Kansas State Board of Education celebrates five decades of change, progress in public education

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Learn what’s new at the upcoming conference

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Women’s Leadership Summit will feature speakers Sarah Smarsh, Dr. Helen Fagan

The Kansas Association of School Boards and United School Administrators—Kansas 2nd Annual Women’s Leadership Summit will feature award-winning author Sarah Smarsh and Dr. Helen Fagan, CEO and Founder of the Global Leadership Group.

The Summit, March 24-25, 2020 at the Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center in Manhattan, will offer female school board members and school administrators opportunities to learn and network about timely topics including recognizing and overcoming bias, managing leadership transitions, balancing work and healthy lifestyles, and self-confident communication. Speakers and panelists will include state-level and local female leaders from across Kansas.

“We’re excited to build on the success of last year’s highly successful inaugural Summit,” said KASB Assistant Executive Director for Communications and Marketing Carol Pitts. “Attendees will enjoy meaningful general sessions and breakout sessions targeted to their unique leadership roles in Kansas public education.”

Former Kansas Superintendent of the Year and current KASB Leadership Services Field Specialist Sue Givens said the summit planning team carefully examined the feedback from 2019. “As a result, we’re offering even more opportunities for networking and collegiality, including a pre-dinner reception on the opening night,” Givens said.

“KASB and USA–Kansas are delighted to have Sarah Smarsh and Dr. Helen Fagan as featured speakers at our 2nd Annual Women’s Leadership Summit,” said KASB Advocacy and Outreach Specialist Leah Fliter. “These two prominent women are outstanding additions to our conference programming.”

Smarsh, a Kansan who writes and speaks on socioeconomic class, is the author of Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth, a 2018 nonfiction finalist for the National Book Award and the Kirkus Prize. Smarsh writes in Heartland about the crucial impact on Kansas public schools on her life and career path. She’s also the host of “The Homecomers” podcast.

Fagan is a nationally known leadership, diversity and inclusion scholar. In addition to her work with the Global Leadership Group, she is an Assistant Professor of Practice in Leadership Engagement at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Director of Leadership Engagement at the Rural Futures Institute, a university-wide institute at the University of Nebraska; and a qualified Executive Coach.

Registration for the KASB and USA–Kansas 2nd Annual Women’s Leadership Summit will open in January.

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Celebrating Public Schools

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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.

COLUMNS

4 President’s Perspective
KASB President Shannon Kimball writes that education advocates should understand fair and equitable tax policy is important to public schools.

5 I’m From Kansas
Take advantage of the learning and networking opportunities at the KASB Annual Conference Dec. 6-8.

COVER STORY

12 Happy Birthday State Board of Education
The State Board of Education as we know it today started business in 1969. KASB looks at what those early days in the board’s history were like and the progress Kansas education has made since then.
Tax policy matters for public education

For many years, I have firmly believed that the high quality of public education in Kansas is one of the most important and compelling economic development, recruitment, and retention tools available. Our schools play an essential role in the quality-of-life metrics that attract families and businesses to come to or remain in our communities. Often, though, it has been my perception that the role of our schools in these discussions is at best overlooked, or at worst, undervalued or dismissed.

So, it was with great excitement that I attended several days of meetings in September and October for Governor Laura Kelly’s Council on Tax Reform; I am serving as a representative of KASB on the Council. I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity to share a public education perspective on the myriad tax policy issues before this distinguished group of leaders from across the state.

Governor Kelly has charged the Council with:

1) identifying goals, initiatives, performance metrics, and other methods of assessing or achieving increased effectiveness and fairness in the state’s tax system;

2) exploring, assessing, recommending and reporting on various tax strategies and policies that may increase the effectiveness and fairness of the state’s tax system; and

3) receiving input from the public — including relevant non-profit or business stakeholders, experts, and other organizations not represented on the Council — regarding various tax strategies or policies.

In her Executive Order creating the Council, Governor Kelly noted that “a fair and efficient tax policy at the state level is essential to growing the economy, allowing all Kansans to thrive, and adequately and predictably funding both state and local government budgets.”

During the Council’s first meetings, I received a crash course on the complex systems of income, property, and sales tax for individuals and businesses in our state, and how those systems relate to, interact with, and compare to our neighboring states and peer states around the country.

The Council also heard reports from several state agencies, including Commerce Secretary David Toland on the renewed efforts of his agency to attract businesses to our state, and Transportation Secretary Julie Lorenz regarding the impact of tax policy on KDOT and the highway program. We learned about current tax policy issues and proposals from the 2019 Legislative Session, such as taxation of Internet sales, proposed changes to the sales tax on food, and the impact of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 on our state tax system.

The Council has also noted a number of challenges emerging from these early discussions: sales taxes are high and complicated, with a number of inconsistencies; property taxes are also high, a situation worsened by shrinking state support to local governments; and the economic health of the state relies on business and population growth, making it imperative to pursue quality-of-life improvements that require stable revenue.

Which brings me back to the importance of input from public education in this discussion. Schools are an essential component of the quality-of-life metrics that contribute to business and population growth. Therefore school leaders have a key role as community partners to ensure students graduate with the skills to continue their education and be successful in the workforce and as contributing members in their community.

Public education also has a huge stake in a fair and equitable tax policy that brings in stable, predictable revenue. The state’s investment in public schools is significant; education advocates need to understand these tax discussions and how they might impact the state’s investment in schools’ operations and our children’s futures.

I encourage you to follow the work of the Governor’s Council over the next 18 months (visit governor.kansas.gov/newsroom/council-on-tax-reform). Tax policy matters for public schools, and the recommendations of this Council may matter a great deal as the Legislature grapples with budget priorities and the need to ensure the future revenue necessary to meet the school funding commitments made under Gannan to our students and our communities.
LEADERSHIP VOICES

I’m From Kansas
Dr. John Heim, KASB Executive Director

Conference: Live and learn together

Last month’s column about how much times have changed for kids today was well received. I appreciate the positive comments from readers and felt good about the points made in the column. As usual, positive feelings were short-lived.

This time, the wet blanket came in the form of the November edition of the Scientific American in an article titled ironically, ‘The Kids Are Alright,’ for the band that defined “My Generation.”

The article argues that the research on social media and its effect on young people is being misused and misinterpreted. So, there you go, pesky facts getting in the way of an otherwise solid thought experiment. Check it out and decide for yourself!

That’s the beauty of learning, thinking and conversing about issues of importance to education. It allows us to refine and define our ideas and thoughts about research and best practice.

Networking and learning from other districts was the No. 1 reason folks listed for attending convention. We have added more opportunities for just that in the form of an extended reception and Friday evening “dine-arounds.”

We have also changed the vendor show to Saturday so everyone has a chance to meet and interact with vendors, added another general session on Sunday, and are implementing a new voting method at Delegate Assembly. Thank you to the 300 board members and superintendents who took the time to participate in the research. We are eager to show you that we listened. So, mark your calendar, pack your suitcase, and come to Wichita. We can promise lots of learning, thoughtful discussions, and maybe even a little fun! 🦚
2019 KASB Annual Conference
Schedule At-A-Glance

Friday, December 6, 2019
7:30 a.m. REGISTRATION OPENS for Pre-Conference
- Meeting All Kids Needs District Tours
- Winter School Law Conference
- Foundations of Boardmanship 1.0
- Poverty Paradigm Simulations
- KSSA Day @ KASB
8:00 a.m. Meeting All Kids Needs Briefing
8:15 a.m. Meeting All Kids Needs Buses Depart
9:00 a.m. Pre-Conference Onsite Meetings Begin
Noon Lunch
KSAA Lunch
4:00 p.m. Meetings Adjourn
4:00 p.m. REGISTRATION OPEN for Annual Conference
Networking Reception
6:00 p.m. Evening Adjourns
Sign-Up Dine-Around Dinners

Saturday, December 7, 2019
7:30 a.m. REGISTRATION OPEN for Annual Conference
8:00 a.m. General Session Welcome and Opening Remarks
- KASB President
- KASB Executive Director
- KASB Nominating Committee Report
8:45 a.m. Keynote Speaker: Tim Hodges
*The State of Our Schools: Public Opinion and Best Practices for Addressing the Challenges Facing Education*
10:00 a.m. Break and Trade Show Opens
10:45 a.m. Breakout Sessions
11:30 a.m. Networking and Solutions Lunch
Leadership for Tomorrow Lunch and Graduation
1:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions
2:30 p.m. Break
3:15 p.m. Breakout Sessions
4:30 p.m. General Session
Featured Speaker: Randy Watson
5:30 p.m. Networking Reception
7:30 p.m. Adjourn

Sunday, December 8, 2019
7:30 a.m. REGISTRATION OPEN for Delegate Assembly
Continental Breakfast
8:30 a.m. Regional Elections
9:00 a.m. Delegate Assembly Begins
Roundtable Discussions Begin
10:00 a.m. Break and Entertainment Begins
10:30 a.m. Closing Featured Speaker: Chad E. Foster
*Blind Ambition: Circumstances Are Far Less Relevant Than the Stories We Tell Ourselves*
Noon Annual Conference Adjourns

KASB will focus on the future during the upcoming annual conference by introducing several changes and technological improvements.

The conference in Wichita starts with pre-conference activities on Fri. Dec. 6 and runs through the Delegate Assembly on Sun. Dec. 8.

The Delegate Assembly is the annual business meeting of the Association. Voting delegates from member organizations choose a KASB President-Elect Designee and decide legislative positions and priorities for the 2020 Legislative Session.

Under the heading of new technology, voting delegates will vote electronically via SimplyVoting.com. Delegates must use a personal mobile device such as a smartphone, iPad, tablet or laptop. KASB will not provide devices. More information has been sent to superintendents and clerks and will be sent to your voting delegate this week.

Another change involves the Conference Trade Show. It will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sat. Dec. 7 and will include a networking lunch, vendor games and door prizes.

Conference registration will be from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and KASB has arranged for standing reservations at six area restaurants for those who wish to sign up for networking dinners.

And to keep up with conference happenings, our EventMobi app allows attendees to use their mobile devices to locate breakout sessions and vendors and receive notifications and reminders. The app can also be used to build a personal schedule for the conference.

The annual KASB Conference is the largest gathering of school board members in Kansas and provides numerous learning and sharing opportunities.

One of the best ways to take advantage of these opportunities is to participate in the pre-conference workshops on Fri. Dec. 6. Take a look at the next page for an overview of these opportunities.
Pre-Conference Session
Meeting All Kids Needs District Tours

Find inspiration during the Meeting All Kids Needs district tours as you observe innovative programs and interact with students, teachers and administrators. You will learn about different ways to improve state-endorsed student outcomes of kindergarten readiness, social and emotional health, graduation rates and post-secondary success. Many times participants get ideas on these tours and take them back to their own districts for implementation.

“KASB is excited to offer excellent opportunities for our attendees to observe some of the outstanding programs our public schools utilize to Meet All Kids Needs,” said Advocacy and Outreach Specialist Leah Fliter. “We’ll learn about high-schoolers who build airplanes; trauma-informed schools and restorative practice; magnet schools; the School Redesign initiative, school safety and more. And we’ll have lunch, courtesy of some talented Culinary Arts programs.”

Three separate tours will take education leaders to various schools in Wichita and the area. Tour One will visit Wichita USD 259 and Andover USD 385; Tour Two will visit Maize USD 266 and Renwick USD 267 and Tour Three will visit Haysville USD 261 and Derby USD 260. This is a popular pre-conference activity and space is limited so please register soon.

Foundations of Boardsmanship 1.0

Whether you are a new or veteran school board member, Foundations of Boardsmanship is a great way to learn about the skills and knowledge you need to become an exceptional board member. And attending as part of a team that also includes the superintendent helps to develop a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities in serving the needs of your district.

The pre-conference will cover establishing the vision for the district, setting priorities and goals, creating policies, holding the superintendent accountable and helping build support for public schools.

The session features dynamic, interactive presentations led by KASB’s Dr. Brian Jordan, deputy executive director leadership services, and other KASB leaders. This is the first of a series of Foundations of Boardsmanship workshop scheduled through Feb. 2020. See kasb.org/training for dates and locations.

Winter School Law

All rise. The Winter School Law Conference will be in session providing a full day of legal expertise and discussion on a wide range of issues that challenge educators every day. Protecting your district from cyber crime, navigating the confusing waters of school finance and workers’ compensation laws, special education, student rights and construction contracts are among the many topics that will be covered.

In addition, a special luncheon will be held for members of the Kansas School Attorneys Association attending this pre-conference, which also qualifies for CLE for KSAA members.

KASB Attorney Luke Sobba will lead a presentation focusing on AIA contracts, lease-purchase agreements and construction manager at risk procedures. KASB Assistant Executive Director of Legal Services Angie Stallbuamer will review student rights cases on free speech, transgender rights, search and seizure and other topics. KASB Attorney Sam Blasi will provide information on cyber attacks on school districts and how to defend against them.

Mark Ward, an attorney with the Kansas State Department of Education, will provide the latest on special education law while attorney Matthew Bergmann, with Frieden & Forbes, presents an overview of workers’ comp issues.

Norm Wilks, school attorney and El Dorado USD 490 board member, will lead the session on school finance, bidding and investing laws.

Poverty Simulation

Many Kansas students live in poverty and research shows that this trauma may affect a child’s behavior and academic performance.

To learn what these children go through, KASB will offer the Poverty Paradigm Experience, which is an intensive simulated journey through the tangle of housing, utilities, food, transportation, school, mental health, social services and work the children or parents in poverty experience every day.

Each participant will experience survival mode for one month, simulated in four weeks of fifteen minutes each. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of poverty and how schools can better support and create change for students.

The sessions are moderated by Rebecca Lewis-Pankratz, director of ESSDACK Learning Centers who has been working to engage educators, community members and families into conversations that lift students out of poverty.

Participants may attend either the morning or afternoon session, with time to join other pre-conference workshops for the balance of the day.

Kansas School Superintendent’s Day

KSSA is taking a step back from its traditional “sit and get” style of meeting allowing you to create the conversation. During this year’s event you will have the opportunity to share, ask questions and learn from your peers. With everything happening in Kansas education you almost need a scorecard to keep up. We plan to use this year’s event to catch-up, understand and more importantly allow you to ask why and how.

We are still planning our traditional inspirational storyteller. This year we are pleased to welcome Steve Dickie from Wichita State University. Dickie is the Executive Director of The CharacterWorks Group, a non-profit organization that coaches leadership. Dickie is also the Character Development Coach for the WSU men’s basketball team.

Please plan to join KSSA in Wichita for dinner with the McCownGordon Construction Team at 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 5 to “Connect with Kansas Leaders.”
Looking at the Data
Ted Carter, KASB Chief Data Officer

Preliminary salary data reported for 19-20

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</table>

KASB has been working with district staff since this summer to collect survey responses for the 10 annual surveys we administer each year. Of these, four surveys include information on district staff other than teachers.

The data from these surveys has been collected together in a single School District Staff Info page on the member portal (kasb.enviseams.com/member-resources/district-level-data/kasb-survey-staff-info).

To date, the response rates for the four surveys containing non-teacher staff info are:
- Superintendents = 73%
- Principals and Assistant Principals = 65%
- Central Office Staff = 62%
- Other Staff = 55%

We encourage districts to submit their data so that KASB and its members have more complete data to work with as we compare amongst each other and work to communicate with the legislature and other stakeholders about the nature of public education in Kansas.

The following represents some comparisons and analysis of the data we have collected to date.

**Staff Counts**

The table above shows the total staff counts and percentages for 2018-19 and 2019-20. The categories with the most district employees for both years were Special Education Paraprofessionals, followed by Non-Special Education Paraprofessionals, then Custodians, Regular Route Bus Drivers, Cooks, Food Servers and Secretaries.

**Annual Salaries**

The next table, top of next page, shows the average salaries reported for 2018-19 and 2019-20 and the percent change represented. Note that the percent change is influenced by which districts have reported so far this year.

**Hourly Wages**

For some positions, districts report hourly wages along with or instead
of annual salaries. The table below right shows the starting and average hourly wages for 2018-19 and 2019-20, and the percent change for each. Again, the percent changes are influenced by what districts have submitted so far this year.

The starting hourly wage showing the largest percent increase was for Contracted Part-Time Nurses, as was the largest percent increase for average hourly wages. Skilled, Licensed Tradesmen also showed large increases in starting hourly wages and Building Food Service Managers showed large increases in average hourly wages. Contracted Full-Time Nurses showed the largest percent decrease for starting hourly wages, while Non-Licensed Maintenance showed the largest percent decrease for average hourly wages.

**Conclusion**

These are just a few of the data elements collected and reported for non-teacher district employees. The online report includes information on fringe benefits, demographics, areas of responsibility, number of staff supervised, and more. KASB is continuously updating the data available as districts submit, so these figures will continue to change as more information is available.

We encourage you to submit this information if you are a district staff member responsible for this, and if you are not, talk to your superintendent or board clerk to ensure this data gets to KASB soon so your district’s information can be included.
New university admission standards adopted by Kansas Board of Regents

The Kansas State Board of Regents has approved the biggest changes for admission to Kansas state universities in years, if not decades. The change could expand opportunity and flexibility, but without attention could also result in more students struggling to succeed in college.

From the first part of the 20th century until the mid-1990s, Kansas law provided “open admissions” for all state universities. Any student who graduated from an accredited Kansas high school was entitled to admission to the freshman class at the University of Kansas, Kansas State, Wichita State, Emporia State, Fort Hays State and Pittsburg State Universities.

State and national concerns over educational standards and student achievement, embodied in the 1983 “Nation At Risk” Report, resulted in both an increase in high school graduation requirements and a change in state law setting “qualified admissions” standards for the universities. There were two major components: Students would have to score at a certain level on the ACT or SAT test OR rank in the top third of their graduating class; AND would have to complete a “college prep” curriculum based on specific courses in core areas.

Qualified admissions was controversial. KASB and other groups opposed the change, concerned some students who may not have met qualifications could still succeed in college, and the impact might fall disproportionately on disadvantaged, often minority students or those from small schools; students who might lack the support in high school to meet the new standards.

Those concerns were at least partly abated. College completion has continued to rise in Kansas and increase even faster among minority groups. That might mean the standards worked as supporters hoped: Rather than discouraging or blocking attendance, more students prepared themselves better for college, and more completed degrees.

However, balance continues to be an issue. Is it better to allow more students a chance to try college, even knowing some percentage probably won’t be able to handle the academic, social and financial demands; or better to set a higher bar to admission, hoping more students will prepare themselves in high school and a higher percentage will actually graduate?

The changes adopted in September by the Regents represent a swing of the pendulum back toward more opportunity.

Is it better to allow more students a chance to try college, even knowing some percentage probably won’t be able to handle the academic, social and financial demands; or better to set a higher bar to admission, hoping more students will prepare themselves in high school and a higher percentage will actually graduate?

First, the new policies switch the alternative to a minimum ACT score from ranking in the top third of the graduating class to a cumulative grade point average of 2.25 at ESU, FHSU, PSU and WSU and 3.25 GPA for Kansas State. (KU already uses a GPA requirement rather than class rank)

This change alone will widen access. Regents staff indicates that about 87 percent of Kansas high school graduates would meet the 2.25 GPA average, and 46 percent would meet the 3.25 average. Both provide more opportunity than the current top-third class rank.

Second, the new policy removes the requirement to successfully complete a specified college prep curriculum in high school.

Students will still have to meet the Kansas State Board of Education’s high school graduation requirements, which are similar in the number of required units in core subjects, but qualified admissions requirements are more specific as to English, math, natural and social science courses and electives are required. (Local school boards can set additional requirements for graduation.)

KASB did not take a position on the change, but here are some likely implications.

- **More opportunity.** As noted, the changes will increase the number high school graduates eligible to attend state universities, which could help increase postsecondary attainment—a goal of the State Board and Board of Regents. Notably, the proposal originated with the Regents’ First Generation Task Force, studying ways to remove barriers to college attendance.
Less paperwork. The new policy will eliminate the need to track courses students take in high school for college admission purposes (in Kansas, anyway).

More flexibility for school redesign. Kansas schools are exploring ways to restructure how they deliver learning, to make education more individualized, more relevant and more rooted in real world experience and application. Removing requirements for specific courses for college-bound students could help – if the new system also provides students skills to succeed in college.

More flexibility for students. High school students may be able to choose among more options for courses and credit – again providing they still acquire the academic (and social-emotional) skills to be successful in college if that is their path.

Individual Plans of Study. Removing the guidance provided by a college prep curriculum will put even more importance on the State Board’s goal that all students have a meaningful IPS developed by the student, family and school, setting out how high school choices will support career goals involving academic programs, technical credentials and workplace skills.

Role of local school boards. Local boards and school leaders will have to pay greater attention to how they are preparing students as new policies take effect, through measures like ACT scores and the postsecondary effective rate, and grading policies and standards.

Changes in State University Admissions
Freshmen Criteria – Students Under Age 21
Requirements for Accredited High School Graduate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current</th>
<th>New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESU, PSU, FHSU, KSU, and WSU: ACT: 21+ or Rank in top third of class KU: Cumulative GPA of 3.25 and ACT 21+ or Cumulative GPA of 3.0 and ACT 24+</td>
<td>ESU, PSU, FHSU, and WSU: ACT: 21+ or Cumulative GPA of 2.25 KSU: ACT: 21+ or Cumulative GPA of 3.25 KU (no change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all institutions: Complete Precollege Curriculum with a 2.0 GPA (Resident)/2.5 GPA (Nonresident). Curriculum consists of: • English (4 units); • Math (3 units with ACT benchmark of 22 or 4 units with one taken in senior year); • Natural Science (3 units with one unit in chemistry or physics); • Social Science (3 units); • Electives (3 units) Note: As part of the admission application, students list each high school course taken along with the grade.</td>
<td>For all institutions: Units (but not specific courses) are recommended; units are not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all institutions: 2.0 cumulative GPA on any college courses taken while in high school</td>
<td>For all institutions: (No change)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Kansas State Board of Education is celebrating its 50th anniversary this month. Voters amended the Kansas Constitution to give the board responsibility for “general supervision” of public education and to provide “intellectual, educational, vocational and scientific improvement.” The same amendment put the responsibility of elected local boards to manage schools in the state constitution.

It’s a good time to reflect on how things have changed over those five decades.

The typical Kansas classroom today is vastly different than in 1969. The student population is more diverse, expectations are higher and societal challenges are more complex. At the same time, schools are safer, more student needs are being met, and educational attainment in Kansas is much higher.

In 1970, 60 percent of Kansas adults over 24 had completed high school and 12 percent had a four-year degree. Today over 90 percent have completed high school and 33 percent a four-year degree. Those percentages have increased every decade.

Short term outcomes also increased. One measure of Kansas high school graduation (average freshman graduate rate) increased from 80.8 percent in 1990-91 to 88.4 percent in 2012-13. (The U.S. rose from 73.7 percent to 81.9 percent). A new, more stringent graduation calculation (adjusted cohort graduation rate) increased from 83.0 percent in 2010-11 to 86.5 percent in 2016-17. (The U.S. rose from 79.0 percent to 84.6 percent.)

Students are graduating with more credits. According to national data, a 1982 high school graduate earned about 21.5 units, increasing to 27.1 units in 2009. The average number of math and science courses increased by more than one full unit each. Kansas raised graduation requirements in the 1990s and 2000s and instituted qualified admissions standards for state universities. The number of students taking both high school and college courses has tripled over the past 25 years, from 4,125 in 1996 to 13,800 in 2019.

Despite recent concerns about electronic cigarette, the use of illicit drugs, alcohol and cigarettes by 12-17-year-olds have decreased dramatically since 1985.

The role of technology has changed. Nationally, the number of instructional computers tripled from 1995 to
Looking back 50 years

State voters create Board of Education with amendment

By Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

In the early days of the Kansas State Board of Education, board members raced to get up to speed on public education issues and were quickly immersed in the politics of the day, according to news articles and minutes of board meetings from the late 1960s. This year represents the 50th anniversary of the board’s existence.

On Nov. 8, 1966, Kansas voters approved a constitutional amendment on education that essentially modernized the state’s education system into what we know today.

The change created an elected State Board of Education, instead of one appointed by the governor, and replaced the Kansas State Superintendent of Public Instruction with an Education Commissioner selected by the board, which meant broad policymaking decisions were transferred from the State Superintendent to the board. The amendment also gave local school boards and the Kansas Board of Regents constitutional recognition and the Legislature more flexibility in school finance while eliminating the County Superintendent and the Board of Vocational Education.

Partisan or non-partisan

The new 10-member State Board of Education was to be elected in November 1968 and take office Jan. 14, 1969. But political differences quickly arose over the system of electing board members.

During the 1968 legislative session, the House wanted State Board members to run in partisan elections, just like other state offices, while the Senate backed a plan for non-partisan elections, like local school board contests.

The impasse lasted throughout much of the session in a conference committee until Senate leaders finally bowed to the House desire for partisan elections in return for House approval of a Senate-backed junior college funding bill.

Continued on page 14

The typical Kansas classroom today is vastly different than in 1969. The student population is more diverse, expectations are higher and societal challenges are more complex. At the same time, schools are safer, more student needs are being met, and educational attainment in Kansas is much higher.

Kansas English Language Learner students increased from 3.2 percent in 2000 to 10.6 percent in 2015. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act passed in 1975, and today about one in six receive special education services.

How have schools, from the State Board to local school boards, accomplished improved outcomes, safer schools, meeting more special needs and more technology?

They have added all-day kindergarten, preschool, more special education staff and services, more specialized courses, more summer and after-school programs, more security and serve more meals. If Kansas schools had the same staff/pupil ratios as in the mid-1980s, there would be 5,500 fewer teachers and 5,000 fewer special education paras, classroom aides, security and technology staff, bus drivers and all other staff.

These people, programs and the facilities to support them have come with a cost. After adjusting for inflation, total school spending has increased 66 percent more than inflation since 1990. However, the Kansas economy has grown even faster, in part because higher education levels result in higher earnings. Total school district expenditures are a slightly lower share of the total income of all Kansans than in 1990.

What hasn’t changed over the past 50 years is the important role public education plays in preparing young Kansans for their future. The current State Board of Education’s “Kansans Can” goal to lead the world in the success of every student is based on that commitment.

2009 and the percentage with internet access increased from less than 10 percent to nearly 100 percent.

Kansas students have also changed. White students made up 84 percent of public-school enrollment in 1993 and 64 percent in 2019, with largest growth in Hispanics and multi-racial categories. Low income students eligible for free or reduced-price meals increased from 33.4 percent in 2001 to 47.2 percent in 2019.

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Continued on page 14

November 2019 13
At one of those first meetings, Dale Dennis, then director of statistical services, provided information to the State Board about the process of school districts appealing their budgets. Dennis continues to serve the education interests of Kansas to this day as assistant education commissioner at KSDE.

1969 session

As the board was setting its foundation, the 1969 legislative session loomed with numerous major education issues churning before the Legislature.

Right before the session started, the Governor’s Committee on Education recommended that state aid to education be increased to 50 percent of total operating expenses from 32 percent. That proposal also roiled KASB. KASB had been a primary author of the funding plan, but KASB delegates rejected it 95-76, saying a comprehensive study of the tax base for school purposes needed to be done before endorsement of a new distribution plan.

During that session, the Legislature also approved a bill setting up unification of the Shawnee Mission high school district and 12 elementary school districts into one unified district. And legislators fought over due process for teachers and professional negotiations. With campus protests and disruptions happening across the nation, legislators also worked on proposals meant to rein in student demonstrations.

State Board members also started appearing before the Legislature, seeking additional funding for the 1970 fiscal year to implement the new system for an appointed state education commissioner and assistant commissioners and to assist the newly created board in assuming its duties.
Board Chairman Harry O. Lytle of Wichita sought $35,000 for the education commissioner’s salary, but some legislators balked at the figure, saying it was too much. Lytle argued that amount was necessary to attract the best candidates for the job.

Lytle eventually got enough funding to hire Dr. C. Taylor Whittier of Gaithersburg, Maryland, as education commissioner. Whittier started his duties on Oct. 7 for $35,000.

In addition to Lytle, the first board members were Dorothy Ballard, Will Billingsley, Dr. William Black, Irene Carlson, Harold Crist, Dorothy Groesbeck, A.R. Jones, Joseph Steineger and Karl Wilson.

**Long meetings**

During that first year, the board delved into numerous topics.

The May 5-6, 1969 meeting was typical. The Northeast Kansas Area Vocational-Technical School at Goodland had earlier been granted a tuition increase under the old system and was re-requesting it before the new board. But the board tabled the action wanting first a detailed study on establishing tuition rates for vo-tech schools.

The board received a briefing on a bill that required the disorganization of the seven remaining non-unified school districts within that same week. But this prompted a lot of questions and the board encouraged the local boards to get input from their constituents on what they would like to do and then report back to the State Board.

State Sen. Joseph Harder, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, appeared before the board, saying the Legislature was working on a study of “how the budgeted money of the school districts is spent — how much for extra-curricular activities, not only for athletics, but for music, speech, drama, etc.,” according to the minutes of the meeting. Harder also said the committee would work with the State Board and cooperate in every way possible.

The board also heard from the Kansas State High School Activities Association on implementing a football playoffs plan and then approved the plan on a 6-4 vote.

Much of the meeting was dealing with the business of other boards and advisory panels and setting up screening committees for prospective nominees for education commissioner.

**Recent history**

For decades, the State Board has worked, mostly quietly, on a wide range of issues, from mundane bureaucratic tasks to deeper subjects.

But it generated international attention in 1999 and 2005 when it became a battleground over the teaching of evolution.

In 1999, the board voted to minimize evolution in science teaching. That decision was reversed in 2001, but then in 2005, the board, after a series of high-profile hearings, mandated equal time for evolution and intelligent design. Again, in 2007 after an election changed some seats on the board, those science standards were rejected.

The board has also played a pivotal role in fighting for increased school funding through two major lawsuits.

In recent years, the State Board has focused on redesigning school operations, improving student success while tackling a host of issues, such as mental health, bullying, school security and recently, vaping. Because of the importance of public school education, the State Board and education commissioner have played major roles in Kansas’ past and present and will shape the state’s future too.

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The new 10-member State Board of Education was to be elected in November 1968 and take office Jan. 14, 1969. But political differences quickly arose over the system of electing board members.

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Key talking points on education

**New resources, redesigned schools equal student success, stronger Kansas**

KASB is often asked to share key points about education issues. With school board and other local elections this fall and the 2020 Legislative Session two months away, here are some ideas to consider for sharing.

The big question school leaders are going to have to answer is: What are you (school districts) doing with the billion-plus dollars you got from the Legislature?

That’s the estimated total increase in base aid, local option budget funding and special education from 2017 to 2023, when the response to the Gannon lawsuit is fully implemented. And, it doesn’t include increased funding for KPERS, bond and interest and capital outlay aid, or other federal and local revenues.

Sure, it’s more complicated than that. The Gannon funding is really designed to get budgets back to 2009 levels when adjusted for inflation; it is really restoring previous funding, not new dollars. Some districts are not receiving new dollars because their enrollment is declining.

But one thing isn’t very complicated: the Kansas Supreme Court accepted the evidence that inadequate funding was hurting Kansas students, leaving about one-quarter of students below acceptable standards; and that more money would help those students do better. It’s now up to school districts to show how that money is being used to get better results.

**KASB proposes one sentence to summarize where we are:**

New resources plus redesigned schools equal student success, supporting a stronger Kansas.

**What does this mean?**

**New Resources** Increased funding allows districts to restore cuts, provide more competitive salaries and add people in positions to help students.

**Redesigned Schools** Even with more money, doing basically the same things may not help all students succeed. Schools are working to combine academic skills with social-emotional learning, build stronger partnerships with families, business and communities, make learning more individualized, and add real world applications.

**Student Success** Success will be measured by test scores and much more: graduation rates, college and career preparation, postsecondary participation and success, civic engagement, and your own local measures.

**Stronger Kansas** The higher education level an individual attains, from completing high school to technical training and two-year degrees to bachelor’s and advanced degrees, the more likely they are to be employed, out of poverty, and have higher earnings to support a family. This is increasingly important as Kansas faces a shortage of workers, especially those with higher skills.

KASB also suggests you can organize your district’s efforts around the following “pathways:”

**Quality Educators**

Since 2009, Kansas teacher salaries have fallen behind inflation, salaries in other professions requiring college degrees, and other states.

**What is your district doing to support employees?**

This could include raising salaries and benefits, more professional development or adding instructional time, and incentives to enter teaching.

**Equity in Student Achievement**

Low achievement by too many students was the basis of the *Gannon* school finance case. Lower income and disabled
students, English Language Learners, students with physical and mental health issues and other challenges are much less likely to be successful in school and beyond.

What are you doing to help students who are not where they need to be?

Steps may include more early childhood programs in your schools or community to help students start school on a more equal basis; adding special education staff; extra assistance in reading and other core areas; adding tutors, before and after school programs, summer school and other opportunities.

Student Safety and Health

While schools are among the safest places to be, too many students and parents worry about the physical safety of school buildings, bullying, depression and suicide, or severe trauma outside of the school – all of which interfere with learning.

What are you doing to make schools safer and students healthier?

This could include more security for your school buildings or new construction; adding counselors and social workers and partnering with community providers to expand mental health services; what you’re doing to curb vaping and provide help for students addicted to nicotine; and supporting a positive school culture with smaller learning communities and stronger relationships with individual students.

Preparation for Postsecondary Education and Careers

The Kansas economy needs more employees with technical credentials and college degrees, and most students will need more than a high school diploma to be able to support a secure “middle class” lifestyle.

What are you doing to increase college and career preparation?

Steps include more meaningful individual plans of study and increased guidance counseling, increasing career exploration, real-world work experiences and civic engagement in your community, and expanding concurrent college enrollment and technical education pathways?

Finally, what are you doing to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of your schools, school boards and leadership teams to meet the unique needs of your communities?

Examples are collaboration with other districts, local governments, agencies and private partnerships, strategic planning, and leadership training.

As always, please contact KASB if you have questions or need assistance in any of these areas.
Employee Benefits Solutions service reaches a new milestone for growth

The ranks of KASB’s Employee Benefit Solutions customers continue to grow, as three additional districts prepare to entrust their employee benefits with the organization.

Andover USD 385, Concordia USD 333 and Lyndon USD 421 are the newest customers of EBS.

Employee Benefit Solutions, which is offered by the KASB Risk Management Group, is a technology-based service that improves management of both employer sponsored benefits and voluntary benefits. EBS streamlines the annual job of selecting benefits.

KASB for decades has offered districts workers’ compensation, property casualty and student accident insurance. With the recent addition of Employee Benefit Solutions, KASB Assistant Executive Director of Risk Management Rod Spangler says the organization has the capacity to cover buildings, staff, students, and employee benefits including health, life, dental and vision insurance coverage, retirement planning products and services, and administration of flexible spending accounts.

“We spent the better part of 2017 researching, conducting user group meetings, selecting carrier partners and designing Kansas educator specific benefits,” Spangler said.

“We launched this service in early 2018 with the hopes of establishing a good strong early adopter group of users. I am thrilled our team has done that.”

In contrast to traditional insurance brokerages, all KASB

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 put that money right back into service of your students?”

The program has the capacity to cover buildings, staff, students, and employee benefits including health, life, dental and vision insurance coverage, retirement planning products and services, and administration of flexible spending accounts.
Gayle Smith joins KASB Risk Management as new Agency Support Coordinator

As the KASB Risk Management Group continues to grow and expand in service to members, it has hired Gayle Smith as Agency Support Coordinator.

Rod Spangler, Director of Risk Management, said Gayle “has a strong passion for service and a wealth of professional experience.

Her role will touch all of our lines, provide direct client and member interactions and keep the wheel turning in our multi-line brokerage firm daily.”

Gayle has long worked in the financial services field, first as an executive assistant at Security Benefit/se2 and then in similar roles at FHLBank Topeka and non-profits.

Spangler said the Risk Management Group’s goal is to provide insurance, benefits and consulting services to bring “insurance with a purpose” to members.

“Gayle will help our group move the passion of ‘insurance with a purpose’ forward,” Spangler said. “We believe at our core, there is a correlation between student success and risk management operations. The more efficient and effective we can support our members in that effort, insurance does have a purpose, it supports student success. Gayle’s personality and skill set will fit perfectly into that mission.”

Gayle and her husband, Brian, a retired trooper from the Kansas Highway Patrol who now works for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, raised their two children in Seaman USD 345. Prior to that they lived in Lyndon for 10 years where Gayle became a Parent Educator through Greenbush for the Lyndon and Santa Fe Trail Districts and started an intergenerational preschool.

Gayle and Brian, who have been married for 33 years, are active members of the Washburn University Alumni Association and their church where Gayle serves as financial secretary. The two have numerous outdoor hobbies, including camping, kayaking, biking, golfing and motorcycle riding.
Six Kansas schools recently were designated 2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education.

The award is based on a school’s overall academic excellence or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. The National Blue Ribbon School award affirms the hard work of educators, families and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools.

There were 362 schools across the country designated as 2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools.

The Kansas schools receiving the designation are:

- Central Plains Elementary School, Central Plains USD 112
- Clear Creek Elementary School, De Soto USD 232
- Corinth Elementary School, Shawnee Mission USD 512
- Kathryn O’Loughlin McCarthy Elementary School, Hays USD 489
- Lakewood Elementary School, Blue Valley USD 229
- Holy Rosary-Wea Catholic School in Bucyrus, Kansas

“These six schools represent the great things happening in Kansas’ classrooms,” said Kansas Education Commissioner Randy Watson. “We want to recognize and honor these schools for the work they are doing in preparing our students to be successful Kansans.”

The Blue Ribbon program recognizes public and private elementary, middle and high schools in one of two performance categories: Exemplary High Performing and Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing.

In the high-performing category, schools are recognized for being among the state’s highest-performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests.

Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools are among the state’s highest performing schools in closing achievement gaps between a school’s subgroups and all students.

Central Plains Elementary School was recognized as an Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing School. Clear Creek, Corinth, Kathryn O’Loughlin McCarthy and Lakewood were recognized as Exemplary High Performing Schools.

The National Blue Ribbon program is in its 37th year and has bestowed the award on more than 9,000 schools.
The Kansas School Superintendents’ Association has selected Valley Center USD 262 Superintendent Dr. Cory Gibson as the 2020 Kansas Superintendent of the Year.

Since 2012, Gibson has been superintendent of Valley Center, which serves more than 3,130 students from the communities of Valley Center, Park City, Kechi, and Wichita.

Gibson started his administrative career in 2002 as a principal in Miami, Okla. before moving to Pittsburg where he served as a principal and assistant superintendent. In 2010, he moved to Halstead as the superintendent.

Gibson, along with fellow Superintendent of the Year finalists Dr. Shelly Kiblinger, Cherryvale-Thayer USD 447, and Dr. Chad Higgins, Maize USD 266, were interviewed by former Kansas Superintendents of the Year.

This committee made the final recommendation for the Kansas Superintendent of the Year.

Candidates for Superintendent of the Year are assessed according to their professionalism, communication, community involvement, and leadership while meeting the needs of the local communities and most importantly their students. As Kansas Superintendent of the Year, Gibson will now be considered for the National Superintendent of the Year program. KSSA, in cooperation with the Ogden Financial Group, will host a celebration honoring him in January along with providing a $1,000 scholarship to a Kansas high school senior to be selected by the Kansas Superintendent of the Year.

Gibson received his Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Educational Specialist degrees from Pittsburg State University. In November 2016, he received his Doctorate in Education from the University of Arkansas. In 2016, the Wichita Business Journal recognized Gibson as one of the top 40 leaders under 40.

He is a charter member of the Valley Center Kiwanis Club, St. Catherine’s Knights of Columbus, Valley Center Fall Festival Committee and is a member of the Valley Center Chamber of Commerce. Gibson has also been involved with his professional organizations, serving as a Director and President for the Kansas School Superintendents’ Association. He also belongs to the Kansas/Missouri Superintendents leadership forum and is a board member for the United School Administrators of Kansas.

Valley Center School District is one of the few school districts around Wichita that has seen substantial growth over the last 15-20 years. In an effort to rebrand the district and realign stakeholder’s perception of the district, Valley Center has updated and replaced almost every visual reminder of the district. In the last seven years the district’s vision statement, mission statement, tagline, logo, and athletic logo have been replaced. This is no easy task in a tradition-rich district such as Valley Center. The work to rebrand the district included patrons’ input and help in creating the new logos. The new visual representations are all original and copyrighted.

Gibson shared that people who have lived or worked in the district for decades can be found wearing the new logos and frequently share how proud they are of the progress towards a ‘New Valley.’ When business leaders were recently asked what the community is known for (greatest asset to Valley Center) they all agreed it is the district. They believe it is the school district that is driving growth and economic prosperity in their community. With that comes pride and responsibility.
State Board: ACT proposal put on shelf
Teacher vacancies, dyslexia, e-cigs, postsecondary success

By Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

The Kansas State Board of Education in October backed off a proposal to use the ACT or ACT Workkeys as a replacement test for the high school state assessment.

In August, Education Commissioner Randy Watson unveiled the idea of having all Kansas students take the ACT in 11th grade instead of the state assessments in math and English in 10th grade and the science test in 11th grade.

But after gathering input from school superintendents, state assessment advisors, special education directors and curriculum directors, he decided the proposal needed more vetting before moving forward. Watson said he generally found more support than non-support but also a significant number of people said they needed more information.

Without overwhelming support, Watson said it was best to wait.

The State Board of Education agreed. Several members said they agreed with the initial proposal but heard from folks on both sides of the issue, indicating that there probably needed to be more discussion.

Watson said the state would go forward with the state assessments for the next school year and the board could revisit the issue in 2021.

Randy Watson
Kansas Education Commissioner

Currently in Kansas, the ACT test is optional but last year the state provided funding to allow every Kansas high school junior to take the ACT and ACT Workkeys tests free of charge. Most college-bound students in Kansas take the ACT.

In the school finance bill passed by the 2019 Legislature, a commitment to fund free ACT testing for all students was written into state law.

The State Board also discussed the following topics:

Teacher Vacancies

Heard a report that teacher vacancies in Kansas increased by 27 percent over this time last year. There were 815 vacancies reported currently, compared with 642 last fall. There were 550 last spring. The largest number of vacancies have been in special education — 186 this year and 158 last fall, followed by elementary — 115 this year and 113 last fall. Science, English Language Arts and math round out the top five groups of vacancies.

Dyslexia Services

Received a wide range of recommendations aimed at helping students with dyslexia. The board will vote on these recommendations in November. The recommendations are aimed at improving pre-service teacher programs, professional...
learning of teachers already in the classroom, screening and evaluating processes for children with dyslexia and dyslexia-like characteristics, and evidence-based reading programs. In addition, the state should create a dyslexia handbook for use by schools and identify a dyslexia coordinator within the Kansas State Department of Education. The increased training and screening will require additional funds, but no estimate has been given yet.

**E-Cigarettes**

Heard an update from health and education advocates who say they are close to unveiling state legislation that would increase the minimum age in Kansas to purchase tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, from 18 to 21. Similar laws — called Tobacco 21 — have been passed in 18 states and Washington D.C.

The proposed legislation has picked up momentum in recent months amid escalating fears about the use of e-cigarettes, especially by youngsters, and illnesses and deaths related to vaping. A State Task Force on Vaping/E-cigarettes has been working on ways to restrict the use of e-cigarettes and help with cessation programs for people who have become addicted.

**Postsecondary Success**

Received an annual update from Commissioner Watson who said during the past three years, Kansas’ five-year average postsecondary effectiveness rate has increased by 4% - up from 44% to 48%.

Postsecondary success is one of the five outcomes identified by the board to help measure progress toward achieving the state’s vision for education – Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

An increased focus on districts partnering with technical schools and colleges and the implementation of Individual Plans of Study for all students has led to the increase in the postsecondary effectiveness rate, Watson said.

**Kansas’ goal is to have a postsecondary effective rate of 70 to 75 percent to meet the demands of the Kansas workforce.**

The postsecondary progress report helps schools determine whether students are pursuing and succeeding in postsecondary education. The report provides a five-year average of high school graduation rates, postsecondary success rates, postsecondary effective rates and postsecondary predictive rates based on identified risk factors.

The report was developed and first made available to districts in 2017 as a way for schools to determine whether students are pursuing and succeeding in postsecondary education.

The postsecondary effective rate is the percent of the full senior class still enrolled in a postsecondary institution or that successfully completed a postsecondary program two years out of high school. The success rate measures only those students who graduated high school, while the effective rate factors in those students who didn’t graduate high school.

Kansas’ goal is to have a postsecondary effective rate of 70 to 75 percent to meet the demands of the Kansas workforce.
Employment Law Legal Training 8:30 a.m. Registration  9:00 a.m.-Noon Workshop 11.12.19 | Dodge City Community College 11.14.19 | Topeka, KASB

Family and Medical Leave and Americans With Disabilities Acts Legal Training 12:30 p.m. Registration 1:00-4:00 p.m. Workshop 11.12.19 | Dodge City Community College 11.14.19 | Topeka, KASB

Aspiring Superintendents 8:30 a.m. Registration  9:00 a.m.-Noon Workshop 11.05.19 | Colby, City Limits Convention Center 11.15.19 | Topeka KASB

Impact of Trauma on Student Success 12:30 p.m. Registration 1-3:30 p.m. Workshop 11.18.19 | Topeka, KASB 10:30 a.m. Registration 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Workshop 11.20.19 | Hays, The Venue

School Finance Advocacy 8:30 a.m. Registration  9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Workshop 11.15.19 (revised Sept. 16, 2019) Topeka, KASB

Family and Medical Leave and Americans With Disabilities Acts Legal Training 12:30 p.m. Registration 1:00-4:00 p.m. Workshop 11.12.19 | Dodge City Community College 11.14.19 | Topeka, KASB

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NOTE: Nov. 15 participants may join School Finance Advocacy Workshop for afternoon sessions.

Impact of Trauma on Student Success 12:30 p.m. Registration 1-3:30 p.m. Workshop 11.18.19 | Topeka, KASB 10:30 a.m. Registration 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Workshop 11.20.19 | Hays, The Venue

School Finance Advocacy 8:30 a.m. Registration  9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Workshop 11.15.19 (revised Sept. 16, 2019) Topeka, KASB

Foundations of Boardsmanship 8:30 a.m. Registration  9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Workshop 12.11.19 | Topeka, KASB 01.11.20 | Haysville, The Learning Center 01.16.20 | Topeka, Maner Conference Center (in conjunction with the Advocacy in Action Conference) 01.25.20 | Hays, The Venue and Greenbush ESC 02.08.20 | Garden City, Board Office 02.15.20 | Topeka, KASB

Basic Negotiations Annual Training 8:30 a.m. Registration 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. 12.11.19 | Topeka, KASB

Practicum in Negotiations 8:30 a.m. Registration 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Workshop 01.23.20 | Topeka, KASB

Prepping for Negotiations Times vary by location. Please refer to kasb.org/training for details. 01.28.20 | Dodge City, The Learning Center 01.29.20 | Dodge City, The Learning Center and Lyons, District Office 01.30.20 | Clearwater, Orion Education Center and Parsons, High School Community Room 02.05.20 | Concordia, Cloud Community College and Gypsum, SE of Saline USD 306 02.14.20 | Topeka, KASB 02.24.20 | Colby, District Office 02.25.20 | Oakley, ESC and Hays, The Venue

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