kansas-Teacher-of-the-Year-Awards.
KANSAS
Teacher of the Year Program

2017 Kansas
Teacher of the Year

Jason Sickel
High School Vocal Music
Blue Valley USD 229
Blue Valley North High School
12200 Lamar Ave.
Overland Park, KS 66209
(913) 239-3000
jasickel@bluevalleyk12.org

2017 Kansas Regional Teachers of the Year

Kristine “Kristi” A. Bruce
Grade 4
Auburn-Washburn USD 437
Auburn Elementary School
810 N. Commercial St.
Auburn, KS 66402
(785) 339-4400
brucekr4@usd437.net

Jennifer M. Farr
Grade 5
Geary County USD 475
Lincoln Elementary School
300 N. Lincoln School Dr.
Junction City, KS 66441
(785) 717-4570
jenniferfarr@usd475.org

Maret Schrader
High School Language Arts
Seaman USD 345
Seaman High School
4850 N.W. Rochester Rd.
Topeka, KS 66617
(785) 286-8300
mschrader@usd345.com

Lori J. Stratton
High School English, Reading
Wamego USD 320
Wamego High School
801 N. Lincoln St.
Wamego, KS 66547
(785) 456-2214
strattonl@usd320.com

Brent M. Wolf
Grade 6 English Language Arts
Derby USD 260
Derby North Middle School
3100 N. Rock Rd.
Derby, KS 67037
(316) 788-8408
bwolf@usd260.com

Crystal May
Grade 4 Mathematics, Science, Social Studies
Maize USD 266
Pray-Woodman Elementary School
605 W. Academy Ave.
Maize, KS 67101
(316) 721-0902
cmay@usd266.com

Communications and Recognition Programs
Kansas State Department of Education
Landon State Office Building
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, KS 66612-1212
(785) 296-2551
www.ksde.org
**Guidance from KASB Legal**

**School board members face new election process, deadlines**

In 2015, the Kansas Legislature passed HB 2104, which changed local election dates, including school board elections. Previously school board general elections were held in the spring of odd-numbered years. The law now requires these elections to be held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November of odd-numbered years. If necessary, primary elections will be held on the first Tuesday in August of odd numbered years.

A brief listing of dates of interest include:

- 2017: Primary election Tuesday, August 1 & General election Tuesday, November 7
- 2021: Primary election Tuesday, August 3 & General election Tuesday, November 2

The change of election dates makes it necessary to extend the terms of school board members whose term was to expire in 2017. Instead, those members will serve until the second Monday in January of 2018, when members who were newly elected in November take office.

**Board action required**

Boards must pass a resolution stating that the terms of board members that would expire at any time in 2017 will now expire on the second Monday in January of 2018.

There is no definitive date on when the resolutions should be passed, although it must be passed prior to the expiration of the board members’ original terms (June 30, 2017). Boards can also pass it much sooner if they desire. If your board has not passed a resolution extending the terms of these board members, please contact a KASB attorney for a sample resolution.

*Learn more online at: www.kasb.org/boardelections*

**Law Enforcement access to students**

Districts have recently sought guidance when law enforcement officials or parole officers appear at school requesting to interview students. In general, the school is under no obligation to produce the students for interview or interrogation by police or parole officers during school hours. We recommend that you advise law enforcement that students should not be deprived of class time, and that police investigations should occur outside of school hours.

If law enforcement officers are permitted to meet with students pursuant to court order or in the investigation of events that occurred at school, parents or guardians should be notified immediately. A representative of the school should remain with the student until parents or guardians arrive.

An exception to this general rule applies to investigations of child abuse, in which case school officials must cooperate with law enforcement or Department of Children and Families personnel and permit them to meet with students upon their request. If the investigation concerns allegations of abuse in the home or perpetrated by family members, parents and guardians should not be notified of the request to interview the students.

If you have questions when law enforcement or any state official requests to meet with students at school, please contact a KASB attorney at 800.432.2471.
Mandatory
Negotiations
Training
available from the
KASB Legal Team!
Contact KASB Legal
at 800.432.2471 or
legal@kasb.org

Notice letter deadline for professional
negotiations is March 31 this year

The school board and the local
professional association must
exchange notice letters setting out
the issues they intend to negotiate
for the coming year’s contract
by March 31, 2017. The topics
of compensation and hours and
amounts of work must be negotiated
every year.

In addition, each side may
designate up to three additional
topics from the list of mandatorily
negotiable matters set out in K.S.A.
72-5413(l). Those topics include the
following:

- Leave, including holiday, sick,
  extended, sabbatical and other
  leave;
- Retirement Insurance benefits;
- Apparel and dress policy;
- Grievance procedures,
  including binding arbitration of
grievances;
- Disciplinary procedures for
  professional employees;
- Resignations;
- Termination and nonrenewal of
  contracts;
- Reemployment of professional
  employees
- Terms and form of the
  professional employee contract;
- Probationary period;
- Professional employee
  evaluation procedures;
- Voluntary payroll deductions for
  professional association dues;
- Dissemination of information
  related to the professional
  association using school
  facilities and time;
- Reasonable leave for bargaining
  unit organizational purposes;
- Other matters related to
  professional service, such as
  employment incentives or
  retention bonuses.

Any matters outside these specific
topic areas may be negotiated if
both sides agree. KASB attorneys
are available to discuss negotiation
issues prior to the March 31
deadline and will review the board’s
proposed notice letter upon request.
Please allow sufficient time before
the deadline. Requests will be
handled on a first-come, first-served
basis, and we cannot ensure that
we will be able to review letters
submitted at or near the deadline.

These articles are provided by the
KASB Legal Services team and are
not intended to be legal advice. If
you having 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.

Legal Assistance Fund Webinars

- 03.13.17 LAF Webinar for Boards and District Leaders:
  Special Education and Section 504
- 04.10.17 LAF Webinar for Boards
  and District Leaders: FMLA

Principals and Building Leaders

- 03.20.17 LAF Webinar for Building
  Leaders: Student Discipline Basics
- 04.17.17 LAF Webinar for Building
  Leaders: Student Free Speech

Learn More at kasb.org/
LegalWebinars
We need you! And the best part about it? You and your district/organization will benefit!

**Informed. Involved.**
Getting the most from your KASB membership!

**GOOD**
- Join us for Seminars and Workshops held throughout the year.
- Attend Fall Summits and Summer Advocacy Workshops.
- Participate in New Board Member Training or serve as a mentor.
- Make sure you are subscribed to KASB publications and emails, and respond to surveys and questionnaires.
- Don’t miss the KASB Annual Conference in December!

**BETTER**
- Get to know your Regional Vice-President and let them know your interests.
- Expand your knowledge and involvement in national issues by joining KASB-NSBA’s *National Connection*.
- Ask to place KASB information on your local board agenda and discuss during meetings.
- Volunteer your district to host on-site KASB meetings.

**BEST**
- Apply for KASB’s Leadership for Tomorrow program.
- Serve as your district’s delegate to the annual Delegate Assembly.
- Volunteer for one of KASB’s standing committees or governing boards:
  - Nominating Committee
  - Legislative Committee
  - Workers Compensation Board of Trustees
  - AdHoc Special Purpose Committees and Study Committees

[kasb.org/informedinvolved](kasb.org/informedinvolved) or contact KASB for more information!
785-273-3600 | 800-432-2471
**Coming Up @ KASB**

**MARCH 2017**
- 3.13.17 Legal Assistance Fund Board Member Webinar: Special Education and Section 504
- 3.17.17* Human Resources Academy - Newton
- 3.20.17 Legal Assistance Fund Building Leader Webinar: Student Discipline Basics
- 3.21.17* Human Resources Academy - KASB Topeka

**APRIL 2017**
- 4.10.17 Legal Assistance Fund Board Member Webinar: FMLA
- 4.17.17 Legal Assistance Fund Building Leader Webinar: Student Free Speech
- 04.17.17 Site Council Training, KASB Topeka

**MAY & JUNE 2017**
- 5.31.17 Summer Law Roundup - Wichita (in conjunction & 6.1.17 with USA Kansas Annual Conference)

*Use Your Season Pass!

**Maximizing the Role of Leadership Teams for the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation**

Kansas has a broader vision of what schools must do to prepare students to be successful, led by the Kansas State Board of Education’s Kansans CAN vision and supported by KSDE’s new school accreditation system, KESA. This half-day workshop will help principals and site council members explore the new role, benefit and value of the school-level site council in KESA.

*Noon to 3:30 p.m.*
- April 17, 2017 Topeka KASB
- April 24, 2017 Oakley Northwest Kansas Ed Service Center

Register at KASB.org/training

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**Human Resources Academy**

- **Friday, March 17, 2017**
  - 1420 E. Broadway Ct., Newton
- **Tuesday, March 21, 2017**
  - KASB | Topeka

**AGENDA TOPICS INCLUDE...**
- The New I-9 and Employer Obligations Under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
- Update on Fair Labor Standards Act Regulations – Are We or Aren’t We Implementing?
- FMLA Eligibility: When Do I Give Forms? How Do I Know If They Are Eligible? What Forms Do I Fill Out? How Do I Calculate The Amount of Leave Used? HELP!!!!
- Update on the Affordable Care Act
- Employment Law Pitfalls
- How Long Do We Keep That & Where? Retention of Employment Records
- Work Comp 101

*Use Your Season Pass!*
Opaa! Food Management specializes in serving the nutritional needs of K-12 school districts. First, we partner with each district to tailor a child nutrition program that meets a local community’s needs. Then we incorporate locally grown farm-fresh fruits and vegetables. The final touch is Opaa!’s scratch cooking, including oven-fresh rolls with lots of tender loving care baked right in.

KASB is proud to partner with Opaa! to offer a high quality, cost effective food management system option for our members.

Read success stories from Kansas Schools and find more information at www.kasb.org/partners