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Opening Keynote
Tim Hodges
Gallup
The State of our Schools: Public Opinion and Best Practices for Addressing the Challenges Facing Education
8:30 a.m. | Sat., Dec. 7

Inspirational Keynote
Chad E. Foster
Blind Ambition: Circumstances are Far Less Relevant Than the Stories We tell Ourselves
10:15 a.m. | Sun., Dec. 8

Hyatt Regency & Century II Convention Center
Celebrating Public Schools

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The Legislature’s latest response to the Kansas Supreme Court in the Gannon school finance lawsuit is back before the court. Will a Gannon VII decision be the lucky number for the state?
Greetings fellow board members. I write you today having witnessed the signing into law of SB 16, the 2019 School Finance package. The bill commits an additional $90 million per year for Kansas schools over the next five years to account for inflation, which was not provided for in the five-year school finance package that was passed in the previous legislative session.

When I wrote in January, I argued it was entirely possible for the state to promptly resolve the school finance question because of actions the Legislature had taken the previous year to repeal former Governor Brownback’s failed tax experiment. After all, in November the Consensus Revenue Estimating Group had revised its projections upward for the coming fiscal year by 4.4 percent, and the state’s projected ending balance stood at over $900 million, or nearly 13 percent, well above the statutorily required ending balance for the State General Fund. In the minds of most Kansans, this seemed like a ready-made, simple and easy solution. All that was required from policy makers, the Legislature and the Governor, was the political maturity and common sense to embrace the solution.

Governor Laura Kelly stepped up to meet the challenge by presenting a budget with the funds dedicated to finance the additional $90 million recommended by the Kansas State Board of Education for inflation and urged the Legislature to act. Though it took most of the regular legislative session to do so, the Legislature rose above the haze of unfair criticisms against public schools and general intrusiveness by a minority of legislators to pass a school finance bill that largely kept with the appropriations recommendation put forward by the State Board to account for inflation in adequately financing public education. More importantly, this majority avoided getting distracted by most of the “policy” issues offered as alternatives to adequate funding, such as expansion of private school vouchers, expensive and duplicative reporting requirements, and limits on how local boards of education can spend funds to meet their local needs.

I want to dedicate this space to thanking Governor Kelly and the Legislature for acting to resolve the school finance issue. While I know that this bill is far from perfect – it cannot make up for lost years of unconstitutionally inadequate funding – I view it as a step toward a larger commitment of fulfilling the constitutional obligation for adequate school funding. I want to thank those (the Governor, 31 Senators, and 76 House members) who voted for SB 16.

To Governor Laura Kelly, we thank you for your leadership in making adequate funding a priority in your budget, fighting for and signing, SB 16.

To the following legislators, we express our gratitude for supporting SB 16:

**Kansas Senate:** Molly Baumgardner, Ed Berger, Rick Billinger, Barbara Bollier, Elaine Bowers, Kevin Braun, Jim Denning, John Doll, Bud Estes, Oleta Faust-Goudeau, Marci Francisco, Bruce Givens, Dan Goddard, David Haley, Randall Hardy, Tom Hawk, Anthony Hensley, Tom Holland, Dan Kerschen, Jeff Longbine, Julia Lynn, Carolyn McGinn, Vic Miller, Rob Olson, Mike Petersen, Pat Pettay, John Skubal, Dinah Sykes, Mary Jo Taylor, Susan Wagle and Mary Ware.

A word to the wise: Listen to the owl

My grandmother had a stuffed owl in her house. When we were kids, we were convinced that owl’s eyes moved and watched you walk around the room. I made it a point to stay out of the living room unless someone else was in there, just in case that big old owl came to life and decided to make pellets out of me. The owl had a little sign that hung below it with a nursery rhyme:

A wise old owl sat in an oak,
the more he heard the less he spoke,
the less he spoke, the more he heard,
why can’t we all be like that old bird?

I think about that owl as I get older, realize just how much I don’t know, and how much I can learn by just paying attention. This past month I had a great opportunity to put that concept into practice. The Kansas State University College of Education was kind enough to name me an Alumni Fellow. The definition of a fellow is a member of a learned society. At KSU, to be a fellow means you get to hang out with some very accomplished people who were no doubt wondering if I was there to make the coffee.

I listened carefully and learned about fellow (See what I did there?) KSU alumni whose accomplishments ranged from working with Bill Gates to improve drinking water and eradicate disease on the African continent, to piloting jets while attending law school and writing best-selling flight manuals by age 30. Dean Mercer and Professor David Thompson were gracious hosts and my old professor G. Kent Stewart joined us for both days. One can learn a lot from listening to them, from educational research to Frenchy Fuqua’s shoes. (Extra credit if you know about the goldfish.)

But the most interesting lesson I learned was from the KSU undergraduate students. They actually let me interact with some students, and as Art Linkletter used to say, “Kids say the darndest things.”

My assignment was to talk to the students about school boards, so I started by asking them about their interactions with their local boards. What they told me surprised me.

“When I was in school, I went to our school board to …
- Ask them to keep our advanced placement classes.”
- Talk to them about not cutting baseball and softball teams.”
- Ask them to keep funding trips to national competitions.”
- Talk to them about keeping our ag program.”
- And so on, and so on.

These students were juniors and seniors in education. They are the ones who lived through the recession of 2008 and the education cuts of 2009 and beyond. Their school careers are defined by losing programs and activities. Their perception of school boards is they are the people who take things away. Had I gone in with a flashy PowerPoint with lots of bullet points, I would have missed this lesson. That creepy old owl was right.

Fortunately, there is a happy ending to this story. After listening and learning, I got to provide these future educators with some hope. Because of Governor Laura Kelly and an alliance of conservative, moderate, and progressive legislators, Kansas schools will have more resources in the future. These future teachers will get to provide their students resources they had to do without. For this old fellow, that means the future looks bright for Kansas education.
Many battle lines are forming in D.C.

By Scott Rothschild srothschild@kasb.org

For the past few years, education leaders in Kansas have spent much of their energies on school finance and policy battles in Topeka. Add Washington, D.C. to the map.

Numerous battle lines are forming on the federal front, from funding special education to ensuring an accurate census count and much more.

At the recent NSBA conference in Philadelphia, Deborah Rigsby, who leads the organization’s federal lobbying efforts, and Whitney Riggs, senior legislative analyst for NSBA, outlined developments in Congress and the Trump administration that will impact our students and schools.

IDEA Full Funding Act

NSBA has made reauthorization of IDEA, which is the main federal statute governing special education, a top priority.

Nationally, IDEA helps over six million students with disabilities (13.5 percent of students), was originally signed into law by President Gerald Ford in 1975 and was last reauthorized in 2004. In Kansas, nearly 60,000 or 13 percent of students are assisted by IDEA.

Under the law, Congress promised to fund IDEA at 40 percent of the additional cost needed to educate special education students, but it never has fulfilled that promise and now provides roughly 15 percent. The average federal investment for each student educated through IDEA is approximately $1,770 for fiscal year 2019 and would drop to $1,758 in FY 2020 if the program is level-funded.

The funding gap serves as an unfunded mandate by forcing state and local governments to make up the difference.

But the feds aren’t the only ones underfunding special education. A recent state audit found that in 2018, Kansas schools spent nearly $900 million to provide special education services to approximately 86,500 students, which is about 18 percent of the total number of students enrolled in Kansas public schools. The audit said the Kansas Legislature underfunded school districts by upwards of $361 million under a recommended staffing level.

The new IDEA Full Funding Act would authorize a 10-year plan to fully fund the federal share. U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., who is retiring after 2020, has taken a leadership role on this bi-partisan bill as an original co-sponsor.

“The IDEA Full Funding Act is commonsense legislation that will make good on Congress’ promise to ensure students with disabilities receive the best education possible,” Roberts said. “I’m proud to support this bipartisan bill and look forward to working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get this over the finish line.”

2020 Census

NSBA also is calling on public school advocates across the country to get involved in the 2020 Census.

“This is huge,” NSBA’s Rigsby said. “You need to get this correct. This determines the public policy for the next decade.”

Since Census data is used in much of federal funding and political redistricting, an undercount could have a devastating impact on schools and local political power. In the 2010 Census, more than two million children weren’t counted.

NSBA is urging school districts to join local Complete Count Committees, which develop strategies and work
plans to encourage the public’s participation with census takers. More information on these committees is available at www.census.gov website.

NSBA also is urging the Trump administration to refrain from policies that would result in an undercount. Recently, the Trump administration has been embroiled in a legal fight over whether to add a controversial question to the census on citizenship. The Census Bureau has not asked all households about U.S. citizenship status in nearly 70 years and some groups say asking about citizenship will lower census participation, leading to an undercount of immigrants and communities of color.

**Other fronts**

NSBA also is working in several other areas, including these:

- Urging lawmakers to oppose legislation that diverts public funds from public schools through private school voucher programs or indirectly through tax credits to fund private, religious or home school education;
- Calling on Congress to restore the pathway to U.S. citizenship for qualified students previously protected by the Deferred Action of Children Arrivals (DACA) program;
- Improving school infrastructure and investing in updates to the Rebuild America’s School Act, which would prioritize grants in underserved communities;
- Improving school safety by allowing districts to customize approaches that best fit their communities; and
- Strengthening Title II funding for teacher preparation programs.

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**Access NSBA’s National Connection for the national perspective to help keep you at the forefront of public education. Resources include community discussions, shared resources, tools, research and reports.**

- ASBJ (American School Board Journal)
- National Connection Daily
- Federal Insider Podcast
- ASBJ Brief
- CPE (Center for Public Education) Briefing Room
- Legal Clips
- News You Can Use
- Webinars

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**nsba.org/services/national-connection**

Find The Leadership Resource Center, Public Engagement Toolkits, discussion boards, a national directory AND MORE through the online portal.
KASB offers `insurance with a purpose`

By Leah Fliter, lfilter@kasb.org

What if your school district could protect itself against risk AND give back to public education? KASB’s Risk Management Group products offer precisely that opportunity.

“We like to call our work ‘insurance with a purpose,’” says Risk Management Group Director Rod Spangler. “Every dollar districts spend on our products goes back out to support student success. No one in this market is in service to education like we are.”

KASB for decades has offered districts workers’ compensation, property casualty and student accident insurance. With the recent addition of Employee Benefit Solutions, Spangler says the organization has the capacity to cover buildings, staff, students, and employee benefits.

Employee Benefit Solutions is a full-service, for-profit insurance brokerage firm offering school districts options for health, life, dental and vision insurance coverage, retirement planning products and services, and administration of flexible spending accounts.

And in contrast to traditional insurance brokerages, the entirety of KASB’s Risk Management and Employee Benefit Solutions profits are dedicated to Kansas public schools.

“You’re already providing those services to your district,” Spangler says. “Why not do it with KASB Risk Management, where you can put your dollars straight back into service of your students? We’re owned by an association whose primary goal is student success. The revenue from our products supports that mission and makes the organization less dependent on member dues.

“Corporations are ‘profits first’ in service to their shareholders, and that’s as it should be,” Spangler says. “Their secondary purpose may be marketing, which can include supporting our members through local sponsorships, but are they in service to public education or merely in support of? Our sole purpose is service to public education.”

Insurance costs are a significant expense that shows no sign of decreasing in the future. And somewhat surprisingly, insurance is not covered by state law that requires districts to bid out expenses that total more than $10,000.
In an effort to improve KASB’s annual conference, KASB has launched a statewide telephone survey of its members.

“This survey will give us an outstanding opportunity to hear from a cross-section of our members about how we can make our annual conference better,” said KASB Executive Director Dr. John Heim. “We’ll hear from members in all regions of the state, including board members and superintendents. This will be valuable information to have as we continue to plan how best to meet the needs and expectations of our members.”

The 10- to 15-minute survey, starting around May 1, will touch specifically on the benefits of attending the KASB annual conference, why members attend and the value of the learning experiences offered.

The survey was designed by Patron Insight, Inc., a Kansas City-based market research organization that has worked with school districts across the Midwest on similar research since 1992. They are a KASB preferred provider for this kind of planning support for members.

Kansas City-based Market Research Associates, a firm that uses only locally based, professional researchers, will conduct the calls. Participants were selected at random, and all responses will be kept confidential.

In general, calls will be placed between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. on weekdays, and noon to 6 p.m. on Saturdays. A cross section of calls will be made during the business day. While there may be some variation on those times, no calls will take place during the traditional dinner hour. The caller ID may show “Market Research Associates” or it may simply show an 816 or 913 area code, because the company uses calling facilities in both Missouri and Kansas.

The survey process will take about two weeks to complete, and KASB is asking members to listen for their phones to ring.

“We really want to hear from you,” said Heim. “So, if you get a phone call on this survey, please participate, and please let us know what you think.”

By Carol Pitts cpitts@kasb.org
Bullying, gender identity, suicide and many more issues that school leaders deal with will be covered during the KASB School Law Workshop and KSAA Meeting.

The May 29-30 event also coincides with 2019 USA-Kansas Conference.

On May 29, the School Law Workshop includes a session led by Donna Whiteman, KASB’s assistant executive director of legal services, on Kansas’ anti-bullying law, what schools must do to investigate alleged incidents, how to handle complaints from students and parents and ensuring that bullying behaviors stop.

The first day also includes a session on accommodating transgender and gender non-conforming students and staff as the legal landscape changes. That session will be led by two school district attorneys — David Cunningham of Lawrence USD 497 and Lori Kopp of Topeka USD 501.

And a session will be held on state and federal laws on students records and privacy led by KASB Attorney Luke Sobba.

After the legal sessions, attendees are invited to participate in the USA-Kansas annual conference, also in the Hyatt Regency.

On May 30, Sobba will conduct a session on suicide prevention, KASB Senior Attorney Angie Stallbaumer will provide an overview of family medical leave and ADA issues and KASB attorneys Sam Blasi and Ashley Rohleder will lead a discussion on student discipline and social media, covering popular apps that students use.

Stallbaumer and Whiteman will provide an update on new school laws and board policies; Blasi will review legal guidance on the practice of using service animals and Rohleder will conduct a session on the legal abilities and restrictions of SROs when working with law enforcement on searches and seizures.

After the day’s session, the Kansas School Attorneys’ Association meeting will start with a session on legal ethics and end with the annual business meeting.

For more information and to register, go to www.kasb.org and under upcoming events click on School Law Workshop & KSAA Meeting.

KASB is proud to be a leader in providing legal services to our members, and in fact this service is only offered by a limited number of state school board associations. KASB employs five attorneys and additional support staff who devote all of their time and effort to school legal issues. Their combined knowledge and experience give members of the KASB Legal Assistance Fund a distinct advantage.

Learn more about the KASB Legal Assistance Fund by calling KASB toll-free at 800-432-2471 or emailing dwhiteman@kasb.org.
Nearly 13 years ago, then-Chief Justice of the Kansas Supreme Court Kay McFarland summoned reporters to the courtroom.

Standing beside a table that held stacks of legal briefs from a lengthy constitutional challenge to the Kansas school finance system that became known as the Montoy case, McFarland announced the court would dismiss the lawsuit, saying the Legislature’s efforts to provide adequate and equitable funding were in “substantial compliance” with previous court orders.

But that didn’t end the struggle. When the state reneged on funding under Montoy during the Great Recession and then after Gov. Sam Brownback’s tax cuts, the Gannon lawsuit began.

Now, Kansas children entering kindergarten just weeks after the final Montoy decision are graduating high school.

The court is again about to deliver a momentous decision in Kansas education history.

Will the court declare as satisfactory the most recent effort by the Legislature to pump more dollars into the classroom or will the justices order the state to try again?

“No one can predict what the court will rule,” said Gov. Laura Kelly when signing into law SB 16, the Legislature’s latest funding response to a Gannon court ruling. “But one thing is for certain: this legislation represents a significant bipartisan effort to address the last remaining component of last summer’s court ruling. It is a meaningful, reasonable plan that maintains the stability of the rest of the state’s budget.”

Last year, the Legislature approved

Continued on next page
hundreds of millions more for K-12 but the court said the state needed to add an inflation adjustment. SB 16 will get school funding to 2009 inflation adjusted levels; the last year that the court said the finance system was constitutional.

Plaintiff school districts say the state’s math is wrong and another $270 million is needed. Oral arguments are set for May 9 and the court has said it will rule no later than June 30.

When Montoy was decided there was a sense among many of litigation fatigue; the same may hold true now. Kelly and legislators who supported SB 16 are hoping the court is done with school finance.

“The saga over public education funding has been long and hard, and it’s time for it to be settled. I believe that this legislation will allow us to finally end the cycle of litigation and move forward,” Kelly said.

When school funding was increased after the Montoy case beginning in 2006, measures of student outcomes – graduation rates, state and national test scores, college readiness, postsecondary attendance and completion – all increased.

However, during the past decade, Kansas K-12 funding fell behind the cost of living, per pupil funding and teacher salaries in other states, and positions and programs were cut. At the same time, the number of students, particularly those with challenges that make learning more difficult increased, and educational expectation were raised. Not surprisingly, Kansas’s ranking on many educational measures slipped.

With additional funding over the past two years, Kansas school districts have begun to recover. They have raised salaries to attract and keep qualified, committed staff, restored positions and added programs to meet student needs. The conference committee agreement will allow schools to continue that progress.

Kansas school leaders have said they are committed to using the new resources to increase student success by supporting educators, focusing on lower-achieving students, keeping all students safe and healthy, and preparing students for postsecondary education with the skills that meet Kansas employment needs and provide greater economic security for individuals and their families.

McFarland, who served on the state Supreme Court for 32 years and died in 2015, said at the dismissal of Montoy on July 28, 2006, “This case is not about winners and losers — it is about the children of Kansas. They will be better educated and better prepared to meet the challenges of our rapidly changing society. Kansas will be the ultimate beneficiary.”

In April, Gov. Laura Kelly signed into law SB 16, which she said addresses hundreds of millions more for K-12 but the court said the state needed to add an inflation adjustment. SB 16 will get school funding to 2009 inflation adjusted levels; the last year that the court said the finance system was constitutional.

Appropriations

The law appropriates $104.5 million, all from the SGF, for FY 2020 to the KSDE. This amount includes $92.7 million for State Foundation Aid; $10.3 million for Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) employer contributions for school districts; and $1.6 million for KPERS employer contributions for community colleges, technical colleges, and interlocals.

The law also appropriates to KSDE $114.2 million, all from the SGF, for FY 2021. This amount includes $89.7 million for State Foundation Aid; $21.2 million for KPERS employer contributions for school districts; and $3.3 million for KPERS employer contributions for community colleges, technical colleges, and interlocals.

Context for funding

The law adds approximately $90 million in foundation state aid (school district general fund money) each year for four years.

Next year, foundation state aid was expected to be $3 billion, or more than $100 million more than the current year. With this action, state aid will increase nearly $200 million, or approximately seven percent.

Looking at increased funding beginning in 2018, when the Legislature began responding to the Gannon adequacy decision, through estimated 2023, state foundation aid is expected to increase nearly $750 million when the law is included, or 28 percent in six years.

In addition, if the Legislature increases special education $7.5 million each year, as anticipated, special education state aid will increase nearly $85 million.
Based on KSDE and Department of Education estimates, Local Option Budgets will increase nearly $140 million over this six-year period.

That means school general operating budgets, excluding capital cost and debt service, federal funds and local fees, and KPERS contributions, can be expected to have increased approximately $1 billion over six years, or nearly 25 percent or about 4.2 percent per year on average.

This does not account for increases in debt service, capital outlay, KPERS, federal funds and other local revenues. Based on the rate of increase estimated for KPERS, bond and interest and capital outlay state aid, and estimated a two percent annual growth in everything else, KASB estimates that total school district expenditures will increase from $6.01 billion in 2017 to $7.47 billion in 2021, or nearly $1.5 billion even before the final two years of base increases.

**KSEEA Amendments**

The law makes several amendments to the KSEEA.

**Base Aid for Student Excellence (BASE)**

It amends the BASE for school years (SY) 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023. This table shows the BASE under current law and what the BASE would be under the law.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>BASE AID FOR STUDENT EXCELLENCE 2019-2020 - 2022-2023</th>
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<td>4,576</td>
</tr>
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<td>2022-2023</td>
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**At-Risk Education Programs**

The law requires the Kansas State Board of Education (KSBE) to identify and approve evidence-based programs provided by state-based national nonprofit organizations that:

- Focus on students who are eligible to receive at-risk program services or who face other identifiable barriers to success;
- Provide evidence-based instruction and support services to such students; and
- Evaluate outcomes data for such students, including, but not limited to, school attendance, academic progress, graduation rates, pursuit of postsecondary education, or other career advancement.

The law also defines “evidence-based instruction” to mean an education delivery system based on peer-reviewed research that consistently produces better student outcomes over a five-year period than would otherwise be achieved by the same students who are receiving at-risk program services.

**School Finance Audits**

The law amends the planned schedule of school finance audits to be completed by the Legislative Division of Post Audit (LPA). It will replace the planned cost-function performance audit in FY 2021 with an audit of school district unencumbered cash balances and move the audit of bilingual education from FY 2022 to FY 2021.

*Continued on next page*
The law requires school districts to provide a link to the KSDE webpage where the one-page performance accountability reports and longitudinal reports on student achievement are posted. The link will be required to be prominently displayed on the school district’s accountability reports webpage.

**ACT and WorkKeys Assessments**

The law requires KSDE to provide the ACT college entrance exam and the three ACT WorkKeys assessments required to earn a national career readiness certificate to each student enrolled in grades 11 and 12 at no charge to the student. It also requires KSDE to provide the PreACT college entrance exam to each student enrolled in grade 9. (Note: Sub for SB 423 (2018) requires KSDE to provide the ACT and WorkKeys assessments to students in grades 9 through 12 during FY 2020.)

**Other Provisions**

**Low-Income Tax-credit Scholarship Program**

The law changes the definition of “public school” in the Low-income Student Scholarship Program from the 100 lowest performing schools to the 100 lowest performing elementary schools. It allows students already receiving scholarships to continue receiving scholarships so no student would become ineligible due to the definition change.

**Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia**

The law extends the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia until June 30, 2022, allowing the Task Force to meet once each year.

**Extension of 20-Mill Property Tax Levy**

The law extends the statewide 20-mill property tax levy for schools to FY 2020 and FY 2021. It also extends the $20,000 homestead exemption for the 20-mill levy for the same fiscal years.

**School District Capital Improvements**

The law makes Capital Improvement State Aid a revenue transfer from the State General Fund (SGF) for FY 2020, FY 2021, and FY 2022. Under current law, Capital Improvement State Aid is scheduled to revert to a demand transfer from the SGF in FY 2020. (Note: This was included in The Governor’s FY 2020 Budget Report.)

**Methods of Public Education Financing**

The law adds Jobs for America’s Graduates—Kansas (JAG-K) and Boys and Girls Clubs to KSA 72-5193, which lists methods of public education financing included in satisfying the requirements under Article 6 of the Kansas Constitution. (Note: Communities in Schools is a listed program under continuing law.)

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Prepared by KASB Advocacy Services
The best recruiter for a new school board member may be a current board member.

As the June 3 deadline nears to file in the November school board elections, it’s time for current board members to start having conversations with individuals they believe would be great additions to the board.

Helping potential board members understand the roles, responsibilities and strategic direction of the district can help them make this important decision on whether to run. Along with a strategic onboarding and mentorship process, this can help the transition next January and ensure your district maintains its momentum toward its strategic goals and success for all children in your community.

Potential board candidates probably know your board sets the vision and goals for the district, hires and evaluates the superintendent and adopts policies and oversees the budget. They might not know your role in the district goes far beyond the monthly or twice monthly meetings and handing out diplomas each year.

The Center for Public Education, an initiative of the National School Boards Association, has identified eight characteristics of effective school boards. You can use this list as a starting point to think about the traits and abilities individual board members should have to help shape the future of public education in your community.

Effective boards...
- Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
- Have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
- Are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
- Have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
- Are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
- Align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
- Lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
- Take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

As June 3 approaches, create a list of the top traits you believe are required to be an outstanding board member in your community, then reach out to individuals and start the conversation.

You can find additional resources to share with potential candidates at www.kasb.org/leadershiponline.
Looking at the Data
Ted Carter, KASB Chief Data Officer

Check your sources and their purposes

I have written several pieces in recent months aimed to help consumers of information get a better feel for what is good research and what is bad. We’ve talked about Averages, Deviations and Ranges, and Likert Scales. In this article we will talk about looking at the source(s) of information and the intended purpose, whether it is stated or not.

No human being is without bias. And, by extension, no organization created by humans is without bias. Everyone has some kind of a stake in the research they do, and it is very, very difficult to ensure fair and impartial presentation of facts. Further, we often hear of this information from second-hand sources that quote the original work, and these second-hand sources may be putting their own slant on what they report.

When reading a news story about some new finding, for example, it is important to consider all the sources by which you are receiving the information:

- The news outlet that is presenting the story: Are they considered relatively unbiased, or is there a known slant to what they report? Several groups such as allsides.com and adfontesmedia.com provide lists of large news outlets and their apparent biases, but some argue that these sources are also biased.
- The author who wrote the story: Not every staff person within an organization has the exact same perspective as the company they work for. Reporters and journalists all have their own beliefs and values, and only the really good ones are able to put forth work that is not notably swayed by these factors. In addition, reporters and journalists are not necessarily experts on the research they are reporting on, so they may not fully grasp the information they are presenting.
- The publication where the research initially appeared: Did the research report initially appear in a peer-reviewed scientific or academic journal? Was it published by the organization that funded the research? Did it appear in a textbook? Magazine? Where the work first appears can tell you a lot about its potential bias.
- The organization under which the research was conducted: Was the research done by a university? By a nonprofit with a political aim? By an organization with a known bias? The company that pays for the study can have a big impact on the information presented and the conclusions reached.
- The person(s) who wrote the report: Is the author(s) a researcher or statistician? Were they a lobbyist or public relations person? Was it written by an individual or by a team? Was it written by the person(s) who actually conducted the research or did the analysis? Sometimes a research brief or summary is written by someone other than those that did the research, and some inaccuracies can come just in the process of summarizing.
- The person(s) who conducted the study or analysis: Were the people doing the study, conducting the experiment, or performing the data analysis trained primarily in those activities? Do their job titles include things like advocacy or communications or PR? Did they have any motivations for presenting biased or selective information?

Good research

In order to have a piece of information that is virtually doubt-proof, you might look for research that is:

- Conducted by a researcher or statistician.
- Written by the person conducting the research.
- Sponsored or conducted under an organization known to be without substantial bias and/or focused on research and presentation of unbiased information.
- Published in a peer-reviewed and well respected scientific or academic journal.
- Reported by an author or journalist known to have a high level of integrity and fairness of reporting and who has adequate understanding of the subject matter and methods used.
- Reported in a publication known to have a high level of integrity and fairness of reporting.
But what about the vast amount of information in the world that does not meet all these criteria? Should you just ignore it? And if not, what else should you consider?

Let’s use the information KASB provides as an example. Most of the work called “research” or “analysis” produced by KASB is done by one of two people – myself or Mark Tallman.

* Let’s start with me. I have a background in research and analysis, and my previous title was “Research Specialist.” My current title, “Chief Data Officer,” still indicates that my primary function is all about information. However, I have worked in the education field almost all of my adult life. Both of my parents were educators. Both of my children have come up through Kansas’ public school system, and I have always been a strong supporter of public schools.

* Then there is Mark. He has been a lobbyist for KASB for a long time. His title is “Associate Executive Director for Advocacy, Communications, Research, and Marketing.” He oversees all of KASB’s advocacy efforts. He is a former public school board member. Most of his career has been spent supporting and promoting public schools.

* And we both work for an organization that’s stated mission is to “provide a culture of collaboration and service, be a voice of public education, and improve student education outcomes.”

* So, should you discredit everything we say?

* Obviously I am going to answer “no” to that one, but I think I can back it up.

* One of the things I have alluded to a few times that does not tie directly to the education, background, or primary job functions of the people involved or the overall purpose and goals of the organizations involved is simply integrity and reputation.

* KASB has a strong reputation for presenting information fairly. We work hard to cite sources and note the limitations of the conclusions we can draw. We try to acknowledge when there are gaps in what we can “prove” as “fact” and what we can only point to as an indicator of what is most likely the case.

* Mark Tallman has a reputation with KASB members for being a reliable source of information. But more importantly, he has a reputation for providing useful information by legislators, the Governor’s office, and other stakeholders throughout Kansas.

* I know my reputation is not as strong as Mark’s, but hopefully I have built some credibility over my years here as someone who tries to present information in an unbiased fashion.

* Nonetheless, there are those who would discredit or ignore anything produced by myself, Mark, or KASB in general simply because our primary goal is to support Kansas public schools.

Consider potential bias

As I said at the beginning of this article, no human is without bias, and by extension no organization is either. The important thing for consumers of information to be able to do is identify the potential sources of bias and keep them in consideration when reading and evaluating research.

Here are some steps you can take:

1. Consider all the people and organizations involved in presenting the information as you receive it – their backgrounds and expertise, their primary purposes, and their reputation for presenting accurate and complete information.

2. If you are getting the information from a second-hand source, see if you can get to the original source of the research – the initial report where the findings were presented. Further, if there is a high-level summary and a full report available, take some time looking at the full report to see if the summary accurately reflects everything included in the full report.

3. If the organization has a known bias, see if you can find other sources for the same kind of reporting. It is sometimes even helpful to find an organization that has a known bias in the opposite direction and compare the kinds of conclusions they draw from available data and research.

And finally, it is important to consider your own biases, background, and expertise, and how it might influence how you interpret the information you are receiving.
‘Apollo’ schools named for school redesign

Kansas’ ‘moon shot’ continues.

State education officials recently announced the selection of 41 schools in 19 school districts that will take part in the Apollo phase of the Kansans Can School Redesign Project.

Starting in 2017, schools have been joining the redesign effort phases named after the U.S. space race to the moon — Mercury 7, Gemini I and Gemini II.

The schools must redesign their operations around five major outcomes designated by the State Board of Education. Those outcomes require: improvements in kindergarten readiness, high school graduation, post-secondary success, emotional well being and implementation of individual plans of study for students.

“This is a really exciting opportunity,” said State Board Chair Kathy Busch.

With the announcement of the Apollo schools, the redesign process is going on in more than 150 schools representing 66 of Kansas’ 286 school districts.

The Mercury 7 and several of the Gemini I districts launched their redesign plans this school year. Many of the changes at these schools include giving students more choices, flexibility and responsibilities. The schools also have worked to build up the school community and personal relationships between teachers and students. Some schools are providing more project-based learning and real-world experiences.

The State Board’s goal is to have all districts started in the redesign process by 2026. The Apollo districts are expected to launch new school designs in the 2020-21 school year.

Districts and the schools taking part in the Apollo phase are:

- Barber County North USD 254: Medicine Lodge Grade School and Medicine Lodge Junior/Senior High School.
- Columbus USD 493: Columbus Unified High School.
- Deerfield USD 216: Deerfield Elementary School, Deerfield Middle School and Deerfield High School.
- Ell-Saline USD 307: Ell-Saline Elementary School and Ell-Saline Middle/High School.
- Frontenac USD 249: Frank Layden Elementary School and Frontenac Junior High School.
- Goodland USD 352: West Elementary School, North Elementary School and Goodland Junior/Senior High School.
- Herington USD 487: Herington Elementary School and Herington Middle/High School.
- Holton USD 336: Holton Middle School and Holton High School.
- Hutchinson USD 308: Wiley Elementary School and Hutchinson STEM Magnet School at Allen.
- Kaw Valley USD 321: St. Mary’s Grade School, Rossville Grade School, St. Mary’s Junior/Senior High School and Rossville Junior/Senior High School.
- Lawrence USD 497: Broken Arrow Elementary School, Deerfield Elementary School, Hillcrest Elementary School and Free State High School.
- Oberlin USD 294: Oberlin Elementary School and Decatur Community High School.
- Uniontown USD 235: Uniontown Junior/Senior High School.
- Wabaunsee USD 329: Maple Hill Elementary School.
SCHOOL REDESIGN PROJECT DISTRICTS

Coffeyville USD 445
- Community Elementary School
- Roosevelt Middle School
- Field Stanley High School

Liberia USD 480
- Madobahak Elementary School
- Liberty High School

McPherson USD 418
- McPherson Elementary School
- McPherson Middle School

Chautauqua USD 233
- Westview Elementary School
- Summit Trail Middle School
- St. John USD 271

St. John USD 271
- St. John High School

Tow Valley USD 240
- Tow Valley High School

Bennet USD 353
- Bennet High School
- Wellington High School

Andrew USD 385
- Marcus Elementary School
- Little River Junior/Senior High School
- Liberty High School
- Lyons USD 405
- Lyons High School

Neodesha USD 481
- Neodesha Elementary School
- Neodesha Junior/Senior High School

Clyde USD 379
- Clyde Elementary School
- Clyde Junior High School

Osawatomie USD 367
- Osawatomie Elementary School
- Osawatomie High School

Eldorado USD 449
- Eldorado Elementary School
- Eldorado High School

Garden Plain USD 285
- Garden Plain Middle School

Harveyville-Pansee USD 398
- Harveyville-Pansee Elementary School

Hillsboro USD 484
- Hillsboro Elementary School
- Hillsboro High School

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.
Kelly wants review of state tax structure

Education leaders should be involved

By Scott Rothschild srothschild#kasb.org

Gov. Laura Kelly says she wants to examine the state tax structure during the interim period before the 2020 legislative session with an eye toward producing a revenue collection system that provides long term stability.

Since half of the state budget goes to K-12 funding, an examination of state taxes is something that school leaders should provide input on and follow closely.

The stability in Kansas taxes that Kelly seeks has been missing from the Kansas tax system for the past decade.

Like most states during the Great Recession, state tax collections in Kansas fell off a cliff in 2008 and 2009. But the second shock occurred in 2012 when Gov. Sam Brownback pushed through huge income tax cuts as part of what he called an experiment.

After the Brownback tax cuts, state services, such as child welfare and prisons, suffered from underfunding while reserves were swept up to keep the state budget afloat. In 2017, legislators, in a bi-partisan move, repealed most of the tax cuts and then mustered up two-thirds majorities to overturn Brownback’s veto.

Since then, state revenues have recovered. Conservative legislative leaders this session tried to implement another round of tax cuts, with most of the benefit going to corporations, but Kelly vetoed the measure and although the Legislature had become more conservative in the past election, it didn’t attempt an override.

“There was an attempt this year to take a U-turn and go off the cliff,” Kelly said.

Kelly said she wants to examine all facets of the Kansas tax system and possibly return to the days when state tax collections were more balanced between sales, property and income taxes.

During a recent town hall meeting in Wichita, Kelly linked taxes and school funding saying, “I can assure you that as governor I will never present a budget to the Legislature that doesn’t respond to our commitment to fund schools adequately.” The crowd responded with applause, but Kelly continued her thought with a warning, “unless the Legislature is successful at passing their tax cuts, which they were not able to get done this year.”

Kelly said she wants to examine all facets of the Kansas tax system and possibly return to the days when state tax collections were more balanced between sales, property and income taxes.

When it’s time to say Thank You let KASB help!

Beautiful 8”x12” walnut plaque in the shape of the state of Kansas with an engraved gold-tone plate. You submit the order – we take care of everything else! $50 for each award plus $20 for the engraved plate and $5 for shipping. Send us your logo or opt for the KASB logo.

Contact KASB’s Sheryl Fincham at 800-432-2471 or see kasb.org/awards for details and order form.
Challenge Awards announced for 185 schools

The Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force has named 185 schools in 98 Kansas public school districts as recipients of the 2018 Challenge Awards.

The awards recognize Kansas schools that are making a notable difference in student achievement despite facing significant challenges in their school population. Since its inception in 2002, nearly 1,700 awards have been presented to schools across the state.

Certificates of Merit will be presented to schools by Kansas State Board of Education members.

The Challenge Award recognizes schools for outstanding achievement and uncommon accomplishments based on Kansas assessment results in math and reading, graduation rates, chronic absenteeism rates and the socioeconomic status of those taking the test. Only schools that have a total percentage of free and reduced-price lunch students above the state average of 46.49 percent are eligible for recognition.

The Confidence in Public Education Task Force is a nonprofit corporation whose primary purpose is to strengthen confidence in Kansas public education and to increase awareness of the positive aspects of public education in the state. The Task Force was created in 1981.

Members include American Association of University Women; Kansas PTA; Kansas Association of School Boards; Kansas National Education Association; Kansas State Board of Education; Kansas State High School Activities Association; Kansas Partners in Education; League of Women Voters – Kansas; and United School Administrators of Kansas.

For more information about the Challenge Awards program, call Tamla Miller at the Kansas State Department of Education at (785) 296-4950.

For more information about the Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force, call G.A. Buie, chairman of the Task Force, at (785) 232-6566.

To read a list of all Challenge Award schools, visit KASB.org and click on KASB Newsroom.
CPR training required in high school

In December 2017, the Kansas State Board of Education unanimously approved adding Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training to the Kansas Health Education Standards.

The board’s stated goal was to save lives by empowering Kansas high school students to “be lifesavers by giving them the skills and confidence needed to help during a cardiac emergency.”

The addition of CPR to standards requires students, beginning with those who were freshmen in the 2018-2019 school year, to receive at least hands-only CPR training as part of their health curriculum before graduation from high school. Since the Kansas Health Education Standards are only model standards, districts remain free to choose how the requirement will be implemented, though any program must be based on current American Heart Association standards or other nationally recognized guidelines. The training must be hands-on, and students must be able to explain, demonstrate and apply basic first aid skills. CPR certification is not required.

Free CPR training resources are available from the American Heart Association. Kits for a school-based program include inflatable mannequins, DVD instructional videos, lesson plans, pretests and post-tests, and other materials to assist in the training.

Contract and nonrenewal video training available for boards, administrators

As the school year winds to a close, it’s time to renew or non-renew teacher contracts.

Under Kansas law, teachers’ contracts automatically roll over for the next school year unless the board of education takes affirmative action to nonrenew them on or before the third Friday in May.

This video will review the legal steps that school districts must take if the board decides to nonrenew a certified teacher’s contract.

Please make this video available to your board members.

You will find a link to the video from the KASB Legal Services Office on the KASB YouTube channel.
New social media challenges, viral stories

In an age where seemingly weekly there is a new social media challenge, it is important to be mindful of the urban legend quality to these stories.

Recently, Fox 4 Kansas City reported on a new social media challenge, called the “48 hour challenge.” The 48 Hour Challenge involves the teen “going missing” for 48 hours, prompting law enforcement response, and the child getting media attention. Similar to the Cinnamon Challenge or Salt and Ice Challenge, young people compete for social media notoriety and attention.

At the time of the story’s publication, there had not been a reported case of the challenge even happening in the area, but the fallout did.

In the case of the 48 Hour Challenge, it is unclear at this time how many students actually participated in this challenge, or how widespread it was. Like in the case of any social media challenge, as a whole, people should be careful not to contribute to the problem by bringing attention to the challenge if it is not already happening in your area. Just as law enforcement must respond equally to any missing child, this should not change the response to reports of a missing child. School personnel and parents should be aware that this story has been publicized, and that students might start to hear about it. At the same time, they should not contribute to the potential disruption by giving attention to this latest trend.

Like so often before, the response was much larger than any actual occurrence of bad behavior. In an effort to prevent the action, parents draw attention to something that students had not even heard of or considered in the first place. Much like the anecdotal evidence that the DARE program made students of the 90s think that everyone was using drugs.

In short, the advice remains the same. Parents and school personnel should reasonably monitor internet and social media use, and keep lines of communication open so that parents and students can discuss these issues and address them collaboratively.

KORA and the illegal use of open records

The Kansas Open Records Act (KORA) can be a confusing piece of legislation. Codified in K.S.A 42-215 et seq., the KORA contains 55 exemptions to requested disclosures. These exemptions can be enough to cross the eyes of the most experienced clerks. However, there is one often-overlooked provisions of the KORA that needs a spotlight.

K.S.A. 45-230 specifically prohibits individuals from knowingly selling or offering to sell information derived from a KORA request. This includes names, address, registrations, and certificates. Anyone who violates this statute may incur legal liability brought by the Attorney General for up $500 for each violation.

Any clerk who suspects that information is being used in violation of this statute should file a complaint with the Attorney General’s office. The complaint must be filed on a complaint form prescribed by the Attorney General which can be found at: ag.ks.gov/complaint-center/koma-kora-investigation-request.

In the same vein, KORA requests for information readily available to the requestor online is not required to be provided. If a KORA request is made for information available online, such as a calendar; correct guidance to the school board’s website will fulfill the KORA request.

Clerks and Information Technology departments do a great job of making frequently requested information available online, we want the public to utilize the online portals and social media to find the information they have requested. Feel free to refer the public to these online resources.

The KORA can be very difficult to navigate correctly, it is often very fact-specific and takes intensive legal analysis to determine the board’s responsibility. Please do not hesitate to contact a KASB attorney with any question you may have concerning the KORA or anything else.

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.
Registration details
www.kasb.org/training

- School Law: 05.29-30.19 (In Conjunction with USA-Kansas Annual Conference Wichita
- School Law for Building Secretaries and Administrative Assistants: 06.18.19 Topeka
- Clerks/Treasurers 06.19.19 Topeka
- New Clerks
  - Hays Rockwell Administration Center 06.25.19
  - Topeka Washburn Tech 06.26.19

Watch KASB News Briefs or see kasb.org/training for additional information.

Clerks and Treasurers Workshop
06.19.19 Topeka
Washburn Tech, Bldg A
Conference Center, Room 121, North Entrance
9:30 a.m. Registration  |  10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Workshop

This is a “make-up date” of sorts! We cancelled our February 2019 Clerks/Treasurers workshop because of inclement weather. Join your fellow board clerks and board treasurers to hear from the KASB Advocacy and Legal departments about the impact of legislation and other important topics that impact the work you do with your local board of education.

We’ve added in time for you to network and discuss with your colleagues!

School Law for Building Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
06.18.19 Hyatt Place Topeka
8:30 a.m. Registration  9 a.m. - noon Workshop

A new workshop, just for you! Building secretaries and administrative assistants deal with unique challenges. KASB’s legal staff created a half-day workshop filled with the latest legal guidance to help you do your job. Topics will include privacy issues, parental custody rights, student records and much more. There will be time to ask the questions you have and get the answers you need!

New Clerks (& New Supts too!) Workshops
06.25.19 Hays Rockwell Administration Center, Hays USD 489 District Office
06.26.19 Topeka Washburn Tech, Bldg A, Conf. Center, Room 121, North Entrance
8:30 a.m. Registration  9 a.m. - Noon Workshop

School board clerks have wide-ranging responsibilities and a critical role in the daily operations of a school district. This workshop will include a review of the legal duties, timelines for required month-to-month and yearly requirements and much more! New superintendent? Information from during this workshop will prove invaluable during your first year as the district leader. You will gain an understanding of the legal duties of the board clerk along with an overview of district roles and responsibilities. Attend as board clerk-superintendent team and get a jump on the 2019-2020 school year. Experienced clerks and superintendents welcome!