THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IN KANSAS

Did Kansas welfare reform go too far?

You only turn 100 once!
See annual conference and centennial celebration highlights inside.
Twenty-five education leaders from across Kansas recently completed a year-long leadership development class sponsored by the Kansas Association of School Boards.

KASB’s Leadership for Tomorrow Class of 2017 was chosen last January through a nomination and application process focusing on individual leadership in public education and participation in activities that promote effective governance and raise student achievement.

A combination of site visits, group reflection and collaboration projects were used during the four sessions. The goal is to give the participants time to explore a broad spectrum of issues and concerns related to public education and student achievement.

• Session I included visits to Hutchinson USD 305 and Stafford USD 349 in March 2017. The group learned about Hutchinson’s career and technical trades programs and spent time in group discussions on leading change within a community and how to build consensus while honoring competing values. The second day was spent in Stafford and included the high school’s Culinary Arts Department partnership with Stafford County Flour Mills flour; demonstrations of the aquaponics research project; and a tour of SEED (Stafford Entrepreneurship and Economic Development) Center.

• Session II was held in Southeast Kansas in May 2017, visiting Coffeyville USD 445 and Parsons USD 503. Technical education was again on the agenda, learning more about individualized plans of study. Day 2 included a visit to Parsons High School and classroom visits to the many career tech programs the school offers. The class also heard from support services and the “safety net” of support that the school and community has in place for its students.

• Session III took place in southwest Kansas in September 2017. Ness City shared information about the system’s project-based learning program and the school’s “Tiny House” Project. The group also participated in crisis community training led by KASB staff. Day 2 included visits to Buffalo Jones Elementary and Garden City High School. Two areas discussed with Garden City officials included teacher shortages and teacher retention.

• Session IV was held in conjunction with the KASB Annual Conference. The group met for a half-day to explore the state’s new accreditation system and using data to make decisions on how to use resources at the local level. Class members then joined KASB Annual Conference pre-conference sessions on Friday.
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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.
President’s Perspective
Dayna Miller, Basehor-Linwood USD 458

KASB seeks partnership with governor

Recently, KASB published a special edition, “New Day for Kansas Education.” I encourage all school board members to pick up a copy or read it on the KASB website.

“New Day for Kansas Education,” tells the stories of wonderful things going on in more than 25 school districts that KASB staff visited last year. It also relates the challenges these school face that, I’m sure, will resonate with everyone.

Kansas is also experiencing a “new day” in politics with the departure of Gov. Sam Brownback, who became governor in 2011. He left for Washington, D.C., to be ambassador at large for international religious freedom. Lt. Gov. Jeff Colyer assumed the governor’s job and he is seeking the Republican nomination in November.

During his tenure as lieutenant governor, Colyer, a plastic surgeon who has volunteered his medical services in some of the most dangerous parts of the world, has focused mostly on health issues, such as the transition of Kansas’ Medicaid program into KanCare.

But for the past several months Colyer has visited schools to talk with students, teachers, Education Commissioner Randy Watson and members of the State Board of Education. He has also reached out to KASB, which enjoys a special “in” with Colyer. KASB Associate Executive Director for Advocacy Mark Tallman and Colyer were classmates at Thomas More Prep High School in Hays and were high school debate partners.

Brownback’s tenure as governor was marked by fighting over K-12 funding. Whether Colyer will follow Brownback’s tendencies on public school education or will try to distinguish himself and lead in this area remains to be seen.

November is right around the corner and there are many candidates vying to be our next governor. It is important that we press candidates on their vision of public school education in Kansas and most importantly how schools will be funded.

Last year, a bi-partisan group of legislators restored some sanity to the state’s fiscal problems by overturning Brownback’s veto of tax changes. The state is still under court direction to adequately fund schools, which will require leadership from the Governor and Legislature.

A sound public school system, funded adequately and fairly, will form the foundation to support a thriving economy and individual achievement. We seek a partner in the governor’s office and hope that every day will be a “new day” of success for our Kansas schools.
School finance: We’re not in sasnaK anymore

Superman geeks will remember when “htraE,” otherwise known as Bizarro World, a strange iteration of Earth, was created by a Superman wannabe. Others will remember the Bizarro Jerry episode of the TV Show “Seinfeld,” in which Elaine hangs out with a group of friends who are kind, thoughtful and considerate, complete opposites of Jerry, George and Kramer. These cultural references come to mind because it is starting to look like 2018 will be the year of Bizarro Kansas.

It may have all started when Kansas Basketball Coach Bill Self shed his usual suit and tie and donned a pullover that matched his West Virginia counterparts. We also saw the Kansas City Chiefs announce that they would be starting their own number one draft choice at quarterback, instead of the one traded from San Francisco. The last year that actually happened, us older folks were watching the season finale of M*A*S*H. I’m not ready to say things are so topsy-turvy that KU won’t win the Big 12 or the Chiefs won’t lose in the first round of the playoffs, but Kansas sports have had a weird month.

The ‘Rule of Law’

On a more serious note, former Kansas Governor Brownback’s State of the State speech called for $600 million more for education and for the Kansas to follow the “rule of law” when it comes to funding schools. Previous speeches have included statements like this one from 2015 in which the Governor decried “…massive increases in spending unrelated to actual student populations or improved student achievement.”

Or this from 2016: “Yet today, of the more than $4 billion the state puts into education funding, not nearly enough goes toward instruction. That’s highly inefficient, if not immoral…”

So, it was starting to look like Bizarro Kansas was going to be a better place with a kinder, gentler state of mind. But then things got even more bizarre. A venerated public servant with 53 years of service was villainized in a letter full of legalese, like “not questioning his honesty...if true” and “alleged communication” and “misallocated.” A crafty attorney can lead you right up to the ugly accusation without using words that will land them in hot water.

Kansas political leaders reacted strongly to this unprecedented attack on an individual civil servant. All four former governors (Republican and Democrat), the former chairman of Senate Ways and Means committee, and former president of the Senate, along with nearly half the members of the House Representatives, have provided written support for this esteemed public servant.

The concerns could and should have been expressed without casting aspersions on anyone’s reputation or intent, and using language more easily understood.

Legislative Intent

Here’s my attempt at some of that “alleged communication.”

The issue in question? How to determine an obscure statistical estimate for “line of best fit” that even mathematicians cannot agree on. When the law passed decades ago, legislative intent on how to calculate the aid was sought, and information about the calculation has been provided to committee through the years. The funds were used as intended, to aid in the safe transport of children to school for at least 30 years. Students would have been denied the opportunity for a ride to school had legislative intent not been followed.

Superman’s Bizarro World never really ends well. Elaine is ultimately rejected by her new Bizarro friends. Kansas basketball might be struggling, but the fourteenth championship is still within our grasp. And I’d sure love to see the Bizarro Chiefs take a Super Bowl and $600 million added to the school finance formula.

In the end, Kansans will favor following the rule of law, as now-Ambassador Brownback finally acknowledged. Kansans also understand the rule of law needs interpretation, as long as it is done honestly and in good faith.
Advocacy efforts can begin small

By G. Kent Stewart, Professor Emeritus of Educational Administration, KSU

This is an effective way to begin a series of monthly advocacy luncheons with local business leaders.

Begin by organizing a luncheon for three—the board president, superintendent and the chamber director—either at a restaurant, or at school.

Lunch in the board room at school is the better choice for two reasons. First, cost is nominal; and second, your guest comes to school, particularly if the district office is in a school building. After all, the objective is to get business leaders in your buildings to enjoy school lunch and observe for an hour or two what happens in a community school.

A lot of years have probably passed since your guest was a student. Getting your important guest to school is a chance to showcase how schools have changed over the years.

Enjoy a relaxed lunch and dialogue about the challenges of helping community leaders become aware of challenges their school board faces making choices and enacting policies aimed at school improvement. After lunch and rich dialogue about schools, take your guest for a tour of the building.

Invite the principal to conduct the tour. Visit a PE class in the gym. Observe students in the library and the technology shop, look into the science rooms, and a classroom where students are using technology to enhance learning. Include a look at a resource room where a student or two are working with a teacher on some specific activity such as improving reading comprehension. The tour should also include a special education room serving students in need of specialized assistance.

Spend a few minutes during the tour to visit a class in session. Choose one staffed by a teacher skilled in teaching and involving students in active learning.

These kinds of lunch/tours and classroom visits often occur at the high school, but don’t overlook the other schools. An enthusiastic group of middle school students working on a problem in pre-algebra can provide an excellent example of good teaching and learning. Similarly, a fourth-grade class using the internet to enhance understanding of an important event in history is an excellent example of active learning.

This public relations event involves thoughtful advance planning. The lunch needs to be served on time, hot foods hot and cold foods cold. The principal of the school to be visited needs time to plan and provide ample advance notice to teachers whose rooms will be visited. Students who will be observed in class need to be aware of the impending visit.

Remember, the event was successful if your guest returns to work enlightened, enthused, and looking forward to telling other business leaders about an exciting two hours spent recently at school, and offering to recommend a business leader for your next luncheon and tour.

These events are quite effective, and eventually include local service club presidents. While the dollar costs are nominal, the time commitment is substantial. So what is the payoff? They generate immeasurable good will and a new level of public understanding is paid forward.

First in a series by G. Kent Stewart that will focus on best practices in advocating for schools and students and assisting community leaders. Stewart taught school administration at Kansas State University for 32 years, where he also consulted regularly and continues to consult with school boards on school facility issues.
KASB members were well represented at the National School Boards Association’s Advocacy Institute 2018 in early February. A 17-member delegation of Kansas education leaders participated in issue briefings, advocacy training and visits to Capitol Hill.

The yearly NSBA advocacy training also provides opportunities for school board members to network with their fellow board members from around the nation to learn about local issues and their potential impact in Kansas.

This year’s NSBA Advocacy Institute featured presentations from Cokie Roberts, a seasoned political analyst and commentator. Topics covered by other presentations included federal education spending, implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act, evidence-based advocacy and immigration.


Education leaders from the Basehor-Linwood, Lawrence, Olathe, Girard, Topeka, Blue Valley, Wichita, Washington County, Shawnee Mission, Manhattan and Seaman school districts made up the 18-member KASB delegation. Attending were: Dayna Miller, Basehor-Linwood; Patrick Woods, Topeka; Frank Henderson, Jr., Seaman; Alicia Thompson and Terrell Davis, Wichita; Amy Martin and Brian Geary, Olathe; Shannon Kimball, Lawrence; Rod Stewart, Washington County; Mike Seitz, Blue Valley; Deb Zila, Shawnee Mission; Blaise Bauer, Roger Breneman, David Goble, Lori Johnson, and Dale Shireman, Girard; and Leah Fliter, KASB staff/Manhattan.
Looking at the Data
Ted Carter, KASB Research Specialist

Enrollment projection report released
Provides state, district estimates through 2022-23

KASB recently released the annual Statewide Enrollment Projections for Kansas.

These projections, based on historical county-level live birth statistics and district-level enrollment data, give an idea of what the student population could look like in Kansas for the next five years.

Key findings from this year’s report are:

- The projected enrollment is expected to increase 0.4 percent next year, decline from 2018-19 to 2019-20, stay steady into 2020-21, then decline approximately 0.2 percent annually through 2022-23.
- From 2017-18 to 2022-23, there will be a decrease in the percent of students in grades K-6 and for Special Education 3 and 4-year olds, 4-year-old at risk students, and pre-kindergarten students.
- The percent of students coming from small and medium districts will increase from 2017-18 to 2022-23.
- From 2017-18 to 2022-23, the percent of students coming from KASB Regions 1, 4, and 6-9 will increase slightly, while the percent coming from Regions 2, 3, 5, and 10 will decrease. However, all of these changes are small percent changes.
- Between 2017-18 and 2022-23, the percent of students eligible for free lunch and those eligible for full-price lunch will remain virtually the same, but the percent eligible for reduced-price lunch will decrease slightly.
- The calculated average age of students from districts with between 5,001 and 50,000 has been increasing, suggesting that these larger districts might see a decrease in enrollment in the future.

To view the report, visit https://kasb.org/research/publications

Enrollment Projections through 2022-23 by Grade Level
In addition to the report, KASB provides district-level enrollment projection data to all member districts, broken out by grade or by school lunch status.

The following are the steps to running district-level projections using KASB’s online tools.

1. Visit https://kasb.org/research/kasb-data/members-only/enrollment-projections/
2. Select the district (or districts) you wish to include in your projections using the filters on the right side of the Overview page.
3. If you wish to narrow the results by year, you can also do that on the Overview page.
4. Use the tabs across the top to select the graph or table you wish to view.
5. For graphs, you can download by selecting the “Download” menu in the lower right corner of the Tableau tool then selecting either “PDF” or “Image.”
6. For tables, you can download the data in a comma-separated file that can be opened in Excel by selecting “Crosstab.”

For additional map options, visit https://kasb.org/research/kasb-data/members-only/enrollment-projections-2/ and follow steps 2-5 above.

**Member Benefit: How to access district-level data**

![KASB logo]

**Enrollment Projections through 2022-23 by Economic Status**
Leadership for Tomorrow class named

By Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

The Kansas Association of School Boards is pleased to announce our Leadership for Tomorrow Class of 2018. The 26 participants were chosen through an application process on the basis of individual leadership in public education and participation in activities that promote effective governance and raise student achievement.

Through five two-day sessions held around the state, the KASB Leadership for Tomorrow program creates a greater understanding of the Kansas public education system and provides opportunities to develop leadership skills for effective governance and raising student achievement.

The program began in 2005, and in the past 13 years 221 school leaders have completed the program.

The 2018 schedule will include visits to McPherson and Twin Valley schools in March; Liberal and Hugoton schools in May; Manhattan school district in July; Wellington and Wichita schools in September; and Kansas City-area schools in late November. The final session is held during the KASB annual conference.

The KASB Leadership for Tomorrow Class of 2018 includes:

1. Tonya Bell, Neodesha USD 461, Board of Education
2. Doug Berryman, Augusta USD 402, Board of Education
3. Quentin Breese, Concordia USD 333, Superintendent
4. Dr. Julie Cannizzo, Goddard USD 265, Assistant Superintendent
5. Paige Crum, Haysville USD 261, Board of Education
6. Bill Day, Lyons USD 405, Superintendent
7. Scott Friesen, Inman USD 448, Superintendent
8. Susan Grey, Valley Falls USD 338, Principal - Pre-K through High School
9. Julie Hedrick, Wichita USD 259, Board of Education
10. Tony Helfrich, Pratt USD 382, Principal-Liberty Middle School
11. Jason Herman, Olathe USD 233, Principal, Olathe North High School
12. Kristina Lemman, Colby USD 315, Board of Education
13. Cathy Macfarlane, Paola USD 368, Board of Education
14. Bryce Matteson, Haven USD 312, Board of Education
15. Jim McMullen, Olathe USD 233, Executive Director General Administration
16. Brett Nelson, Manhattan-Ogden USD 383, Principal - Marlatt Elementary School
17. Dr. Steve Noble, Seaman USD 345, Superintendent
18. Denise O’Dea, Washington Co USD 108, Superintendent
19. Dr. Leticia Porter, Bonner Springs/Edwardsville USD 204, Director of Elementary Education/Human Resources
20. Shanna Rector, Salina USD 305, Executive Director Administrative/Student Services
21. Ron Rosales, Wichita USD 259, Board of Education
22. Jamie Rumford, Scott Co USD 466, Superintendent
23. Joan Simoneau, Burrton USD 369, Superintendent
24. Angie Stallbaumer, KASB Attorney/Policy Specialist
25. Clark Wedel, Haven USD 312, Superintendent
26. Rachelle Zade, De Soto USD 232, Board of Education

The Kansas Association of School Boards is a not-for-profit organization located in Topeka, Kansas. Members include governing boards for unified school districts, community colleges, area vocational-technical schools and cooperatives, interlocals and regional service centers. The Association provides legal, advocacy and leadership training in addition to offering a number of products and services to support local school districts in daily operations and management.

For more information, contact Carol Pitts, KASB, 800-432-2471, cpitts@kasb.org
You only turn 100 once, if you’re lucky. KASB has been lucky to have great leaders and members and commemorate the occasion we decided to have a gala. Featured speakers were past presidents who provided the history of KASB through the decades. The evening of conversation and reflections celebrated KASB’s 100 years of service to our members and public education in Kansas.

At right, KASB President Dayna Miller (right) talks with NSBA President Kevin Ciak (center) and KASB Executive Director John Heim. See more photos from the conference on the following pages and at kasb.org/kasb100years.

KASB past presidents attending the 100th Gala Celebration in December pose for a picture with a time capsule that will be stored for future leaders and members to open in 2117.
Unlocking the power of generations

If you want to reach a Millennial, text. If you want to dialogue with a Baby Boomer, send a detailed email and the only folks still using their phones as Alexander Graham Bell intended are members of the Greatest Generation.

Those were some of the humorous insights provided by KASB’s keynote speaker Matt Beaudreau, a researcher and motivational guru who provided tips into understanding and solving generational challenges with students and co-workers. Beaudreau’s message of being able to recognize generational differences and seeing those as positives, resonated well with the hundreds of attendees.

Photo by Ethyn Falk, Goddard

The Koepke Chronicles

Who better to provide the inspirational talk at KASB’s 100th annual conference than the legend himself — John Koepke, the former KASB executive director who brought the association into the modern era during a 40-year career.

Koepke regaled school board members and administrators with stories that showed the vast changes in the operation of school boards and KASB from the 1970s through now.

Photo by Paige Eck, Goddard

Special Sessions

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education for the Kansas State Department of Education, is a favorite speaker at the annual conference. He is joined by Craig Neuenswander, KSDE School Finance Team Director. Together they bring a message of school finance policy changes ahead.

Photo by Paige Eck, Goddard
Above, left: Annual Conference participants take advantage of breaks to share ideas and discuss issues. Above: KASB Executive Director John Heim greets school board members, superintendents and other educators from across the state. Left: The conference included many break-out sessions on topics related to school policy, finance, curriculum and issues facing all Kansas school districts.

KASB Delegate Assembly

The Delegate Assembly approved KASB’s Legislative Committee Report which included a resolution aimed at continued improvement in Kansas student success.

The “Reinvest, Redesign and Results” Resolution called for the Legislature to address the Kansas Supreme Court’s adequate funding issues and work with the Kansas State Board of Education and local school boards to develop a long-term plan on education goals and the resources required to reach those goals.

See more information about KASB’s 100th Year Celebration at kasb.org/kasb100years

Kimball elected

Shannon Kimball, president of the Lawrence USD 497 school board, was elected President-Elect-Designee by the KASB Delegate Assembly.

“I will work to support and further KASB’s role as the voice of public education in Kansas. This voice continues to be desperately needed,” Kimball said “to counter the false narrative of failing public schools.” Kimball’s term as president will start July 1, 2019. President Elect Patrick Woods, of Topeka USD 501, will serve as KASB President beginning July 1, taking over for current President Dayna Miller, of Basehor-Linwood USD 458.
District Tours

Meeting All Kid’s Needs

Dozens of school board members were treated to inspiring stories from students and educators as they toured schools in Derby USD 260, Goddard USD 265 and Valley Center USD 262. The annual “Meeting All Kid’s Needs” bus tours are one of the highlights of the KASB Annual Conference. It provides a chance for schools to show the great things they are doing and for education leaders to take that knowledge and experience back to their districts.

Right: Students at Amelia Earhart Elementary, Goddard USD 265, work with a 3D printer as part of project-based learning. Bottom Left: Learning with toddlers at TOP Center at Derby USD 260. Bottom Right: Valley Center High School culinary arts students prepared and served lunch.

Guest Photographers

Special thanks to Dane Baxa, director of community relations for Goddard USD 265 (left), and these high school students who served as photographers during the 2017 KASB Annual Conference: Owen Vannata, Eisenhower High School; Paige Eck, Goddard High School; Alex Rumsey, Eisenhower High School; and Ethyn Cole-Falk, Goddard High School.

See more pictures and highlights from KASB’s 100 Years of Service at kasb.org/kasb100years.
Welfare Reform
Have changes helped or hurt Kansas students?

By Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

While the Legislature waits for the results of a school finance study, which is due March 15, some legislators are working on related issues that could have a big impact on thousands of low-income Kansas students.

Some recent studies are casting doubt on the effectiveness of changes in the state welfare system that were approved by former Gov. Sam Brownback and his Republican allies in the Legislature from 2011-15.

These changes included reducing the amount of time a person can receive benefits under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and placing more restrictions that make it easier to disqualify families receiving the cash assistance.

Supporters of these changes say they encouraged more people to get jobs, lifted them out of poverty and built their self-esteem.

Fewer cases, more abuse

The TANF caseload has plummeted from 13,104 in October 2011 to 5,231 in October 2016.

But a recent study by researchers at the University of Kansas says there is a dark flip side to these changes.

Child abuse and the number of children placed in foster care has increased as the changes in TANF took effect, they say.

“Restrictions on access to the safety net appear to have unintended consequences with regard to human costs and costs to taxpayers,” said Michelle Johnson-Motoyama, one of the authors of the study.

And the researchers say the increase in abuse and foster care placements is related to the removal of families from TANF or the increasing barriers in getting the assistance.

When families are under economic distress, oftentimes parenting problems follow in addition to depression and other disruptions, they say.

In discussions with school officials across the state last year, educators often noted that more of their students faced deteriorating family situations, which led to behavioral issues in the classroom.

Officials with the Kansas Department for Children and Families disagree that the changes to TANF have hurt children. They have noted there are states with more generous TANF limits that have also seen an increase in children needing care. And they say DCF has put together support services to help parents transition into work.

But another study, this one by the left-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, showed that the vast majority of Kansas families leaving TANF did not find steady work and remained in poverty. And other studies show few families eligible for childcare assistance actually receive that assistance.

While policymakers debate the causes of increases in child abuse, what can’t be debated is that an increase has occurred.

Since fiscal year 2010, Kansas has seen a 20 percent increase in the number of child abuse and neglect reports, a 35 percent increase in reports screened as needing an investigation and of those investigated, a 51 percent increase in the rate of substantiation, according to the Kansas Children’s Service League.

These increases result in increased costs in education, health care and justice and corrections.

Poverty up in Kansas schools

In 2015-16, 48.6 percent of students were eligible for free and reduced lunch as compared with 42.7 percent in 2008-09.

In 2015-16, there were 9,265 homeless children attending Kansas public schools as compared with 6,700 in 2008-09.
My old friend has become governor
Here’s what he needs to do for Kansas students

By Mark Tallman, mtallman@kasb.org

On January 31, I was able to watch a childhood friend, high school classmate and teammate sworn in as Kansas Governor, in a ceremony that included other friends and teachers from our years in Hays, Kansas, and Thomas More Prep High School.

That Governor Jeff Colyer made his hometown and school experience so central to his first day in office suggests he believes we are strongly shaped by those around us, particularly when we are young: family, faith communities, and schools.

No one who knew Governor Colyer in those days can be surprised at the path he has taken: White House Fellowship, surgical practice, international medical charities and elected public service that has taken him to highest office in our state.

No one builds that kind of resume without strong internal characteristics: talent, drive and commitment. But no one succeeds entirely on their own. I’ve been reflecting on what the experiences I shared growing up with the new Governor should mean for his policies and for Kansas.

Private School Experience

Before I am accused of hopeless nostalgia for bygone days of private schooling in a mostly white, middle-class town 40 years ago, let me make clear the differences. Our high school had no special education students, no students whose families couldn’t afford at least some tuition, and minimum academic requirements. I literally did not know a classmate whose parents were divorced – much less hadn’t been married in the first place.

Our school was preparing students for college at a time when a majority of jobs required only a high school diploma (and many not even that), and certainly some of my classmates did not finish more education. All Kansas universities admitted any Kansas high school graduate and I paid $225 for the entire semester of my first year of college. A good number of our teachers were priests and nuns who had taken a vow of poverty (which certainly helps hold down educational costs if you can get away with it) and to whom we have a tremendous debt of gratitude.

So, there is much about the school experience I shared with our new Governor that we cannot go back to – not if we really want to help all students in Kansas get the benefits of an education we received.

Vision for All Kansas Schools

Yet even though we went to a private, Catholic high school in the 1970’s, there were many things I believe could and should be part of our vision for every school in Kansas.

First, there was a strong sense of shared values and commitment to service. Much of this, of course, was founded on the particular faith tradition of Roman Catholicism. Our school was named for a Catholic saint executed for refusing to compromise his religious and moral principles with the king of England. But universal, secular values like honesty and dependability, respect for all persons, striving for self-reliance, compassion for those less fortunate, independent thinking and service to the community are vital to our state and nation. Most Kansans seem to value such qualities as much as academics in educational outcomes, if not more so.

Second, there was a focus on preparing for life and work after high school. TMP specifically called itself a “college prep” school, and there was a clear goal of having all students at least prepared for more education after high school, of being activity involved in our community, and of having a view of the world beyond our immediate experience.

To begin with, I recall what former Governor Bill Graves used to say: desire for every child in Kansas the education you wanted for your own children.
Third, we learned the most by actually doing, rather than studying about doing. I have always believed I learned more from debate, forensics, drama, student journalism, model UN, high school politics than what I learned from books and lectures (not to mention a lot of creative activities we invented for ourselves that were not exactly sanctioned by our teachers). This was long before the days of “project-based learning,” but it was also long before the days of measuring schools by narrow standardized testing. It allowed a much broader view of what education should be.

Recommendations for New Governor

What, then, what would I recommend to our new Governor for education policy? 

To begin with, I recall what former Governor Bill Graves used to say: desire for every child in Kansas the education you wanted for your own children. Morally, this reflects the command to love our neighbors as ourselves and serve the least among us. Constitutionally, it reflects the state’s equal obligation to educate its people. Practically, our state cannot be strong economically or socially without improving the skills of our population, especially those from families and communities falling behind.

Next, recognize that our State Board of Education, based on extensive input from Kansans over months of collecting data, has launched an unprecedented effort to change our school system in exactly the ways I suggested above. You have been supporting those efforts publicly, visiting schools and meeting with educators and students. You need to continue to be the most vocal, visible champion of change – because even when people want change, the actual implementation is always hard.

Along with supporting change, support those working hard to make it happen. Join Commissioner Randy Watson, the State Board and education leaders in explaining that our school system must change not because it has failed, but because the world keeps changing, and therefore the needs of our students, families and communities keep changing. Be a leader who inspires, not a critic who simply tears down.

Finally, support the resources needed to make this vision real, understanding that the long-term benefits of each child who is ready for school, who stays in school, who graduates and goes on to postsecondary education will more than pay back our investment in higher income, healthier living and less need for state spending in the future.

With these modest proposals, I wish Dr. Jeff Colyer, TMP class of ’78, the best as he begins serving as the 47th Governor of Kansas.
The space race in Kansas is getting crowded.

Another group of school districts are expected to join the Kansans Can School Redesign Project with officials dubbing the new phase: Gemini II: The Space Walk Begins.

Under the Redesign Project, school districts commit to designing an elementary and secondary school around the State Board of Education outcomes focusing on student success. These include kindergarten readiness, social-emotional growth, individual plans of study, high school graduation and postsecondary achievement.

Last year, seven districts were chosen and selected the names of the Mercury 7 astronauts. Then 21 districts joined the effort and were dubbed Gemini I schools, after the second group of U.S. astronauts.

These districts, along with their local communities, have been undergoing program and system changes to prepare for the redesign liftoff. The Mercury 7 schools are scheduled to enact their redesigned school operations at the beginning of next school year and have already started some smaller pilot efforts. The Gemini I schools must launch their redesigns no later than the spring of 2020.

Now a new phase is under way, with districts applying to fly under the Gemini II banner through April 2.

The districts and schools must have approval of their boards and support of 80 percent of their teachers. And they must be willing to have a new school design in place for the 2019-20 school year.

Tammy Mitchell and Jay Scott, who serve as the school redesign specialists with the Kansas Department of Education, have been crisscrossing the state to help the redesigning schools. They say the enthusiasm for change is high.

“Teachers are leading it, teachers are driving it, and teachers are super excited to share what they are doing with their communities and other teachers around the state,” said Mitchell.

Officials in some schools have traveled to other states to learn about innovative strategies. Scott said Liberal High School officials took notes from schools near Green Bay, Wisconsin, to try to make more time at Liberal High School for personalized learning for their students.

Both Mitchell and Scott say the redesigning schools have made huge efforts to reach a “shared vision” with members of their communities.
Here are a few questions to help gauge your readiness, from the KSDE website:

1. How knowledgeable are your administrators, board, teachers and community with the Board Vision?
   a. Have you shared your data?
2. Do stakeholders agree that a collaborative culture already exists?
3. Are school administrators willing to empower teachers and to share ownership in this redesign process?
4. Is the district willing to look at the reallocation of resources in support of redesign?
5. Are you willing to allow students to have voice and choice in the redesign model?

For information, visit www.ksde.org. Deadline to submit the application is April 2, 2018.

Thinking about becoming a Gemini II district?

Here are a few questions to help gauge your readiness, from the KSDE website:

1. How knowledgeable are your administrators, board, teachers and community with the Board Vision?
   a. Have you shared your data?
2. Do stakeholders agree that a collaborative culture already exists?
3. Are school administrators willing to empower teachers and to share ownership in this redesign process?
4. Is the district willing to look at the reallocation of resources in support of redesign?
5. Are you willing to allow students to have voice and choice in the redesign model?

For information, visit www.ksde.org. Deadline to submit the application is April 2, 2018.
2018 KANSAS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

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2018 KANSAS REGIONAL TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

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Kimball is President-Elect-Designee

Shannon Kimball, president of the Lawrence USD 497 Board of Education, has been elected KASB President-Elect-Designee.

Kimball faced no opposition and was elected unanimously at the KASB Delegate Assembly during the association’s annual convention in Wichita.

“I will work to support and further KASB’s role as the voice of public education in Kansas. This voice continues to be desperately needed,” Kimball said “to counter the false narrative of failing public schools.”

She said KASB must continue to be at the forefront of debates over school finance, tax revenue, quality teachers, and the Kansans Can vision of leading the world in the success of each student.

Kimball, an attorney, grew up in western Kansas and earned a bachelor’s degree in political science and Spanish from the University of Kansas. She received her law degree at the University of Michigan Law School and has worked with public schools, first as an attorney in private practice, and then as an education specialist at the Georgia Department of Education.

She and her husband, Jason, returned to Lawrence to raise their family of three children, all of whom attend Lawrence public schools.

Kimball’s term as president of KASB will start July 1, 2019. KASB President Elect Patrick Woods, of Topeka USD 501, will serve as KASB President beginning July 1, 2018, taking over for current President Dayna Miller, of Basehor-Linwood USD 458.

Kimball is a member of the League of Women Voters of Lawrence/Douglas County, and the Kansas, Georgia, and American bar associations. Her local service includes her children’s school PTO, work with the Lawrence Memorial Hospital Endowment Association and the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, and serving on the board of her neighborhood association.

KASB is dedicated to serving school districts and improving student success. It is governed by a Board of Directors composed of school board members from throughout Kansas.

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Learning about the role of school board members

On a national radio broadcast earlier this month, KASB President Dayna Miller said she is hopeful that new Gov. Jeff Colyer will work to secure the funds needed to improve public education in Kansas and resolve the school finance litigation.

“We have a good relationship with Gov. Colyer and so we’re hopeful that means an increase (in funding) and that means support throughout the Legislature,” Miller said during an interview on The Takeaway.

The show highlighted Kansas’ fiscal problems and Colyer’s ascension to the governor’s office after Sam Brownback left to become ambassador at large for international religious freedom in President Donald Trump’s administration.

Miller, also a member of the Basehor-Linwood USD 458 school board, noted that Colyer, the former lieutenant governor, has recently spent a lot of time visiting schools and working with Kansas Education Commissioner Randy Watson and the Kansas State Board of Education.

KASB board learns about new partners

The KASB Board of Directors received an update on new uses of media in advocacy, communication and research during its quarterly meeting Jan. 12.

The board also received updates on the legislative response to the school finance decision, a KASB dues report, six-month budget review, pensions and approved the new KASB Risk Management Employee Benefits Solutions project. The board also approved a new endorsed partner: Patron Insight, Inc. and RNA Communications.

John Heim, KASB executive director, reported on the progress of a new association management system called Pinpoint AMS. The system is being developed through a joint partnership between KASB and its sister school board associations in Oklahoma and Nebraska.

Orientation for new board of directors was held prior to the meeting. Attending were Region 1 Vice President Jason Winbolt, Spring Hill USD 230 board of education; and Region 9 Vice President Brad Bergsma, Goodland USD 352 board of education. Also attending was Sheril Logan as interim Region 14 Vice President, Wichita USD 259 board of education. The new Region 14 Vice President is Stan Reeser, a Wichita USD 259 board member.
AG clarifies executive session rules

In an opinion letter released January 8, the Kansas Attorney General concluded that a motion to recess into executive session may only utilize one of the justifications listed in K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 75-4319(b), but multiple subjects may be discussed if they all fall within the justification recited in the motion for executive session. See Kan. Atty. Gen. Op. No. 2018-1.

The opinion also reiterated that the motion must be recorded in the board’s minutes and is not complete unless it states the three statutory elements:

1) subject to be discussed;
2) statutory justification for discussing the subject in executive, rather than open, session; and
3) the length of time the executive session will last or the time at which the open meeting will resume.

The opinion letter clarified that “subjects” in the statute refers to “what is to be discussed, without revealing confidential information.” Because the revised statute uses the word “justification,” and not “justifications,” the Attorney General concluded that the legislature intended to permit only a single justification to be stated for recessing to executive session. Because the statute uses the term “subjects to be discussed,” the Attorney General concluded that the legislature intended public bodies to be able discuss more than one subject, as long as both subjects qualified for executive session treatment under the same justification.

Based upon a strict constructionist reading of the statute, the board could, for example, discuss employment issues of multiple separate employees in the same executive session under the “nonelected personnel” exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act. It could not, however, justify the decision to talk about a personnel issue involving a single employee under both the nonelected personnel and attorney-client privilege justifications. While this limitation appears counterintuitive (because, after all, shouldn’t two justifications be better than one?), the attorney general concluded that such a limit was the legislature’s intent. If a matter has facets that require separate discussions under different justifications, it will be necessary to call an executive session supported by one justification, limit discussion to issues covered by that justification only, then return to open session and move for a new executive session under the other justification.

Board clerks are reminded to record the complete motion in the minutes of the meeting.

These articles are provided by the KASB Legal Services team and are not intended to be legal advice.
Prepping for Negotiations
02.20.18 | Topeka KASB | 1 - 3 p.m.
02.21.18 | Spring Hill | 7 - 8:30 p.m.
02.27.18 | Oakley a.m. | 9 - 11 a.m.
02.27.18 | Hays | 2 - 4 p.m.

Clerks and Treasurers Workshop
02.21.18 | Topeka KASB | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Human Resources Academy
03.15.18 | Newton
03.22.18 | Topeka KASB

Job Descriptions Workshop
03.21.18 | Topeka KASB |

Board Leadership Training
03.07.18 | Scott City | 9 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
03.13.18 | Topeka KASB | 9 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

School Law Roundup
May 30 & 31, 2018 | Wichita
USA Kansas Annual Conference
May 30 - June 1, 2018 | Wichita

See kasb.org/training for updates and registration details.