Creating a trauma informed school community
If you think school finance is confusing now …

By Scott Rothschild
srothschild@kasb.org

Writing 54 years ago in the 1963 School Board Journal, Dorothy Goodpasture, president-elect of KASB, nicely summed up the emotions that frequently are involved in public education debates. “It has been said that education is political dynamite because it touches our two most treasured possessions — our children and our pocketbooks,” she wrote.

In her article, entitled “Property taxes and school district organization in Kansas,” Goodpasture reviews the history of education in Kansas from its rural roots — “… whenever enough children could be gathered together to fill a room, a schoolroom was built and a teacher hired.” — up to the then-present — January 1963 when there were multiple levels of different kinds of school setups.

If you thought the current public school system is confusing, read about how it was back then. At first it sounds simple, but then quickly gets complicated.

“Two facts remained fairly constant: (1) wherever people wanted to form a new school district, they formed one, and (2) they paid for these schools with taxes on their property which was the only source supporting schools,” Goodpasture writes.

By 1937, however, people realized that property was not the only source of wealth, so the Legislature approved a sales tax with a portion of that revenue returned to local school districts for property tax relief. But in 1947, the Legislature froze that amount of revenue, then years later approved a per pupil amount of funding, but the continuation of a disproportionate tax burden and the number of districts “that sprouted like sunflowers all over the state,” forced the Legislature to wrestle with school issues again.

By 1963, Goodpasture writes: “We have at present, 2,023 different school districts of 17 different varieties, including 3 kinds of rural high school districts, 5 kinds of common school districts, 2 kinds of city school districts, community high school districts, united districts and an assortment of others operating under other special laws.”

She describes that of those 2,023 school districts, 223 — more than 10 percent — had no school at all. More than 400 districts had schools with only one teacher. “To complicate matters further, rural high school districts and community high school districts are super-imposed upon common school districts and some cities of the second class with the hodgepodge result that a common school district may find parts of its territory in as many as three or four different high school districts,” she wrote.

Goodpasture then describes the “crazy-quilt” property tax situation, uneven valuations, the astronomical increase in debt for building schools, and the overall property tax burden for Kansans.

She wrote the “brightest ray of hope” was for the Legislature to approve a school district reorganization and a comprehensive state financial plan. “It may take 10 years to get where we need to go, but the time to start is now. School children don’t live in the past. They live in the present and for the future. So should we.”

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Read more about the success of this important KASB member benefit on page 20.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Celebrating Public Schools

- President’s Perspective 4
- I’m From Kansas 5
- KASB Research 11
- KASB Board of Directors 14
- KASB News 20

Features

- Creating Trauma Informed School Community 6
  The number of students who have experienced some sort of trauma in their lives is on the rise and teachers and support staff in Kansas are learning how to help children cope and overcome the stresses of trauma.

- Variables Affect Enrollment Projections 8
  Longtime educator Kent Stewart talks about the difficulty in making school enrollment projections. To get an accurate calculation, one must take into account numerous factors.

- KASB Board of Directors Profile 10
  KASB profiles Region 10 vice president Laura Bors, who is committed to community service and education.

- National Blue Ribbon 12
  School climate was a key factor in helping McKinley Elementary School in Abilene become a National Blue Ribbon School.

- Q&A 16
  Kathy Busch, vice chairwoman of the Kansas State Board of Education, says today’s teachers and administrators inspire her. Check out her question and answer with School Board Review.

- Washington D.C. 18
  Education advocates need to pay attention to what is going on in Washington, D.C. President Donald Trump has proposed a budget that would cut some funding to Kansas schools.
Step back; look at the big picture

Every now and then, we as school advocates feel like we are fighting against a never-ending onslaught of criticism of public school education. We test too much, we don’t test enough, we need to stick to the three ‘R’s,’ we need more options so our students can compete in the modern world, we spend too much, we need to pay teachers more (actually, we do need to pay teachers more), etc. etc.

Sometimes when schools are in the news, it seems that it is often for something bad or something that is made to look bad. So, sometimes we need to step back and look at the big picture. KASB tries to provide a big picture perspective by presenting a balanced, reasonable approach to ranking Kansas schools against other states in an annual study. Many of you may be familiar with the KASB Report Card. It involves a great amount of research and compares Kansas public schools with all the other states over 15 measurements that include assessments, graduation rates, and post-secondary attainment. We released this Report Card to the public so Kansans will know how we are doing. In the 2016 Report Card, which was released last August, Kansas ranked 10th in the nation across these measurements, while Kansas’ spending per pupil was 29th. Every state that ranked ahead of Kansas spent more per pupil. So, by this measure, Kansas is not at the head of the class, but is in the top tier. And this is while Kansas spends below the national average.

Achieving high and spending low could mean that Kansas has one of, if not, the most efficient public school system in the country. So, while critics can probably always find a school expenditure that could be questioned, on the whole Kansas’ above average achievement for below average bucks is a record any governmental or business operation would love to have. We should be proud of it too.

Nearly half a million children walk into Kansas public schools every day. Are they all getting all their needs met? No, and we need always to make sure we are improving. But for the most part, Kansas schools are doing an excellent job. Teachers are inspiring their students, administrators and school board members are making sure resources are spent wisely and every year the proof is in the pudding. KASB puts out the Report Card to show parents, students, taxpayers how we are doing. That’s a nice, big picture.
Many of our children have turbulent lives and we must help them

Most everyone has suffered some kind of childhood difficulty. For me, most of it was self-induced. What was it for you? Not making a team, a class bully, middle school in general, or as KASB’s Mark Tallman describes, (quoting Niles from “Frazier”) the general difficulties of being “a small-boned child with superior language skills?”

While these kinds of experiences can be traumatic, the concept of childhood trauma has been the subject of recent attention and research and the new information is shocking.

Marcia Weseman, former middle school principal in the Blue Valley school district was at KASB recently to share some of her knowledge about the subject and it is an important one for school leaders to understand.

I learned the importance of defining one’s terms in high school novice debate class. For our purposes, childhood trauma goes beyond those listed above. The Centers for Disease Control website has excellent information on Childhood Trauma and what can be far-reaching, long-term impacts on those affected. A good summary description can be found at www.kasb.org/NPRTrauma1.

Researchers use the Adverse Childhood Experiences survey to determine an ACE Score. These experiences range from whether you were “sworn at, insulted, put down, or humiliated” at home to whether you had a parent in prison. What they have found is that children with higher ACE scores tend to experience more long-range physical and mental health issues ranging from obesity to cancer. In the short term, children are more likely to have difficulty regulating emotions and behavior, which translates into lacking responsibility all day long. I once received a hateful email from a parent at another school because I wouldn’t let a wrestling team travel during a blizzard. He accused me of effeminizing the wrestlers. Those arguments have been going on for centuries.

Local school boards are the place where esoteric and high-minded debates meet ten-year-old homeless kids. We cannot afford to debate social ills. The students we have are the best we are going to get right now. Schools and districts need to look at their policies and procedures and consider how to build resiliency in students, how to help them manage their turbulent lives so they can be productive citizens.

The research is showing that children who suffer trauma at home need exactly the opposite at school. Getting angry and yelling at a kid who has been yelled at in his home for years is not an effective strategy. Paddling a kid who has been beaten and abused at home will not yield positive results.

Read more from Dr. Heim online at http://heimkasb.blogspot.com
“A healthy relationship with one caring adult can offset significant childhood trauma,” Weseman said.

Creating a trauma informed school community

By Leah Fliter, lfilter@kasb.org and Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Ask any teacher in Kansas and they will probably tell you they are seeing more children who have experienced trauma in their lives.

Recent research says childhood traumatic experiences translate into further problems in the classroom and later in life. And when one child experiences trauma, it can have a rippling effect throughout the classroom and school.

Now teachers and support staff throughout Kansas are trying to learn more about what they can do about this issue.

Kathy Mickelson, who works for the Three Lakes Educational Cooperative which provides special education services for several Kansas school districts, recently attended a workshop at KASB on trauma. She said trauma “explains a lot of behaviors we’re seeing. We realized our schools needed more information and we want to be proactive in helping students, parents and staff.”

The workshop was led by Dr. Marcia Weseman, who is a trainer for the Trauma Smart Program at Crittenton Children’s Center, which is part of the St. Luke’s Health System.

Weseman has more than 30 years of experience as a teacher, principal and district administrator. She travels around the country presenting to social workers, teachers, administrators and other school leaders on how to become a “trauma-informed community.”

Trauma is any event that places overwhelming demands on the body’s psychological systems, resulting in a profound sense of helplessness and lack of control, Weseman said. Trauma can be the death of a sibling, poverty, physical and emotional abuse, witnessing violence, loss of a parent through divorce or death, homelessness and substance abuse at home.

Children who have experienced trauma exhibit behaviors such as “spacing out,” tantrums, withdrawal, inability to get along with others, hopelessness and school truancy, all of which impact school behavior and academic and social success.

Studies have found that by the age of four, one in four children experienced or witnessed a traumatic event. Research by Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has shown that adults with six or more traumas in childhood have a life expectancy that is 20 years shorter than average. Higher drop out rates and incarceration rates are also associated with trauma.

But schools can help children cope and recover from trauma. “We have found that by creating an environment and culture and changing the way we interact with people, primarily children, that these things can be overcome,” Weseman said. “A healthy relationship with one caring adult can offset significant childhood trauma,” she said.

And what is good in building a relationship with children who have experienced trauma is also good for all children, she said.

A good rule of thumb is to assume that every child has been victimized by trauma. Use universal precaution, Weseman said. All children should be given unconditional respect and should be challenged only in ways that avoid shame or humiliation.

Teachers must build trust and attachment with students. The child must feel safe; if they don’t it is difficult to focus on learning. For example, a child from an abusive home is constantly trying to sense cues from adults, so if a teacher raises his or her voice, the child goes into survival mode.

Students that have experienced trauma need to have their feelings validated. Instead of asking what is wrong with the student, teachers need to ask what has happened to the child. And teachers must manage their own stress and recognize their own emotional triggers too, Weseman said.

The payoff for applying strategies to help children recover from trauma is astronomical.

“One year with a healthy adult with a positive attachment in that child’s life can change the trajectory. One teacher can change the outcome of a child’s life,” she said.

More information on the effect of trauma can be found at traumasmart.org.
Participants at a recent trauma workshop at KASB are given a variety of objects representing responsibilities routinely “juggled” in schools. Then, a balloon representing a child or adult with a trauma history is introduced. The balloon behaves and responds differently and makes it more difficult to manage routine responsibilities.

About Trauma Smart

Developed by experts at Crittenton Children’s Center, Trauma Smart is working in Head Start preschool programs across the country. We prepare children for social and academic success:

• Actively includes parents in their child’s school experience;
• Improves the work environment for teachers and school personnel; and
• Creates practical and enduring change for children, families and communities.

The Trauma Smart program is founded on evidence-based interventions recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network to be effective in helping children and the adults who care for them effectively address the negative impact of violence and trauma.

Learn more at TraumaSmart.org

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The accuracy of a grade-by-grade school enrollment projection can be adversely affected by several variables. During the nearly 50 years I calculated future enrollments for school districts, I became increasingly cautious about accuracy, especially beyond the first year or two of the projection. After isolating some 18 variables, I reduced them to 12 and included modernizing some 12 parameters each with discussion in a book, "Avoiding School Facility Planning Flukes" (Stewart, 2007). They are: grade repeat policy, church, student dropouts, foster children, and major community changes; additional enrollment impacts; and major community planning. Three key factors influence enrollment, especially in rural districts: 1. The enrollment projection generally addresses seven-year planning. 2. A major employer may expand just outside the school district causes a significant increase in enrollment, although this kind of project allows a hopefully successful response. A major employer may expand a business thereby bringing new families to the district as fast as housing can become available. 3. A major employer may expand a business thereby bringing new families to the district as fast as housing can become available.

Second, when mixed family/two family homes are fairly prevalent in a school district, enrollment numbers can be influenced by move-ins and move-outs. It is difficult to obtain accurate figures for enrollment, especially in Kansas. I was taught to be particularly attentive to these variables as those who may have several school age children. A major employer may expand a business thereby bringing new families to the district as fast as housing can become available.

Fourth, housing development projects have a very observable impact on enrollment, especially in rural districts. Welfare policy can influence enrollment, especially in rural districts. Welfare policy can cause a significant increase in enrollment, although this kind of project allows a hopefully successful response. A major employer may expand a business thereby bringing new families to the district as fast as housing can become available.
Tot Spot, Topeka USD 501
Magna Winner

Topeka USD 501 recently received a prestigious national award for its mobile therapy unit called the Tot SPOT. District staff members in the speech pathology department and the maintenance department transformed a district van into a child-friendly, polka-dotted unit that is used for speech and language services and other childhood needs.

The American School Board Journal recognized Topeka public schools with a Magna Award, which honors school board best practices and innovative programs that advance student learning.

The mobile therapy unit, which has been used since September 2016, delivers expanded services to children while parents are able to observe the therapy and become more engaged.

“The district’s goal is to provide equitable services and meet the needs across the district for all students using creative ideas such as the mobile Tot SPOT van,” Topeka Superintendent Tiffany Anderson said. “We believe that it is imperative that we explore creative ways to personalize and invest in early childhood services and the innovative idea from staff members Peggy and Wally Fisher in creating the mobile therapy van is an example of the amazing creativity and innovation from staff in Topeka Public Schools.”

TPS is the only school district in Kansas to win first place and has previously won awards in 2014, for Pine Ridge Prep and Parents as Teachers and 2015 for Westar Energy and Kanza Education and Science Park. In addition, TPS received an honorable mention in 2012 for the Truancy PreventionDispatch Program and a notable program in 2010 for the Pine Ridge Partnership.

“We are thrilled that the American School Board Journal is recognizing us. This speaks volumes of the great work that educators do in our district,” said Topeka School Board President Patrick Woods. “I want to commend the staff and the hard work they do. Our school board sets clear goals and high expectations and the administration meets those goals,” he said.

Universal Preschool
Coffeyville USD 445
Honorable Mention

Coffeyville USD 445 school board received an Honorable Mention in the prestigious Magna Awards for formation of the Coffeyville Coalition for Early Education 501c3.

That allowed donors to help expand the district’s Dr. Jerry Hamm Early Learning Center to full-day and open up more spots for children and for more community members to be involved in the program.

Through this collaboration, the center raised more than $2.1 million to fund a four-classroom addition to the building and remodel the existing facility.

Coffeyville is a high-poverty district that works hard to ensure that the Early Learning Center remains financially able to serve the most vulnerable members of the community.

The center currently serves more than 220 students from both the school district and Head Start. On-site services include special education, mental health services and a community health center that has both medical and dental services.

Coffeyville’s Early Learning Center has been touted as the model program in Kansas for kindergarten readiness.

For more on Coffeyville’s Early Learning Center read the April 2017 KASB School Board Review.
Lara Bors, Region 10 Vice-President
Garden City USD 457 Board of Education

by Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

Lara Bors’ reasons for first seeking a seat on her local board of education came from a commitment to community service and an even greater commitment to education.

“My son, who was going to start kindergarten the next school year, asked why I was doing it and I explained to him that I wanted to make sure he had the same or better educational opportunities that I had,” she said.

Bors is a product of the Shawnee Mission School District. A political science degree from Truman State University and a law degree from Washburn University led her to a nine-year stint as an Assistant Finney County Attorney before going into private practice. That same year, four positions were open on the Garden City School Board.

Once elected, Bors gained appreciation for her fellow board members.

“We have a vast array of backgrounds on our board and while we may not always agree, we reach decisions very thoughtfully and stand by them after the vote of the board,” she said.

Garden City USD 457’s new high school – a recent Blue Ribbon School winner - and the district’s early childhood education center are just two of many points of pride for Bors.

She is also a proponent of expanding technology.

“We have a 1:1 initiative in our High School and are transitioning more technology to our lower grades. I am also extremely proud of our alternative center,” she said. “We have a bricks and mortar alternative school for students, a virtual academy and a therapeutic school for kids of all ages that need mental health services along with their education.”

Her list of favorite things about being a board member can get long, she said. She starts off with high school graduation, but then quickly begins listing other things.

“I love being able to have an impact on students. The best thing may be seeing the kids come to their school presentations at our board meetings. Recently we had a school come and talk about their "maker space." The teacher said that two of the kids were really in charge of the robot coding portion of the day," Bors said.

The fact that the two students were girls was, in a word, “awesome,” Bors said.

Bors said the students asked the board for iPads, and when one of her fellow board members asked for a show of hands on who would like them, all the students raised their hands, except for the two students who had been involved in coding the robots. So Bors asked the two girls what they wanted.

"'Better robots,' they responded. That was just too cute," Bors said.

Bors accepted the role as KASB Region 10 vice-presented for one simple reason: she was asked to do it!

“I believe in KASB and the role that it provides local school boards. Having a voice in [KASB] I believe will be beneficial. With all that is going on at the state level, we need to make sure there is a unifying voice for school boards. We have a wide variety of needs in all of the school districts and having an organization that can put it all together is critical,” she said.

She also values the opportunity to interact with other board members across the state.

“Sometimes we all get into a rut or a box and it’s good to hear what others are doing so we can continue to be creative for our students,” she said.

No matter what role she has – at the local or state level – Bors is dedicated to providing opportunities for students.

“I hope that I make the right decisions,” she said. “I hope that the decisions we make are positive ones for our kids.”

In addition to her work with the school district, Bors serves in a variety of leadership roles within Finney County and her profession. She is on the board for the Garden City Chamber of Commerce, serving as the presenting sponsor for the Chamber’s annual teacher of the year event, the “Crystal Apple Awards.” She also assists in coaching the youth baseball team for the Garden City Recreation Commission and serves on the Juvenile Corrections Advisory Board for the Kansas 25th Judicial District.
KASB launches “Data Steward” program

In working with district staff, KASB has come to the realization that it is often not the Board Clerk who submits the data for our annual surveys. In addition, KASB wanted to recognize the unique and sometimes time-consuming work involved in getting us answers to those questions. Finally, KASB wanted to identify a contact person at each district who could help better disseminate information on the data tools, reports, and other resources we make available for use by districts.

Therefore, KASB is launching what we’re calling our “Data Steward” Program. Each district has been asked to identify one person at their district to serve as the official KASB Data Steward.

The Data Steward’s Roles and Responsibilities are as follows:

Data submission
A KASB Data Steward’s primary responsibility is to ensure that the district submits responses to KASB’s annual surveys each year. There are currently ten annual surveys, along with an annual collection of teacher salary schedule information and a semi-annual school board election survey. Each district is expected to respond to each survey annually (or semi-annually for the election survey). The Steward ensures that this data is submitted by the right staff member(s) in a timely fashion.

Awareness of KASB data and research resources
Along with being responsible for making sure data is submitted to KASB, the Data Steward also serves as the district’s source for data coming from KASB.

Promotion of KASB Research
KASB works to produce timely research reports and datasets that districts can use for planning and advocacy efforts. However, it is not always easy for KASB to get the word out on these research products. The KASB Data Steward should watch KASB publications for new research and make sure folks at their district who might be interested or can use the information are made aware of it.

Constant feedback loop
KASB Research Staff is always looking for ways to improve the work we do. KASB Data Stewards serve as a primary source for feedback to KASB regarding the process, content, and communications about data collection and dissemination.

Likewise, KASB Research Staff will provide feedback to Data Stewards about the work that they are doing and offer suggestions to make these tasks easier and more efficient. The lines of communication are always open and two-way, and KASB hopes to foster a close relationship with the Data Stewards as we work together on these initiatives.

Of particular importance are the survey questions themselves — many that seem straightforward could be interpreted differently depending on who is reading it, the way that particular information is handled at each district, and so forth. KASB needs input and insight from districts to ensure we are asking the right questions, and asking them in the right way so that they can be understood by all districts and answered consistently across them.

KASB has asked districts to specify who their Data Steward should be, assuming that the Board Clerk is fulfilling this role unless we hear otherwise. If you would like to specify your district’s data steward, you can email research@kasb.org or contact Ted or Debbie at the KASB office to let us know who that individual should be.

We are currently working on a Data Steward Handbook, which will contain information on the purpose, specifics of the survey questions, file specifications, recommended best practices, and other information that will help the KASB Data Stewards better fulfill their role.

KASB Research and Leadership staff are also working together to develop a training that Data Stewards can come to in order to learn more.

If you have questions, comments, or other feedback, please contact Ted Carter at tcarter@kasb.org.
History, pride evident at McKinley

by Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Abilene is steeped in history. It is the boyhood home of 34th President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who said, “The proudest thing I can claim is that I’m from Abilene.” It was the railhead end of the Chisholm Trail. This historic legacy helps shape McKinley Elementary. “… like Ike we are not afraid to stretch the boundaries by accepting challenges to open up new opportunity for our students in our district and at McKinley School,” school officials wrote in their application to the 2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program.

McKinley Elementary, part of the Abilene USD 435, 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.

McKinley Elementary, which has more than 200 students in the second- and third-grades — 64 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced lunch — was honored for being an “Exemplary High Performing School.”

School climate at McKinley is a key factor in achieving this designation by integrating behavior, academics, support for students and a social curriculum encouraging positive actions.

It is one of a few schools in Kansas that implemented a Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered model that provides academic supports for reading and math, behavior and a social curriculum. It has a one-on-one iPad initiative that allows students to access resources to create solutions to challenges they are given.

The staff philosophy states, “Together, let’s make a difference in the life of each McKinley student.”
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.

Learn more at: nationalblueribbonschools.ed.gov

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National Blue Ribbon School Exemplary High Performing School: McKinley Elementary School
Abilene USD 435

The school climate is exemplified in what is printed at the bottom of the McKinley stationary:


Parents receive brochures explaining that students will be respectful, responsible and their best selves and students receive good behavior tickets which can be used in various drawings or to purchase items in the “behavior store.”

All students receive music and visual arts instruction each week.

Parents have responded, stating in a recent survey that they feel welcome at school and that the school has a safe and positive environment for their child.

The staff and students’ families have a pot luck dinner in the park before the school year begins.

Many volunteers from the community help out in the classroom and the Eisenhower Center, Old Abilene Town and Greyhound Hall of Fame are used to enrich the students’ knowledge.

The school climate is exemplified in what is printed at the bottom of the McKinley stationary: If Asked, “What Do You Make”? Remember to Reply “I Make A Difference.” Together, Let’s Make A Difference in the Life of Each McKinley Student.

This is the final installment on Kansas schools receiving the National Blue Ribbon designation. Besides McKinley, those schools are Wheatridge Middle School, Gardner-Egerton USD 231; Chanute Elementary, Chanute USD 413; Challenger Intermediate, Goddard USD 265.
Want to see a school established in 1883 that now offers a geosciences pathway or a class on how to build a robotic prosthesis? Or an elementary school that recently celebrated 60 years as an anchor for a diverse community and culture? Perhaps a state-of-the-art technical education center that provides automotive collision repair and welding with a plasma torch? These were just a few experiences the KASB Board of Directors had during its Spring meeting in early April. As KASB president this year, Amy Martin, Olathe USD 233 board member, hosted the board and KASB staff for visits on Friday, April 7.

“First, thank you to the Olathe Board Clerk Joy Bondurant and to KASB’s Melissa Holder for making all the arrangements, and my sincere appreciation to our Olathe principals, staff and students who absolutely shined,” Martin said.

The tour began at Ridgeview Elementary School. After a welcome by Principal Kim Thorup, the board divided into smaller groups, escorted by fifth grade ambassadors who talked about the school and the “Leader in Me” program. It is described as a whole-school transformation model based on “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,” by Stephen Covey. The goals are higher academic achievement, fewer discipline problems and increased engagement among teachers and parents.

Fun fact: KASB Executive Director John Heim is an alumnus of the school, attending starting part way through fifth grade and all of sixth grade.

Next stop on the tour for the KASB Board of Directors was OATC (Olathe Advanced Technical Center.) The school opened in 2013 and houses Auto Collision, Auto Technology and Welding programs serving Olathe and area school districts as well as students from the Kansas School for the Deaf.

Industry-based certifications through the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation are part of the program, and a construction trades program is connected to the center and housed at Olathe North. Students from areas such as welding and auto collision repair provided brief overviews of their programs, then answered questions during the tour.

The tour then headed to Olathe North High School, established in...
Principal Kim Thorup (far right) extends greetings to KASB board and staff April 7 as fifth grade ambassadors (background) prepare to lead tours of their Olathe USD 233 elementary school.

1883 and now home to five of the district’s 15 21st Century Academies. The high school offers its 2,000 ninth through 12th grade students a wide variety of opportunities, including a class on crime scene analysis and a class developing robotic prosthesis technology.

The final stop of the day was Olathe West High School, slated to open this fall. The new school will offer the two new 21st Century Academies: public safety and green technologies.

Olathe’s enrollment is close to 30,000 students. A $156 million bond issue passed in 2016 and will address facility needs, safety and security and technology for the growing Kansas City suburban district.

The next day was all business for the board of directors and KASB staff. Saturday’s meeting convened at the technology center. The board heard a report from Mark Tallman, KASB associate executive director for advocacy and communications, on the proposed school finance framework and other legislative topics.

Donna Whiteman, KASB executive director for legal services, provided training for the board on fiduciary duties of nonprofit governing boards and KASB policies pertaining to the board. Other reports included an overview of KASB Risk Management presented by Rod Spangler, Risk Management assistant executive director, and a look at what is planned to commemorate KASB’s 100 years of service, presented by Carol Pitts, KASB assistant executive director for marketing and public relations.

Other reports included a National Association of School Boards update provided by Frank Henderson, Jr., school board member from Seaman USD 345 and a member of the NSBA Board as the Western Region director. Henderson shared information recently released on the “Stand up 4 Public Schools” initiative and campaign.

The next meeting of the KASB Board of Directors is scheduled for June 3, 2017 in Topeka.
Q: What is your education background?
A: I started teaching science at Mulvane Junior High then biology at Bishop Carroll High School. I was in administration in Wichita Public Schools as a middle school assistant principal (4 years), middle school principal at Robinson and Coleman Middle Schools then principal at Southeast High School. I retired after six years as an assistant superintendent in Wichita Public Schools.

Q: Why did you run to be a member of the Kansas State Board of Education?
A: When I retired, I felt I still had more to give back to education. I believe so strongly in public education; I wanted to have an opportunity to give back to students, parents, and communities in Kansas while serving my district.

Q: What is the biggest challenge facing the State Board?
A: The biggest challenge for the school districts right now is the school finance formula. For the State Board I believe our biggest challenge is moving to the implementation of the Kansans Can Vision. This will require school districts and schools to begin to think and do their work differently.

Q: What is the best part about serving on the State Board?
A: When I first started on the State Board, I got a true appreciation for the work of school districts throughout the state. I had worked in an urban district so I enjoyed getting to know about the great work districts and schools across the state were doing to provide an excellent education for our students.

Q: What do you do outside your board duties?
A: For the first four years I was on the State Board I worked part time at Wichita State University in the College of Education. It was a really valuable experience to work in the higher education field to see how our K-12 students move to that level. In my work at WSU, we also worked with several of the
Community Colleges to help students make that move so I saw that level of post-secondary work also.

Q When you were a child, who did you look up to?
A My Dad was very inspirational to me. He was a successful businessman but he was also very focused on giving back to the Wichita community. He served on several different boards, including the Wichita School Board and other community and state organizations. He taught me the value of supporting our communities.

Q Who inspires you now?
A The teachers and administrators that work every day serving our students. To me there is nothing more important than providing a good quality education to our students because they represent our future.

Q Was there a teacher or someone in the education community who made a difference in your life?
A Several. I had a science teacher, Mr. Neil Miller who inspired me when I was a student. Then a professor of biology at Kansas State University who continued my interest in science. Dr. Michael Tilford helped me get into teaching by setting up a licensure program for me at WSU to allow me to complete my teaching license. He also helped me understand that each student could learn and deserved our support to achieve their goals. I had a colleague when I first started teaching who helped me understand how to reach each child before there was even such a thing as mentoring. I had several people who helped me when I moved into administrator. What I love about education is that it is a helping profession all the way from the students we help to the other adults we help in our profession.
Kansas schools could lose critical funding under Trump budget proposal

By Leah Fliter, lfilter@kasb.org

If President Donald Trump’s 2018 budget blueprint for the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) is enacted, Kansas schools could lose $60 million in federal funding that supports smaller class sizes, teacher training, after-school and summer school programs and the education of military-connected children.

The National School Board Association (NSBA) has issued a call to action asking local boards of education to contact their members of Congress to urge them to maintain federal funding levels for those and other important programs and to oppose the diversion of $20 billion in education funds to a voucher program. Kansas Senator Jerry Moran told Kansas State Board of Education members in April he expects federal education funding to remain relatively flat.

The Trump administration released its budget blueprint in mid-March. The preliminary document sets overall goals and key priorities for federal agencies, with detailed departmental budgets scheduled to be released this month. While Congress traditionally makes substantive changes to presidential budget proposals, the volatile nature of the Trump presidency’s initial months and Congressional inaction on appropriations for the current fiscal year raises the prospect that some harmful proposals for 2018 could become law unless constituents make their voices heard.

Title I and school choice

Title I, the largest federal K12 education program, provides financial support to public schools with high numbers or percentages of poor children to help those students master challenging content and academic achievement standards. While the Trump education blueprint doesn’t cut Title I funding, it adds $1.4 billion to Title I for public and private school choice programs, with a goal of appropriating $20 billion annually for those initiatives.

Of the $1.4 billion, $1 billion is earmarked toward encouraging school districts to adopt an open enrollment system that would allow federal funding to follow students to the public school of their choice. In Kansas, state per-pupil funding follows a public-school student to another public district, provided the second district agrees to or can accept that student. The Trump proposal, while broad, appears to give additional incentives to local boards of education to adopt or expand upon open-enrollment policies to capture more federal dollars.

The remaining roughly $400 million in proposed Title I increases includes $168 million for charter schools. In Kansas, charter schools operate under the supervision of the locally-elected board of education. In 2015-16, there were 10 charter schools in the state.

Finally, the proposal adds $250 million for a new private school choice program. Private school choice initiatives, often referred to as “vouchers,” generally direct education tax dollars away from public schools to help subsidize the tuition of private and religious schools. In Kansas, state law allows corporations to receive a tax break in exchange for donations to an organization that grants scholarships to low-income children who wish to leave low-performing Kansas public schools to enroll in “participating qualified schools,” all of which are private or religious schools.

KASB and other educational advocacy organizations oppose choice plans that aid private schools which are not subject to the same legal requirements as public schools. Sen. Moran told the State Board vouchers do not have widespread congressional support and are “unlikely to happen.” He said voucher decisions are best left to local officials.

Special education

The proposal maintains $13 billion in federal funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); roughly $117 million of that goes to Kansas to assist with the state’s special education costs. The proposal does not provide funds to increase the federal reimbursement for excess costs above the current 16 percent. IDEA is the second-largest federal education program.

Preparing, training, and recruiting high-quality teachers, principals, or other school leaders (Title II)

The proposed 2018 blueprint for DOE includes the elimination of
roughly $2.4 billion in ESSA’s Title II, “Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, or Other School Leaders.” As a result, Kansas school districts would lose $17 million to $18 million in funding from “Supporting Effective Instruction” grants that have been used to deliver critical professional development for teachers, hire additional staff to reduce class sizes, improve classroom technology integration, conduct in-service training, promote STEM initiatives and many other programs.

Elimination of federal funding for those initiatives would likely shift the cost to already-strained state general fund and local school district budgets.

**21st Century Community Learning Centers**

The Trump DOE budget blueprint also calls for the elimination of the $1.2 billion 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which supports before-and after-school programs as well as summer school. The proposed elimination would cost Kansas roughly $8 million that local boards have used to provide additional learning opportunities in the wake of state funding cuts.

The Administration’s budget message said the program “lacks strong evidence of meeting its objectives, such as improving student achievement.” The Department of Education’s own research, however, showed that for Kansas students who regularly participated in CLCs in the 2014-15 school year (the latest data available):

- 86.7 percent showed an increase in math grades
- 77.6 percent showed an increase in English grades
- 66.7 percent showed improvement on elementary reading assessments
- 50 percent showed improvement on middle school or high school math assessments

**Impact Aid**

Trump’s 2018 DOE budget proposal also calls for the elimination of $66.8 billion in federal Impact Aid Support for Federal Property. In Kansas, roughly $30 million in impact aid includes basic support payments, payments for students with disabilities and payment for other costs for school districts that are located near military or other federal installations that do not contribute property tax revenue to those school districts’ revenue streams.

Elimination of federal impact aid would not only affect the education of military-connected students, but would also make those installations vulnerable to troop force reductions or base closures under Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) proceedings due to perceived or actual lack of support for military families. Military bases in Kansas contribute hundreds of millions in tax revenue, billions of dollars of gross state product and more than 9 percent of total employment to the state’s economy.

**Not addressed in 2018 Department of Education Blueprint**

Budget allocations for programs for Rural and Low-Income Schools; Small, Rural School Achievement; Indian Education; Homeless Children and Youth Education and Math and Science Partnerships, which represent roughly $195 million in funding for Kansas schools, are not addressed in the 2018 blueprint.

**School nutrition**

School nutrition programs are funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s budget, which is pegged in the 2018 budget proposal for a 21 percent decrease from 2017 levels. Kansas received $189 million in federal funding in FY2016 for the national school lunch program, child and adult care food programs and summer food service programs.
KASB Work Comp board approves 6 percent rate reduction for members

by Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

The board of trustees of the KASB Workers Compensation Fund Inc. has approved the second consecutive annual decrease in the fund’s rating structure.

This year, the decrease will be six percent, while last year’s was eight percent.

“The fiscal health of the Workers Compensation Fund is strong,” Rod Spangler, KASB’s Assistant Executive Director of Risk Management, said. The board met recently to approve the new rates, which will take effect July 1.

The KASB Workers Compensation Fund was established by KASB in 1987 and currently serves 110 KASB member organizations.

“As we approach our 30-year anniversary, it should be evident from two rate reductions in as many years, as well as a substantial dividend returned last year, our fiscal position is strong.

“Our Operations Manager, Liz Maisberger-Clark has been involved in the direct oversight of this fund for nearly as long as its existence. Exceptional continuity in her leadership, sound financial decisions and active claims administration should provide our members and potential members of our pool confidence in where they have decided to place their work comp insurance package,” Spangler said.

The Fund operates solely for the benefit of KASB members and is designed to return favorable operating results to members through reductions in future premium costs and dividends.

The Fund is administered by KASB with an in-house claims department, and is governed by a separate Board of Trustees composed of locally-elected board of education members. No eligible member has ever been denied coverage, nor has any member been non-renewed due to excessive losses.

In addition, KASB Risk Management soon will be implementing a new claims software that will be more user friendly for members. And renewals that will be mailed to member districts at the end of May will feature a packet containing new information on containing costs and advantages of belonging to the workers comp insurance pool.

Spangler noted, “Approaching three decades of service to educational entities in Kansas, we have seen many competitors come and go offering this coverage and we have also seen many changes in school funding over this same timeframe.

Our pool and its leadership is a mainstay in Kansas and we are thrilled to assist our members with sound work comp solutions that focus on pointing resources back to the classroom for student success.”
The bookish types

by Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

KASB staff are by and large a bunch of readers, so it is no surprise a book study breaks out now and again. Staff recently read “Thank You for Being Late,” by Thomas L. Friedman. Randy Weseman, assistant executive director for leadership and operations, finished reading the book in December and felt it was a good fit for staff who might want to participate in a study.

“People have a feeling their world is accelerating away from them and they can’t quite understand why,” Weseman said. “This book suggests a path for understanding, coping and even prospering within an environment of accelerating change.”

The book’s author calls it a “supernova” of changes centering on climate, the market and technology. There are consequences as society reacts and adapts to these forces, but whether the results are good or bad created opportunities for spirited discussions!

The KASB Book Club took place over the past two months with staff members volunteering to lead the discussions. The 23 staff members who participated met over lunch each week, though not all could participate each week.

Working hard to keep the group on topic and on time for the one-hour discussions were facilitators Ted Carter, research specialist, Amanda Rollenhagen, accountant, Jamie Slack, Risk Management customer service representative, Pam Schwartz, receptionist, and Luke Sobba, staff attorney.

Schwartz said she began to think more about the acceleration of technology because of an encounter with a FedEx truck driving home from work after one of the book study sessions.

“I noticed their catch phrase printed on their truck, ‘The World on Time.’ It made me think about our conversations that day about the 2007 big data splurge and the lasting impacts those advancements made on the world,” Schwartz said. “So where do we go from here? Will technology become so advanced that someday we could live in a Jetson’s society or in a Star Trek world?”

Each session usually included more discussion than reaching any conclusions, but the entire study was a great opportunity to get to know colleagues better.

“Some view things as a social issue, and some view things as an economic issue. It was interesting to learn how far apart those two opinions can be at times,” said Amanda Rollenhagen, KASB accountant.

The guiding questions for the discussions were developed by John Heim, executive director, and included ‘what struck you as interesting,’ ‘how could this affect our state’ and ‘how could this affect education policy or practices.’ The bookworms also discussed implications for KASB and for their own personal lives.

There was consensus that while technology has made things “easier-faster-be er in some ways,” observed Doug Moeckel, deputy executive director, the human element is still important. Relationships combined with personalized service and support continue to be of value.

![Image](https://example.com/image.jpg)

The final session of the KASB recent book club was led by Pam Schwartz (at right).
Three $3,000 grants to support innovative project-based instruction in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are available from Westar Energy. This is the fourth year for the grant program, and 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 special interest area.

The awards are a partnership between Westar Energy, Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) and Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE). A selection committee, composed of personnel from Westar Energy, KASB and KSDE will select the winning applicants. The deadline for grant submissions is July 14. Awards will be announced August 7, 2017 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.

Increase participation in KASB training and save money!

More members are choosing the KASB Season Pass! For a one-time fee of $1,500 you gain an entire year of unlimited participation in seminars and workshops for staff and board members (some exceptions apply). kasb.org/training or contact KASB for details.

785.273.3600
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The KASB Annual Conference is the association’s flagship event, providing intensive learning and networking experiences that bring together hundreds of Kansas board of education members, school district leaders and content experts.

We invite you to share your expertise and experience to help create these opportunities for our annual conference attendees. The 50-minute presentations will be given on Saturday, December 2.

The deadline for submitting a proposal is July 14, 2017. We expect available slots to fill up early, so please submit your proposal as soon as possible!

The best presentations honor the governance role of boards of education, include the voice of school board members and the leadership team and give participants time for interaction and questions.

Presentations should focus on at least one of the following strands:

- **Advocacy and Engagement:** Stakeholder engagement by the community is critical to maintaining quality schools and creating opportunities for future success. These sessions will emphasize how communities and school districts are advocating for their students at the local, state and/or federal levels. Presenters will share strategies and structures they have developed or used to create a strong voice for their students.

- **Aligning to the “Kansans CAN” Vision:** The Kansas State Board of Education adopted a new vision for Kansas schools based on feedback from across the state. This vision includes the following outcomes or measures: Kindergarten readiness, Individual Plan of Study focused on career interest, High school graduation rates, Postsecondary completion/attendance and Social/emotional growth measured locally. Presenters will share how they are aligning their system to meet these outcomes and how they are measuring progress and success.

- **Foundations of Boardsmanship:** Boards of education have several functions that help ensure a successful school system. These include (1) establishing the vision for the district; (2) setting priorities and goals; (3) creating policies; (4) hiring and evaluating the superintendent of schools; (5) holding the superintendent accountable for accomplishing district goals; and (6) helping build support for public education. These sessions will equip new and experienced board members with foundational skills for basic boardsmanship.

- **Policy/Legal:** Societal trends, community pressures and changing circumstances can impact both the quality and equality of education offered to our students. These sessions provide the latest guidance and information on legal issues and policy matters relating to school law, student and staff issues.

- **KESA (Kansas Education Systems Accreditation) Framework for Success:** KESA is the new accreditation system for our state. It uses a framework of rubrics to guide the process: Relationships, Relevance, Responsive Culture and Rigor. In these sessions presenters will share programs and practices they are currently using within at least one of the KESA “R’s.”

- **Efficient and Effective Practices:** Schools across Kansas have responded to dwindling resources through innovation, collaboration and reallocation of resources. These sessions will highlight the work districts have done or are pursuing to become more efficient while still being effective at improving student success.

Submit your proposal online at [http://tinyurl.com/l5yc9xf](http://tinyurl.com/l5yc9xf)

*A blast from the past: 1967 Convention.*
The local school board, an integral part of the American institution of representative government, acts on behalf of the people of each community to translate our state’s public education mission into reality. Close to 2,000 men and women guide Kansas public school systems, employing more than 70,000 Kansans and serving nearly 500,000 children.

The Kansas Association of School Boards 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!