School officials relieved as special session ends, but many steep challenges ahead

Many educators never lose the desire to continue to be involved in school after they’ve formally left the classroom. Dr. Ferrell Miller, Geary County USD 475 board member, is one such educator who continues to give his time and energy to the community he loves.

Dr. Miller has served for 39 years in numerous capacities for Geary County USD 475. He served as a vocal music coach for 14 years at Fort Riley Junior High, an assistant principal for four years at Junction City High School and a Principal for 21 years at Junction City Middle School. Following his retirement in 2009, he became an Achievement Via Individual Determination (AVID) tutor at Junction City Middle School.

Dr. Miller then ran for and was elected to the USD 475 Board of Education in 2010 and is currently in his second term. “Following my career in education, I wanted to give back as a volunteer, who was elected to serve in the county that paid me to do what I loved doing. I loved working with students, staff, and parents to make a difference in lives through learning and encouraging people to be and do more than they imagined.”

During his time on the Geary County USD 475 Board of Education, Dr. Miller has served as a member, vice president, and president of the board. He is currently a board member. In addition to his time on the school board, he has served on a number of other civic...
KASB seeks candidates for association President

KASB is seeking candidates for the office of KASB President. The position requires a three-year commitment to serve on the KASB Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Candidates must be serving on a member school board. The deadline for application is Wednesday, August 31.

The Association depends on engaged, active participation by members to guide its work on behalf of the children of Kansas. The successful candidate for president will serve a six month term, as KASB President-Elect Designee, beginning with their election at the 2016 KASB Delegate Assembly in December. In July 2017, the individual will move into the office of KASB President-Elect. This position will spend the next year as President and the third year as Past President.

The KASB Nominating Committee will meet September 10 to interview and endorse candidates. The Committee’s recommendation will then be shared with the general membership of KASB and formally presented to the KASB Delegate Assembly on December 4. Delegates will elect the new president-elect designee during at that time.

Those interested in applying are encouraged to contact current members of the KASB executive committee or past KASB president with questions. KASB members are also asked to encourage applications from fellow board members who they believe possess the necessary vision and commitment to serve as Association president.

An online pdf application with additional information can be found at kasb.org/nominating. ~Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org
On again, off again KASB advocacy tour is on again

Neither Kansas Supreme Court school finance decisions nor special legislative sessions can deter KASB from its annual advocacy tour.

Developments in school funding have sidetracked the tour twice, but KASB has sandwiched in several meetings and re-scheduled others.

So far, attendance at the meetings has been excellent with school board members, administrators and political candidates coming to learn about school issues and ask questions. The attendance has been encouraging and shows school leaders are committed to getting solid information on the status of Kansas schools.

Mark Tallman, associate executive director for advocacy and communication for KASB, conducts the meetings with a presentation entitled: “Best of Times or Worst of Times for Kansas Public Education.”

The presentation shows that the education level of Kansans continues to improve, which in turn is a tremendous boost to the state’s economy, and that Kansas students are among the highest achieving in the country. But the presentation also shows many students are not prepared for the challenges of today’s economy and school funding, when adjusted for inflation, has been flat for several years.

New meeting dates have been scheduled for Hays and Oakley on July 18; Sublette and Pratt on July 19 and Hutchinson and Salina on July 20. ~Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

School leaders met in Lawrence in early June for one in a series of meetings on the KASB Advocacy Tour. KASB’s Mark Tallman, associate director for advocacy, made a presentation, called “Best of Times or Worst of Times for Kansas Public Education.” The advocacy tour has attracted school officials, advocates and candidates from across the state and is scheduled to continue in July.

Dr. Ferrell Miller

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boards, including: the Geary County Historical Society; the USD 475 Boys and Girls Club; the Geary County Schools Foundation; the JC Breakfast Optimist Club; and the Military Affairs Council.

Dr. Miller says the most rewarding part of his work is “working with my fellow board members, the superintendent, his staff and having opportunities to visit and encourage students and staff. Our board is made up of intelligent, talented people who care about students, staff, parents and our community.” He finds that these dedicated people truly live by the district’s motto, “Learning For All- Whatever It Takes” and they show their commitment and dedication by attending workshops, conferences and conventions to “learn how to improve not only our schools, but also themselves as servant leaders.”

In addition to his fellow board members, Dr. Miller finds the people in USD 475 to be one of the best things about the district. “Parents send their very best to our schools each day. Our staff does amazing work teaching students to read, write, problem solve and learn how to collaborate with each other in work and play.” He states that the diversity of the population- due to the impact of Fort Riley- helps to to provide a “wealth of cultures from all over the world.”

However, as with most things, the rewards do come with challenges. And Dr. Miller finds the future of school funding to be one of the challenges facing his district. He states that while USD 475 is fortunate “that we have Impact Aid because of having children of military families and support personnel’s children for those families,” he still finds the lack of support from the current legislature challenging. “Do your job!” is the message Dr. Miller has for state officials. “Education is a state function. Education is the key to not only self-improvement but also the improvement of our communities and state. If the education of the people within a state is a state function, then officials need to step up and do the right thing by supporting it financially as well as verbally.”

Another challenge Miller faces as a school board member is finding the time to attend multiple school events to show his commitment to the district and the board. “My goal has been (but not recently achieved) to be at every school in our district at least once a semester. I have volunteered to listen to elementary age students at 7:30 a.m. twice a week, assisted with an after school piano lab, read to some early childhood students and have genuinely tried to reach my goal. After attending an activity at a school, I send an e-mail to the teacher(s), principal and a copy to the superintendent, thanking them for their work and sharing specifics of what I enjoyed about my visit. Teachers especially deserve to be praised genuinely and often for their work; however, everyone in our district is amazing. This year I have logged a total of 511.5 hours of volunteered time and traveled 2,589 miles.”

As for the future of USD 457, Dr. Miller believes technology is an important part of moving forward. “We need to continue to prepare our students for the technological/information age so they will not only compete, but excel in the 21st century as leaders who make a difference in the lives of many.” He also believes tolerance is key to the future. “We need to appreciate more the different ideas, opinions, cultures, and backgrounds- not offend, humiliate, and degrade people because they are different. Our public schools are the foundation for learning not only information but also tolerance.”

~Shaneice McNabney, smcnabney@kasb.org

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schools open,” said KASB Executive Director Dr. John Heim. “This display of leadership serves our state well.”

While school leaders assured staff, parents and students that schools would remain open and start on time in August, state revenues continued to tank.

Even before the special session started, Gov. Sam Brownback’s administration announced a series of emergency budget maneuvers, including delaying a school payment, to keep the state’s ending balance above zero. School funding makes up approximately half of the state’s budget.

And the next portion of the Gannon school finance lawsuit — whether the level of school funding is adequate — could require a much bigger payment to schools than the equity phase of the litigation.

The state’s worsening budget situation and the question of future school funding provides the backdrop to what promises to be intense races for the Legislature and retention elections of five Supreme Court justices.

All 125 seats in the Kansas House and 40 seats in the Kansas Senate will be up for grabs. July 12 is the last day to register to vote for the primary election, which is Aug. 2. The general election is Nov. 8.

KASB urges Kansans to get registered, get informed and vote. KASB has a special election page on its website with information about voting and links to help voters learn more about candidates. The Election 2016 page is at www.kasb.org/election2016.

School personnel also should be careful not to mix business with politics. It is a violation of state law to send an email from your school computer, or simply forward an email, that deals with advocating for the election or defeat of a political candidate.

Any questions regarding state law on campaigning can be directed to the KASB Legal Department at 785-273-3600 or the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission at 785-296-4219.

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

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

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

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

For more information and the online application, see www.kasb.org/WestarSTEM.

~Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

ELECTION DEADLINES

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>Last day to register to vote for primary election.</td>
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<td>July 13</td>
<td>First day advance ballots are mailed. In person advance voting may begin.</td>
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<td>Contact your county election officer to find out when and where.</td>
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<td>August 1</td>
<td>Noon deadline to cast advance voting ballots in person in office of County Election Officer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2</td>
<td>Primary Election; Advance voting ballots must be received in office of County Election Officer by close of polls.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 18</td>
<td>Last day to register to vote in general election.</td>
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<td>Oct. 19</td>
<td>First day advance ballots are mailed. In person advance voting may begin.</td>
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<td>Contact your county election office to find out when and where.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 4</td>
<td>Deadline for voters to apply for advance voting ballots to be mailed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 7</td>
<td>Noon deadline to cast advance voting ballots in person in county election office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 8</td>
<td>General Election; Advance voting ballots must be received in office of County Election Officer by close of polls.</td>
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Increase participation in KASB training and save money!

For the second year KASB is offering a season pass!

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

Learn more at kasb.org/training, order online at kasb.org/seasonpass1617 or contact KASB for details.
The largest gains in achievement have been in states that have undertaken financial reforms. Among the most productive investments resulting from increased spending are:

- High-quality preschool
- Small class sizes – particularly in lower grades and for economically deprived children.
- Teacher pay
- Additional learning time has a positive effect on academic motivation and low - performing students.

The Effectiveness of Class Size Reduction

The second brief, “The Effectiveness of Class Size Reduction” gives a very good review of the research related to class size and student outcomes.

The report indicates that nationally teacher pay and benefits account for about 80 percent of the country’s school budgets. This is consistent with research KASB has done indicating that as of 2015, 77.8 percent of school expenditures went to salaries, benefits, and purchased (or contract) services. You can read KASB’s research at kasbresearch.org.

As early as 1979, there was research showing that once class size fell below 15 or so, “learning increased progressively as class size became smaller.” Further, the gains made by students in smaller classes lasted as students in smaller classes early on were more likely to graduate, go to college, and get a college degree.

Based on the existing research as a whole, the author concludes that “the literature on class size reduction is clear and positive. The ‘overwhelming majority’ of peer-reviewed papers find it an effective strategy.” He goes on to present the following recommendations:

- Class size is an important determinant of student outcomes, and one that can be directly determined by policy. All else being equal, lowering class sizes will improve student outcomes.
- The payoff from class-size reduction is greater for low-income and minority children. Conversely, increases in class size are likely to be especially harmful to these populations -- who are already more likely to be subjected to large classes.
- While lowering class size has a demonstrable cost, it may prove the more cost-effective policy overall particularly for disadvantaged students. Money saved today by increasing class sizes will likely result in additional substantial social and educational costs in the future.
- Generally, class sizes of between 15 and 18 are recommended but variations are indicated. For example, band and physical education may require large classes while special education and some laboratory classes may require less.

It is worth noting that KASB research has found that the average student-teacher ratio in Kansas, which is roughly analogous to class size, is approximately 18 students per regular teacher, and 9 students per direct educator. You can read more about Kansas student to staff ratios at kasbresearch.org.

The Purpose of Education: Truing the Balance Wheel

The third brief is entitled “The Purpose of Education: Truing the Balance Wheel” The report gives a brief explanation of the Center’s view of the purpose for education in the U.S.

Citing Thomas Jefferson’s assertion that people must be educated in order to be able to govern themselves, and Horace Mann’s assertion that education is “the Great Equalizer,” NEPC states that the purpose of education is “to build, sustain, and strengthen the society.”

The author notes that though great progress has been made in areas such as graduation rates, disparities within the student population are a major concern.

The following are areas that NEPC feels deserve particular attention:

- Effective teachers and principals: Teachers are the most important “within the school” factor. Sound leadership is essential, most especially in high-poverty and low-performing schools.
- Appropriate class size: The research evidence is clear that smaller classes yield the greatest gains for poor and minority students.

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The NSBA Advocacy Institute: A great place to learn and interact

Looking for an activity that develops an appreciation of public school advocacy, a more comprehensive understanding of governance, a deeper respect for fellow board members, and is a lot of fun? Consider, then, attending NSBA’s Advocacy Institute in January 2017.

Eight local board members, two family members and two KASB staff members attended AI earlier this month in Washington, D.C. and found it all of the above...perhaps even more.

The KASB Team

Rod Stewart, KASB past-president, Washington County USD 108;

Dayna Miller, KASB president-elect, Basehor-Linwood USD 458 and her son Tyler;

Frank Henderson, Jr., NSBA Board of Directors, Seaman USD 345;

Gail Billman, KASB Region 3 vice president, Labette County USD 506 and her daughter, Maggie;

Betty Arnold, Region 14 vice president, Wichita USD 259;

Gary Yost, Region 8 vice president, Otis-Bison USD 403;

LeEtta Felter, Olathe USD 233;

Joe Beveridge, Olathe USD 233;

Leah Fliter, new KASB Advocacy and Outreach Specialist, Manhattan USD 383; and

Tom Krebs, Governmental Relations Specialist, who will be replaced by Rob Gilligan July 1.

Mr. Stewart, Ms. Miller, Mr. Henderson, Ms. Billman and Mr. Krebs were veterans of the AI, once known as the Federal Relations Network (FRN). For the others, it was their first visit to the Capitol representing KASB.

The Program

The Institute kicked off Sunday morning, June 12, with an orientation session for new attendees; it also included a presentation on social media and the 2016 campaign season.

The conference officially kicked off with a general session Sunday afternoon.

The conference continued Monday with both general sessions and breakouts. Mr. Krebs participated on a panel that discussed the impact of social media, particularly Twitter, in covering legislative matters and communicating with association members.

After the official day concluded, the KASB delegation set to work on planning for the visit to Capitol Hill the next day.

Hill Visits

The KASB delegation broke into two teams for the Hill visits, with constituents slated to meet with their senator or representative.Splitting up also allowed the team to be of manageable size, particularly for the visits to the representatives' offices; and it allowed all team members to take the lead on different discussion topics.

Because of the times available, one team made four visits, while the other team made two.

The team that made four visits was composed of Mr. Beveridge, Ms. Felter, Ms. Arnold, Mr. Yost, Mr. Stewart and Mr. Krebs. Ms. Miller and Tyler, Ms. Billman and Maggie, Mr. Henderson and Ms. Filter comprised the second team.

The first team started with a visit with a staff member in Rep. Tim Huelskamp’s, R-Hutchinson, office. It then moved to the Cannon office building via the underground tunnel that connects them and went to Rep. Kevin Yoder’s, R-Overland Park, office. The meeting started with a staff member but Rep. Yoder soon joined us and spent more than half the meeting with the team.

The second team, after heading to the Hill and lunch, met with Rep. Lynn Jenkins', R-Topeka, staff. She joined them at the end of the meeting for a picture opportunity and a brief discussion of ESSA implementation. After a ride on the Congressional subway, the team finished the day with a meeting and photo with Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Dodge City. At each visit, our student advocates spoke eloquently of the impacts of CTE, special ed and child nutrition programs on their lives.

The Issues

NSBA gave the KASB Team extensive background information on four issues to discuss with the Kansas Delegation. Our teams prepared leave-behind packets with our key issues and policy requests. The leave-behinds were particularly helpful for Rep. Jenkins’ staff, who had only recently taken on the education portfolio.

At the end of the day, the teams met back at the conference hotel for a debriefing session. Members compared their impressions of the day and agreed that the visits were an extremely positive exercise. The veterans in the group were pleased with the hardworking Congressional staff. When asked to describe their day, our advocates used the words, “camaraderie”, “grateful” “hope”, “fun”, and “cooperation.” – Tom Krebs, tkrebs@kasb.org & Leah Fliter, lfilter@kasb.org
National Education Policy Center Briefs
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• Challenging and culturally relevant curriculum and supportive instructional resources: Tracking and inconsistent access to advanced courses generates unequal educational opportunities.
• Sufficient quality time for learning and development: Although school days are somewhat uniform, instructional time is considerably less for lower socioeconomic children.
• Up-to-date facilities and a safe environment: Facilities affect learning, and the neediest children currently endure the most inadequate facilities.

In order to focus on the needs of disadvantaged students, NEPC recommends the following changes to the scope of education:

• Extended time for learning and development: The summer academic loss of less affluent children is a clear indicator of the difference in the quality of informal learning experiences. “Students from more affluent backgrounds are exposed to learning resources including books, computers, museum visits, and other social, cultural, and academic experiences.”
• High quality early childhood education and services: Perhaps the highest return on investment in education comes from universal, publicly funded, high-quality preschool.
• Community schools and wrap-around services: “School-based programs that offer medical and dental care, psychological support, recreational activities, and social services for all children have long been shown to significantly impact students’ ability to benefit from educational offerings.”

Finally, NEPC recommends the following for policymakers:

• Embrace the broad goals of education, including civic responsibility, democratic values, economic self-sufficiency, cultural competency and awareness, and social and economic opportunity.
• Ensure that all schools have the fundamental educational resources they need to promote student success: effective teachers and principals, appropriate class sizes, challenging and culturally relevant curriculum and supportive instructional resources, sufficient quality time for learning and development, up-to-date facilities and a safe environment.
• Expand the scope of schools in high-poverty neighborhoods to provide wrap-around services including nutritional supports, health clinics, parental education, extended learning time, recreational programs, and other services needed to meet the social, physical, cognitive, and economic needs of both students and families.
• Promote a policy context that is supportive of equal opportunity: focus testing on formative rather than high-stakes purposes, prevent or repeal policies that allow for school resegregation, and renew the public commitment to public education.

The author concludes with the following quote from John Dewey in 1912:
“What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon it destroys our democracy.”

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Rod Spangler
Assistant Executive Director
KASB Risk Management
rspangler@kasb.org

‘With a new director, new name and rebranded look, KASB RISK MANAGEMENT is ready to provide our members with greater support and guidance in the future.’

- Dr. John Heim, KASB Executive Director