Clock ticking on Kansas school finance

Some key figures in the Kansas school finance debate. Top: KASB’s Mark Tallman & House K-12 Education Budget Chair Fred Patton; Senate President Susan Wagle; and Senate Majority Leader Jim Denning. Bottom: House Speaker Ron Ryckman; Reps. Ed Trimmer and Melissa Rooker.
Frank Henderson re-elected to represent nine states as NSBA Western Region Director

By Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Frank Henderson Jr., a longtime education advocate on the local, state and national levels, was recently re-elected to the National School Boards Association’s Board of Directors as the Western Region Director.

Henderson, who is a member of the Seaman USD 345 school board, is on the KASB Board of Directors and has served as KASB president, said he was honored to be re-elected to a three-year term by the NSBA Delegate Assembly during the organization’s annual conference earlier this month in San Antonio.

“NSBA continues to be the premier voice for America’s school children, serving as the Washington office for 90,000 school board members,” Henderson said. “We provide strong legislative, legal, and public advocacy, assisting and equipping school board members and other educational leaders with the knowledge and tools necessary to lead and represent the students in their respective school districts.”

KASB Executive Director Dr. John Heim said of Henderson, “As an NSBA board member, Frank is a strong voice for Kansas and the Western Region.” The region includes Kansas, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

Henderson said the NSBA annual conference was outstanding with informative workshops and great keynote speakers such as Julian Castro, a former mayor of San Antonio who served as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Barack Obama.

NSBA announces new board leadership

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) announced its president and board leadership for 2018-19: Frank C. Pugh of California’s Santa Rosa City Schools District, president; Beth Branham of South Carolina’s Lexington School District Two, president-elect; and Charlie E. Wilson of Columbus, Ohio’s Worthington City Schools, secretary-treasurer. Kevin E. Ciak of New Jersey’s Sayreville Public Schools will now serve as immediate past-president.

NSBA’s 150 school board member Delegate Assembly held the leadership elections during NSBA’s Annual Conference, April 7-9, in San Antonio, Texas. In addition to the elected officers, chairs of NSBA’s councils will serve as ex-officio directors. The chairs for the Councils were chosen by their respective committees.

“Every child deserves access to a 21st century public education that prepares them for college, career and future success,” said NSBA Executive Director and CEO Thomas J. Gentzel. “Our officers and Board of Directors have a significant role in our ongoing commitment to ensure our country’s schoolchildren have the opportunity to receive a high-quality education so they can realize their full potential.”

“I congratulate Frank Pugh, NSBA’s new president, and welcome the new members of the board and appointments to the board. Together the board and leadership will work diligently to provide valuable resources to our members, secure federal policies that ensure public education continues to improve to meet students’ needs today and into the future, create a better understanding of the importance and benefits of the role of school boards and local governance and generate greater appreciation for our local public schools.”

Frank Pugh has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to advancing public education and serving in the best interests of students, families and their communities. Pugh served as President of the California School Boards Association (CSBA) in 2010 and was elected to NSBA’s Board of Directors in 2011. He has been a Santa Rosa City Schools board member for 28 years. He will continue his tireless and determined efforts to advocate for students and public schools as NSBA’s president.

NSBA is dedicated to addressing educational equity and advancing student learning and achievement for every student. The new board embraces this important mission. Through years of work on their local school boards, each of the members of the board are uniquely positioned to champion equity and continue the association’s efforts in support of public education and our country’s 50 million public school children.
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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.  

April 2018
President’s Perspective
Dayna Miller, Basehor-Linwood USD 458

Shout our story from the rooftops

The Legislature lurched to a contentious end of its regular session and, like many recent legislative sessions, the main argument was over school funding. We, as education advocates, know there is probably nothing more important to fight for than the quality of the education we provide for the next generation.

But I’m sure there is a certain amount of weariness felt by some in the general public about these seemingly never-ending, political battles over school funding. For those Kansans who don’t spend the majority of their waking hours in the school finance world, the headlines and sound bytes about the funding standoffs can probably be sometimes incomprehensible and oftentimes depressing.

That is why we need to re-double our efforts of shouting from the roof tops the positive story of Kansas public education.

We need to let people know that when Kansas schools received the first above-inflation increase last year in years, schools invested the money wisely on retaining teachers and instituting programs to enhance early childhood learning and focus on at-risk students. We must inform the public that what they hear in “anti-public school” radio ads about wasteful school spending is simply NOT true.

The conservatives in the Legislature recently hired school finance experts to do a study. Those experts found that Kansas school districts are more efficient than any they had ever seen.

We need to tout the Kansans Can vision in which teachers and administrators across the state are partnering with their parents, businesses and whole communities to redesign their operations to ensure the success of each and every student. This concept is spreading like a prairie fire in Kansas and it is like nothing else going on in the country in public education.

We have a great, positive story that needs to be told over the noise of the political fighting.

KASB research shows on average the higher the education level a worker has, the higher salary the person will make, which means producing more economic activity and relying less on taxpayer assistance. For Kansas to thrive in the future, Kansas public schools must continue to improve. That is why we fight what to some may appear to be a never-ending fight.
Everyone is fighting a battle

Libby Strout, one of two main characters in Jennifer Niven’s book ‘Holding Up the Universe,” was once known as “American’s Fattest Teen” and was so big they had to cut a hole in her house to get her out. Imagine a student in your school who comes back after several years of home school, during which this extraction took place on national TV for all to see.

Niven captures the moment so well from the point of view of Libby, and also gives a hyper-realistic look at the other student’s reactions to her. Needless to say, the bullying is heartbreaking.

My internal thoughts of “what would you have done” were laid bare when, referencing two characters in the book, my wife flat out asked: “Which of these boys would you have been?” The question is one we should all ask ourselves.

Jack Masselin is the other main character in the book. On the outside, Jack has it all going on. So as not to divulge any spoilers let’s just say Jack has issues of his own. Issues no one can see because of his philosophy: “Be charming, be hilarious, don’t get too close to anyone.” These are the students who are so good at “playing school” that no one knows their pain.

You will have to read the book to get the rest. “Goodreads” gives it five stars. I simply couldn’t put it down. My wife complains about our shared Kindle and audible library being all war books and scary thrillers; I have been trying to expand my horizons. My niece suggested this one. It’s not about history and it’s not scary; unless you have ever been a victim of a bully. Which means it is all about history and it is scary for pretty much everyone.

The October 11 edition of the New York Times Magazine included an article titled “Why Are More American Teenagers Than Ever Suffering from Severe Anxiety?” One could ask more provincial question: Why is Kansas’ suicide rate 25 percent higher than the national average? These questions have no easy answers, and the problems have no easy solutions.

Reading and discussing “Holding up the Universe” would be a good place to start learning the lesson that everyone is fighting a battle, even if we can’t understand it.

If you are an educator I recommend you read this book. Student’s in our schools struggle for so many reasons beyond academics. A wise person once said everyone we meet is a mirror. This book provides us with a mirror in which we can see the pain and joy of being a teenager.
Art Gutierrez serves as role model for students in Emporia district

By Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

For Art Gutierrez, serving on the Emporia USD 253 school board has been a good fit.

Gutierrez was recently elected to the KASB Board of Directors as the Region 2 Vice President. As head of Systems and Technical Services and an associate professor at Emporia State University, Gutierrez’s knowledge and experience with technology makes him a great advocate as the school district improves student achievement through the use of advanced technologies.

“That’s something I know about and can contribute to,” Gutierrez said. “At the college level, we are having these same discussions about student readiness and strategies we can employ to help students be successful and I was already thinking about those things, so I thought I could have a voice.”

Gutierrez grew up in a low-income Hispanic family and says that serving on the school board shows students from similar circumstances that they can succeed. “I wanted to serve as a role model for those students.”

As a lifelong Emporian, Gutierrez also serves as an example. He grew up in a low-income Hispanic family and says that serving on the school board shows students from similar circumstances that they can succeed.

“I wanted to serve as a role model for those students,” he said.

Gutierrez said there needs to be more diversity among teachers and administrators in the district, which is about 45 percent Hispanic and where 60 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Putting together a more diverse school district staff is a huge challenge, Gutierrez said.

“Everyone agrees that is a great idea, but we have a hard time making progress on that goal. We have to grow our own,” he said.

And like any other parent with children in school, Gutierrez wanted to become more involved in district policies. He has two daughters, one in sixth grade and one in eighth grade.

“That was a big impetus to get involved. A lot of parents are nervous about middle school,” he said.

Gutierrez was elected to the school board in 2015 and is a graduate of the KASB Leadership for Tomorrow class of 2016-17.

He has a master’s degree in Library Science and bachelor’s degree in computer information systems.

At ESU, he teaches classes on research skills, information technology and information literacy, in addition to serving on numerous committees. He also serves on many community committees.

He said the community is an enthusiastic supporter of the public schools. “There is always some organization giving a grant to the school district,” he said.

Currently, he says state funding and school security are two major issues for the district.

He agrees with the Kansans Can vision of leading the world in student success, but says it will require additional funding.

“We have lofty goals with Kansans Can; we have to fully fund it now. I see a lot of push back and that is why we have to advocate for public education,” he said.
2018 Call for Proposals

Westar Energy STEM Innovation Awards

By Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

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 fifth 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.

Westar Energy is the leading electric utility in the Midwest, dedicated to investing in the communities served and developing partnerships that invest in their current and future workforce.

The awards are a partnership between Westar Energy, the 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.

To be eligible for these grants, applicants must be teachers or administration in KASB-member districts.

Requests that incorporate the following components are of the greatest interest:

- A focus on electricity, electrical production and conservation in Kansas.
- Designed to improve, advance and enrich student learning while growing their interest in STEM.
- Designed to spark interest in STEM disciplines among students from non-traditional or underrepresented groups (i.e. ethnic minority and female students).
- Provide activities that support student application of classroom STEM knowledge to practical applications.
- New this year! Successful applications will have a significant element of community service woven into their proposals.

Submission deadline is July 13. Awards will be announced August 1-3, and award checks will be mailed August 31.

All grant recipients are recognized during the KASB Annual Conference and asked to present a breakout session on their project.
New school board members complete Intro to Foundations of Boardsmanship

By Carol Pitts, cpitts@kasb.org

Close to 300 board of education members in Kansas were recently recognized by KASB as having completed the Introduction to Foundations of Boardsmanship training for new board members.

Dr. Brian Jordan, KASB assistant executive director for leadership services, said the training gives new board members a strong foundation to begin building skills as effective leaders.

“We include an introduction to the fundamentals of serving on a board of education and cover topics such as advocacy, finance, setting goals and priorities and evaluating the superintendent,” Jordan said.

“The workshop includes legal topics such as open meetings and executive sessions, and an overview of the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) and other state and national education governance topics.”

Board of education members are elected to four-year terms and serve on a volunteer basis. That means they take time off work or attend training on weekends to learn more about how to serve and lead their local school district.

Another part of the introduction to boardsmanship training held from December 2017 through March of this year included how to set goals and work through disagreements to reach consensus.

“Top achieving districts have one thing in common — a board of education and district leadership team that has clearly identified their priorities and remains focused on a vision for the future of their students,” Jordan said.

Creating a board team takes time, he said, and one of the best ways to prepare for success is to have the new board member attend training along with the superintendent, board clerk and a more seasoned board member who can serve as a mentor.

KASB Leadership Services has scheduled additional training opportunities to expand on the topic of boardsmanship. See box at right for dates and watch for more information at kasb.org/training-events.
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- Benefits and Rewards Services
- Consumer Research and Insight
- Marketing and Communications
Looking at the Data  
Ted Carter, KASB Research Specialist

How Kansas NAEP scores compare

The 2017 NAEP results were made available in April so many are digging through the data to try and make sense of what it might tell us. This article is another attempt to do just that.

KASB is frequently asked to speak to how Kansas students are doing. It would make sense to answer this question by comparing Kansas public school students to all public school students in the nation, and to focus not on the scores and percentages themselves, but on how much above or below the nation Kansas students perform.

Therefore, for this analysis, I am presenting the difference between the Mean Scores, Percent at Basic or Above, and Percent at Proficient and Above on the 4th and 8th grade Reading and Math exams for Kansas public school students and the scores and percentages for all public school student nationwide.

There are student subgroups worth investigating, such as students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch versus those who are not eligible. Though this article focuses on all students, further analysis may delve into these subgroups.

Mean Scores

The following graph shows the difference in mean scores between Kansas and the nation’s public schools on the four exams.

As can be seen, in terms of mean scores, Kansas students have had consistently higher mean scores than the national average for public school students with the exception of the 4th grade reading test in 2015. However, the number of points above the national average has been declining since 2005. That is, until 2017, when the number of points above the national average increased for all tests except for the 8th grade reading exam, which is also the only exam that saw an increase in the number of points Kansas is above the nation in 2015.

This data suggests that though Kansas has been “losing it’s lead” on the nation for several years, this trend may be reversing as of the 2017 results in terms of mean (average) scores.

Percent at Basic or Above

The following graph shows the difference in the percent of students performing at Basic or above between Kansas and the nation’s public schools on the four exams.

Similar to the mean scores, this data shows that the percent of Kansas public school students performing at Basic or above has been consistently above the national percentage (except for 4th grade reading in 2015), but Kansas’ lead has been declining since at least 2009.

For 4th grade, the number of percentage points above the national percent increased from 2015 to 2017, suggesting a reversal in the trend. For 8th grade, Kansas’ lead decreased slightly for Math, and more noticeably for Reading.

Percent at Proficient or Above

The graph on the next page shows the difference in the percent of students performing at Proficient or above between Kansas and the nation’s public schools on the four exams.

Continued next page
KASB Research completes annual reports

KASB recently released the last four Annual Reports based on data we collect. We thought we’d share the list of all of the reports available.

The following are available on kasb.org/research/kasb-data and are available to everyone:

- Calendar Survey: School district calendar and schedule information.
- Fees Survey: Fees for participation, admissions, class and school equipment and materials, and use of equipment and facilities.
- Other Staff Survey: Information on classified staff, nurses, and bus drivers.
- Teacher Contracts Survey: Information on teacher contracts and the negotiations process.
- Teacher Salary Schedules: Teacher salary schedule info taken from districts’ negotiated teacher agreements.
- Supplemental Pay Survey: Information on amounts paid for part-time and supplemental contracts.
- Retirement Survey: Information on district sponsored retirement plans.
- School Board Election Survey: Outcomes of school board elections.
- Questions Submitted Elections: School district special question election activity. Combination of info previously submitted by County Election Clerks, data reported by KSDE, and questions asked on the School Board Election Survey.

Reports on KASB’s Members Only Data Page

- Enrollment Projections: Five-year projections for district enrollments by grade and by lunch program participation based on actual enrollment and district birth rate data.
- Employee Relations Survey: Non-Renewal, Termination, Release, and other Teacher Employee Relations Info.
- Central Office Staff Survey: Central Office Staff (Managers and Supervisors) Info.
- Principals Survey: Principal and Assistant Principal info.
- Superintendents Survey: District Superintendent Info.
- Postsecondary Institutions: Degrees and Postsecondary Institutions for Superintendents, Principals and Assistant Principals, and Central Office Staff.

Along with the annual reports in PDF format, there are datasets available in online interactive tools and Excel files, as well as other tools and datasets from other sources and some combining multiple sources.

If you would like more information, or to request a password to the Member’s Only Data Page, contact Debbie, ddyche@kasb.org or Ted, tcarter@kasb.org in the KASB Research Office.

As with the other two metrics, the percent of Kansas students performing at or above Proficient has been consistently higher than the percent of public school students nationally. The number of percentage points above the national average has been generally on the decline since 2005.

However, for 4th and 8th grade math and 4th grade reading, the number of percentage points above the national average increased for Kansas public schools, and the 8th grade reading number declined only slightly.

Conclusion

This brief analysis suggests that the last decade has seen a change in the performance of Kansas public school students when compared to public school students nationwide, with Kansas students continuing to outperform the nation, but losing their lead in each subsequent testing year. However, the 2017 data suggest that there may be a change in this trend, with Kansas students starting to push ahead further than their peers in other states to a greater extent than in 2015.

With new funding for Kansas public schools, we can only hope that this new trend continues.
It’s crunch time for a school finance resolution

By Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

When the Kansas Supreme Court last October struck down the public school finance law, it gave the Legislature until June 30 to fix it.

“The State will have ample time and opportunity, whether by regular legislative session, special session, or a combination thereof, to bring the system into constitutional compliance so that we can make such a judgment — by that date,” the court said.

Well, time’s almost up.

The Legislature approved a new school finance bill on April 8, the last day of the 2018 regular session. Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt and plaintiffs in the Gannon lawsuit must file legal briefs by April 30 and the court will hear oral arguments May 22.

Advancing the $525 million, five-year funding increase featured numerous distractions and brinksmanship and was approved with the minimum number of required votes. And as if that wasn’t enough, shortly after the bill crossed the legislative finish line, state officials discovered an error that will reduce the final investment by $80 million unless legislators work on it again.

What follows is a timeline of what the Legislature did in responding to the Kansas Supreme Court decision in the Gannon lawsuit — known as Gannon V.

October 2, 2017

The court rules SB 19, signed into law in June, fails to provide an adequate or equitable funding system that is reasonably calculated to have all public school students meet or exceed standards designed to ensure they are successful after graduation. SB 19 increased school funding by approximately $300 million over two years. It is the fifth decision in the Gannon lawsuit, which was originally filed in 2010.

October 17, 2017

Schools for Fair Funding, which represents plaintiff’s school districts, says the state needs to increase K-12 funding by $600 million to comply with the ruling. The group says that amount, plus the $300 million from SB 19, would equal the $900 million increase endorsed by the State Board of Education. Schools for Fair Funding also says the Legislature must fix four equity violations that the court identified as being unfair to low-wealth districts.

October 30, 2017

Legislative leaders select an interim committee to work on addressing the court ruling, including whether to propose a constitutional amendment seeking to block the courts from ruling on legislative school finance decisions. The chairman of the committee, state Rep. Blaine Finch, R-Ottawa, would eventually write the proposed amendment aimed at taking the courts out of school finance decision on adequate funding.

December 29, 2017

Republican legislative leaders hire Dr. Lori Taylor, a school finance expert and professor at Texas A&M University, to conduct a $245,000 school finance cost study. GOP leaders say the study will help the Legislature address the court ruling.
January 9, 2018

In his final State of the State address, Gov. Sam Brownback calls for an additional $500 million for schools over five years, an increase in teacher pay, more school counselors and psychologists and other proposals endorsed by the State Board of Education and Kansas State Department of Education. Brownback, who had been a frequent critic of school funding during his two terms, surprised many legislators with his proposals as he prepared to leave Kansas for a job in President Donald Trump’s administration.

January 31

Jeff Colyer, the lieutenant governor, is sworn into office as the 47th governor, replacing Brownback. Colyer endorses the school finance proposals laid out earlier by Brownback.

February 5

State Rep. Fred Patton, R-Topeka, is named chairman of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee to replace Larry Campbell, who resigned his legislative seat to become Colyer’s state budget director. Patton served as president of KASB from 2010-12 and is currently president of the Seaman USD 345 school board on which he has served 15 years.

March 16

The Taylor-WestEd school finance study is completed and undermines those who call for a low- or no-cost solution. The study says it will cost from $450 million to $2.1 billion more to help Kansas reach stated goals of improving student achievement. The study also says Kansas schools were producing at nearly 96 percent of their potential cost efficiency on average.

March 27

In a late-session development, the House Insurance Committee holds a hearing on a bill that would make it easier to sue school districts that don’t allow teachers to carry firearms and prohibit insurance companies from refusing to provide coverage for districts that allow concealed carry. The bill remains in committee.

March 29-April 5

In a period of one week, a constitutional amendment to prevent Kansans from seeking judicial review of legislative decisions about how much funding is adequate for schools was introduced, heard in committee and then approved by the House Judiciary Committee. It hasn’t progressed any further, however, some legislators say it may advance if the court rules against the Legislature again.

April 3

The House approves a $500 million, five-year school finance bill but Senate Republican leaders announce they will not work on school finance until the Legislature approves placing the school finance amendment on the ballot. Within two days, however, the leaders reverse course and work on school finance continues.

April 5

The Senate approves a $275 million, five-year school finance bill.

April 7-8

With little movement in hammering out the differences between the House and Senate school finance plans, the House amends a Senate bill with the House funding level, approving it 63-56 and sending it to the Senate for an up or down vote. The Senate approves the bill 21-18 early April 8. Colyer pushes for passage and announces he will sign it into law, paving the way for Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt to begin defending the legislation before the court.

So, what happens if the issue isn’t resolved by June 30? Here is what the court said: “... after that date we will not allow ourselves to be placed in the position of being complicit actors in the continuing deprivation of a constitutionally adequate and equitable education owed to hundreds of thousands of Kansas school children.”

Follow developments with school finance issues in the Kansas Legislature and the Kansas Supreme Court through the KASB website, www.kasb.org.
Kansans Can School Redesign Project Grows

By Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Nineteen additional school districts have been added to the Kansans Can School Redesign Project.

That means since last August, 47 of Kansas’ 286 school districts have committed to overhauling at least an elementary school and secondary school to align with the five major outcomes established by the Kansas State Board of Education. Those outcomes are kindergarten readiness, individual plans of study focused on career interest, increased high school graduation rates and post-secondary completion and social emotional growth.

Some of the districts in the program are redesigning more than two schools so the total number of schools that will undergo change totals more than 100.

Asked if he was pleased with the participation rate of districts, Education Commissioner Randy Watson said, “I am very happy.”

Watson said even those districts that haven’t joined the specific Kansans Can redesign are working on innovative ways to meet their local needs.

The first seven districts — dubbed the Mercury 7 after the United States’ first astronauts — are set to “launch” their redesigns in August.

The 21 Gemini I districts can launch this fall or the fall of 2019. The Gemini II districts will launch new school redesigns in the 2019-20 school year.

In addition to agreeing to redesign around the Kansans Can vision, the schools had to have approval of their local school board in a public vote, faculty support with a vote of 80 percent and support from KNEA or other professional organization.

After the Gemini II districts and schools were announced this month, State Board of Education Chairman Jim Porter told the school officials that they faced daunting challenges.

“We may look good compared to a lot of other states but that’s not good enough for Kansas,” Porter said.
KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KANSANS CAN

SCHOOL REDESIGN PROJECT APPLICATIONS

MERCURY
- Coffeyville USD 445
- Field Kindley High
- Liberal USD 480
- Meade County High
- McPherson USD 418
- McPherson Middle
- Olathe USD 233
- Wathaw Elementary
- Santa Fe Trail Middle
- Stockton USD 271
- Stockton Grade School
- Stockton High
- Twin Valley USD 240
- Yoscutt Grade School
- Bennington Junior/Senior High
- Wellington USD 353
- Kemysy Elementary
- Wellington High

GEMINI I
- Ashland USD 220
- Ashland Elementary
- Ashland Junior/Senior School
- Basehor-Linwood USD 458
- Basehor Elementary
- Basehor-Linwood High
- Beloit USD 273
- Beloit Elementary
- Beloit Junior/Senior High
- Burston USD 369
- Burston Elementary
- Burston Middle/High
- Canton-Galva USD 419
- Canton-Galva Elementary
- Canton-Galva Junior/Senior High
- Chapparal USD 361
- Harper Elementary
- Chapparal Junior/Senior High
- Dighton USD 482
- Dighton Elementary
- Dighton Junior/Senior High
- Durham-Hillsboro-Lehigh USD 410
- Hillsboro Elementary
- Hillsboro Middle
- Fowler USD 225
- Fowler Elementary
- Fowler Junior/Senior High
- Geary County USD 475
- Westwood Elementary
- Junction City High
- Kingman-Norwich USD 331
- Kingman Elementary
- Kingman Middle
- Leavenworth USD 453
- David Brewer Elementary
- Leavenworth High
- Newton USD 373
- State Creek Elementary/State Fair 5-6 Center
- Chisholm Middle
- North Lyon County USD 231
- Americus Elementary
- and/or Reading Elementary
- North Northwinds High
- North Ottawa County USD 239
- Minneapolis Grade School
- Minneapolis Junior/Senior High
- Ottawa USD 290
- Lincoln Elementary
- Ottawa High
- Remick USD 267
- Lincoln Elementary
- Garden Plain High
- Rolla USD 217
- Rolla Elementary
- Santa Fe Trail USD 434
- Overbrook Attendance Center (K-3)
- Santa Fe Trail High
- Skyline Pott High USD 438
- Skyline Elementary
- Skyline High
- Spring Hill USD 230
- Prairie Creek Elementary
- Prairie Creek High
- Andover USD 385
- Meade County Elementary
- Robert Martin Elementary
- Cottonwood Elementary
- Andover Central Middle
- Caldwell USD 360
- Caldwell Elementary
- Caldwell Secondary
- Cedar Vale USD 285
- Cedar Vale Elementary
- Cedar Vale Memorial High
- Clay County USD 379
- Garfield Elementary
- Waldo High
- Clay Center Community Middle
- Clay Center Community High
- Collinwood High
- Frederia USD 484
- Lincoln Elementary
- Frederia Junior/High
- Halstead-Bentley USD 440
- Bentley Middle/High
- Haven USD 301
- Haven Grade School
- Yoder Charter School
- Haven Middle
- Haven High
- Haskell USD 474
- Haskell Grade School
- Haskell Junior High
- Lakin USD 215
- Lakin Grade School
- Lakin High
- Little River-Windom USD 444
- Windom Elementary
- Little River Junior/Senior High
- Lyons USD 405
- Central Elementary
- Lyons High
- Neodesha USD 461
- North Lyon Elementary
- Nellie Elementary
- Neodesha Middle/High
- Osawatomie USD 367
- Swann Elementary
- Education Center (Pres-K)
- Trojan Elementary (K-5)
- Oak Grove Middle
- Peabody-Burns USD 398
- Peabody-Burns Elementary
- Peabody-Burns Middle/High
- Southern Lyon USD 232
- Neosho Rapids Elementary
- Northwood Junior-Senior High
- Stafford USD 340
- Stafford Elementary
- St. Mary's Middle/High
- Whitewater-Rennington USD 206
- Rennington Elementary
- Remington Middle/High
- Wichita USD 259
- Celia Elementary
- Chester Lees Academic Learning Center
- Winfield USD 465
- Country View Elementary
- Irving Elementary
- Winfield Middle

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Considering a run for state office?

By Rob Gilligan, rgilligan@kasb.org

Is now the right time to move up?

The filing deadline for the 2018 General Election is noon on Friday, June 1 for Kansas House of Representative seats, state-wide offices and federal elections. If you have ever thought of making the jump to the state or national level, now is the time to decide.

Local elected officials making the transition to a state or federal office have a long history of success, including the current Kansas Legislature that includes many former school board members in the House and Senate.

State Sen. Lynn Rogers, D-Wichita, a longtime school board member, decided to run because he said he felt the needs of his school district weren’t being represented. “So, instead of just complaining, I decided to step up.”

Rogers said his experience on the school board and knowledge of school budgets has helped him provide information to legislators and correct erroneous information they are getting from other sources.

When asked what advice he would give to school board members thinking about running for the Legislature, he said, “Work hard! Hard work can beat those candidates who only have big money. Walking door-to-door and talking to your neighbors gets your message across. You also get a great education as to what people are thinking.”

What to Consider

So, if you’re considering that jump, here are a few questions you can ask yourself to make sure you are prepared:

1. Do you have support of your family and friends? Making the move up will require additional time for service, travel, and a significant amount of “homework” to keep informed on the myriad of issues you will be asked to consider.

2. Do you have the resources? Campaign costs are one thing, but once you are elected it takes additional resources to support your efforts to serve. With a pay rate of about $88 per day, members of the Kansas Legislature are often sacrificing a better earning during their service time, so it’s important to have a financial plan in place.

3. What is your goal in serving? Ask yourself exactly why you want to take on this new challenge and what your goals would be. If you want to be able to articulate to the voters of your district why you should be elected to serve, it will be important to have a strong message and understanding of the issues being discussed in Topeka.

4. Have you talked with a former legislator? The easiest way to get a good understanding of the job and what it will entail would be to spend some time talking with a current or former legislator. If you can, talk with multiple legislators to get different perspectives and a broader understanding.

5. Is your summer calendar open? With the filing deadline of June 1 and the primary election 68 days later on August 7, you will need to hit the ground running to make use of the limited time. Fund raising, public events, ad buys and mailers are all part of the process, but nothing beats walking the neighborhoods of your district and meeting constituents in person.

There are great opportunities for leaders to grow and help the State of Kansas by making the jump to a state level office. If you think now is the right time, KASB Advocacy will be offering informational briefings across the state for all legislators, candidates and board members in June. We hope you can join us as you begin your new journey. Just be sure to get some good shoes!
Sen. Lynn Rogers attends a joint Senate and House committee meeting during the session. He was elected to the Kansas Senate in November, 2016. The longtime Wichita USD 259 school board member remained on the board until his term expired this past January.

Office of Kansas Secretary of State  
2018 Election Information  
www.kssos.org/elections/elections.html

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Offices to be Elected or Retained

**National Level**
All four U.S. Representatives

**State Level**
Governor/Lt Governor  
Secretary of State  
Attorney General  
State Treasurer  
Commissioner of Insurance  
One State Senator, Dist. 13  
All 125 State Representatives  
Kansas State Board of Education, Regions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9  
Seven Kansas Court of Appeals Judges  
District Court Judges, 48 retained; 27 elected  
District Magistrate Judges, 18 retained; 3 elected
Parading what’s right about your schools

By G. Kent Stewart, Educational Administration Prof. Emeritus, KSU bcsgks1@cox.net

A couple with grade school and middle school youngsters were moving to a new town and seeking a home to buy. They asked their Realtor a lot of questions about the schools. Mom wanted to know all about the three elementary schools, the middle school curriculum, activities and security. Dad was more interested in athletics, buildings, school debt, taxes and transportation.

The experienced Realtor was unable to adequately answer some of their questions. The mission statements, athletic schedules and district fact sheets were welcome and helpful, but her clients wanted to know more. They seemed to be seeking more personalized information about the schools.

Here is an opportunity for Boards to help determine what needs to be shared with an increasingly curious public that will broaden school understanding and support.

Of all the teacher in-service presentations I delivered for so many years, my favorite was a half-day workshop titled, “Parading What’s Right About Your Schools.” Teachers loved it and produced impressive lists of what they believed most accurately defined their schools as unique and special places for kids grow and learn and mature.

Modesty is a deep-seated value in America, particularly observable among teachers. We were taught to do good work, but to work quietly without bragging or attracting attention.

In the workshops, once we understood this block, teachers came face-to-face with the realization that only they were aware of their own great work.

Workshops concluded with enough examples about good work happening at schools to supply newspaper articles indefinitely and to help parents understand just how good their kid’s teachers and schools really are. We produced written evidence of the special things that kids experience at school, made special by skilled and dedicated teachers quietly doing the good work they were hired to do.

Try broadening the time-proven School District Facts cards to include unique facts about how individual schools put their mission statements into action.

Lundblad and Stewart*, in their school public relations book, recommend bringing to public awareness: student and staff achievements, school awards and recognitions, innovative teaching, facility security, PTA/PTO activities, technology in the classroom, partnerships, successes with gifted and special needs students, the breakfast program and test score improvements; anything unique that would attract public interest and enhance knowledge and understanding of the good work going on in today’s schools.

With a little thought, teachers can supply a wealth of meaningful examples aimed at increasing public understanding and school support.


Third in a series by G. Kent Stewart focusing 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.
Patron Insight, RNA Communications join endorsed provider program

By Carol Pitts, cpits@kasb.org

Turning information into action for results just got a whole lot easier for KASB members.

Randy Weseman, assistant executive director for operations and leadership, said KASB’s two newest endorsed providers will help schools improve communication with stakeholders and engage their community in discussions on school improvement, facility upgrades or improving support for their schools.

Patron Insight, Inc. has more than 25 years of experience helping schools discover and understand their community’s perceptions and opinions on a wide range of issues.

RNA Communications specializes in advertising, marketing and public relation services.

Both companies have partnered with KASB to offer members services such as surveys, communications audits, working with focus group, community engagement, marketing and branding.

“Many of us at KASB have worked directly with the people behind both Patron Insight and RNA Communications for many years,” Weseman said. “They have now passed the KASB Preferred Provider Partnership test with distinction, and we are very pleased to recommend their services and support to you.”

Patron Insight, Inc. services include pre-election research, citizen’s advisory committees and communication audits. They provide collection and interpretation of data and information districts need to make better decisions. This gives you access to information from key stakeholders who rarely speak up, but whose support is vital.

RNA Communications is a marketing firm with deep experience working with government agencies, municipalities, not-for-profits and other public entities. They provide marketing and advertising services to non-profits, municipalities and public entities, with fees structured to support the budgets of non-profit clients.

To learn more about how Patron Insight, Inc. and RNA Communications can help you connect with your community, go to patroninsight.com and rnacommunications.com or call Randy Weseman at 785-273-3600.
Rules for breathalyzer, alcohol testing

With prom season dawning, many schools will confront the question of how to keep school functions alcohol free. Some schools have required students to submit to a breathalyzer test prior to being admitted to the event.

Districts should be aware that subjecting anyone to such a test constitutes a “search” for constitutional purposes. A breathalyzer examination could be considered unlawfully invasive, if not conducted properly.

Constitutional Concerns

The Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibits unreasonable searches or seizure of an individual’s person or property. Schools do not need a warrant or probable cause to search students, but any search must be “reasonable under the circumstances.” For a search to be considered reasonable, it must be 1) justified at its inception, and 2) reasonably related in scope to the circumstances which justified the search in the first place.

In the school context, the first of these requirements generally means that the search originated after forming reasonable suspicion that the search will turn up evidence that the student is violating the law or school rules. The second means that the search itself cannot be excessively intrusive, in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the suspected infraction. Court opinions have made clear that subjecting a person to a breathalyzer test is considered a search. Thus, such tests must comply with the Fourth Amendment requirements outlined previously.

One question often raised regarding searches of students engaged in extra-curricular or co-curricular activities is whether students consent to these types of tests simply by participating in these activities.

There is no consensus among courts concerning the constitutionality of suspicionless drug testing of students participating in extracurricular activities, including prom. Current law simply does not yield a clear answer on this question.

If a school is planning on using Breathalyzers prior to admittance to a school activity, students should have clear advance warning that the program will be implemented.

Factors to Consider

School boards should carefully consider several factors before adopting drug and alcohol testing programs. These factors include:

- The purpose of the testing program
- The students to whom the program will apply
- The substance to be tested
- The types of testing that will be required
- The procedures for determining who will be tested
- The testing procedures
- The confidentiality of test results
- The consequences of refusal to test or a positive test

Because accurate drug testing programs can be very costly, boards must carefully weigh the costs and benefits of implementing a drug testing program.

School boards should consider all of these factors in determining whether to institute a drug testing program in their school or utilizing breathalyzers. Boards should also consider how they will respond to challenges concerning the training or expertise of those who administer the tests, as well as to the accuracy of the equipment used to test students.

Boards and administrators should also keep in mind students who have consumed alcohol can be identified by other means, as well. Boards of education should consider whether utilizing breathalyzers will provide sufficient benefit to justify the costs and risks of implementing a policy requiring students to submit to testing as a precondition of participating in a school activity.
Guidance from KASB Legal

KORA documents not allowed for sales

The Kansas Open Records Act ("KORA") permits any individual to inspect or obtain copies of public records of state agencies or political subdivisions, including schools.

The person making the request need not be a patron of the district, nor even a citizen of the state of Kansas to be entitled to official records.

The right is not without limits, however. The act exempts various categories of documents based on privacy and other concerns. Also, K.S.A. 45-230 prohibits anyone knowingly using a list of names and addresses contained or derived from public records for the purpose of selling or offering for sale any property or service to persons whose identities and contact information are disclosed pursuant to a KORA request.

In other words, except in some circumstances that generally do not apply to public schools, names and addresses obtained through a KORA request may not be utilized for marketing purposes. The penalty for such a misuse of public information can be as much as $500 per violation.

School districts are permitted to request a signed statement that the person requesting records will not misuse them in violation of the statute before providing access to documents. The statement should recite the following:

I hereby certify that the information sought in this Kansas Open Records Act request is not sought for the purpose of selling or offering for sale any property or service to the persons listed therein.

I further acknowledge that, pursuant to K.S.A. 45-230, any person subject to this section who knowingly uses names and addresses obtained through a Kansas Open Records Act request for the purpose of selling or offering for sale any property or services to the persons listed therein shall be liable for a civil penalty in an action brought by the attorney general or county or district attorney in a sum set by the court not to exceed $500 per violation.

If the requester refuses to sign such a statement, the district is not required to provide access to names and addresses, though the remainder of the KORA request must still be answered.

Limit the scope of collective bargaining

Notice letters for professional negotiations have been exchanged by now, and the board should have reviewed the professional employees’ letter to ensure that the issues raised by the association all concern mandatorily negotiable topics under K.S.A. 72-2218(l)(1)(C).

School boards often question why they should be concerned over limiting negotiations to those topics. If the teachers have concerns other than those matters, why not discuss them?

The simplest answer is that boards need to avoid diminishing rights which are managerial or quasi-managerial in nature. The board must also ensure that subjects which can be addressed administratively are not included in the agreement. The final responsibility to manage, control, and direct the operations of public schools is vested in the school board — and there it should remain.

To maintain this control, negotiations should be limited to the “rewards” for work rendered (salaries, compensable benefits and non-compensable benefits) and the conditions under which such work is rendered (length of contract, association rights, planning time, etc.).

If the teachers raise other issues, the board should insist on discussing those matters separately, outside of the mandatory negotiations process. Negotiations should be avoided on any issue involving the reserved and inherent rights of the board to act in the managerial areas of discretion.

Please feel free to contact our legal staff, specifically Luke Sobba, if you have any questions about negotiations.

These articles are provided by the KASB Legal Services team and are not intended to be legal advice. If you have any questions, please contact KASB at 800.432.2471.
KASB Risk Management introduces
win-win solution to employee benefits

By Carol Pitts cpitts@kasb.org

Employee Benefit Solutions (EBS), the newest service offered by KASB Risk Management, brings a win-win solution to members starting this fall.

“Our members asked us to find a better solution for management of employee benefits, and we have,” said Rod Spangler, KASB assistant executive director and leader of KASB Risk Management. “We’ve developed a technology-based solution that improves management of both employer-sponsored benefits and voluntary benefits.”

Clerks and human resource staff who use this newest KASB service will no longer be at the mercy of an outside vendor’s process or timeline.

“Our online tool, developed by KASB Risk Management specifically for our members, allows organizations to manage their own process and control their own data for the annual benefits enrollment for employees and new hires, and to make changes when a staff member has a qualifying event and needs to make a change,” Spangler said.

One distinct advantage over other vendors is the flexibility EBS gives staff to research options by gaining access to the system outside the school day.

Benefit selection is a once a year task that has to be done. KASB’s EBS system streamlines the task and at the same time offers a better experience for everyone.

“By using our technology-based solution, employees can learn at their convenience and have time to discuss with family or other advisors. They will then be better informed and prepared to make important decisions without feeling the rush of a 15-minute enrollment time slot,” Spangler said.

This online access also minimizes disruptions to the school day and means teachers and support staff can remain focused on students and student success.

The KASB Risk Management Employee Benefit Solutions brings equally important advantages for employers.

“Every management staff member – no matter the position – continues to be asked to do more, not less. Our Employee Benefit Solution gives administrative staff time-saving functionality and puts them back in control of the process,” Spangler said.

Benefit selection is a once a year task that has to be done. KASB’s EBS system streamlines the task and at the same time offers a better experience for everyone.

Spangler urges KASB members to contact him sooner rather than later to learn more about the benefits of KASB Risk Management Employee Benefit Solutions.

“Benefit enrollment usually happens in late August and into September, so right now is the perfect time to explore what our new service will do for you,” Spangler said.

The Employee Benefit Solution is the sixth product or service developed by KASB Risk Management to fit the needs of our members, Spangler said. Others
include workers comp insurance, student accident insurance and property/casualty insurance, health insurance consulting and the KASB-sponsored Kansas Joint Utility Management Program (KUMP).

“Each of these services and products can save money and put resources back into the classroom,” Spangler said. “We’re here to help find those savings by offering insurance and other services that are the best fit for our members.”

Spangler said KASB Risk Management’s mission is to serve as a strategic risk management partner. “In our 30 years of service, we have always had that mission in mind,” Spangler said.

“The addition of Employee Benefit Solutions rounds out our agency mission. We are owned by and in support of the overall KASB mission. When members use our agency to be that strategic risk management partner, they put their trust and resources in an agency with a shared mission for student success.”

And member participation in KASB Risk Management products and services also benefits KASB as your professional association, he said. “KASB Risk Management generates non-dues revenue that are used to support other KASB services and activities such as advocacy and communications,” he said.

It’s really more like a win-win-win!
School Law Roundup
May 30 & 31, 2018 | Wichita
USA Kansas Conference
May 30 - June 1, 2018

Clerks Summer Workshop
06.26.18  Hays     06.28.18  Topeka

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