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February 2014 • Volume 58, Issue 1

JOURNAL

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Table Of Contents

JOURNAL

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ON THE COVER

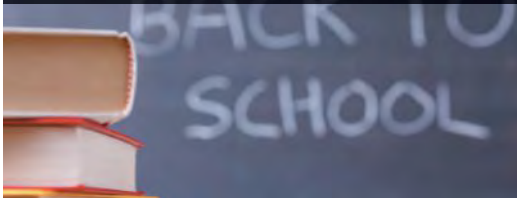
Lawson leads OSBA in 2014, p. 14



OSBA President Susie Lawson meets with Health Technologies students at Wayne County Schools Career Center. — photo by Bryan Bullock

FEATURES

p. 20



NEWS

p. 36



DEPARTMENTS

p. 3



New digital edition available!

You can access the *Journal's* new digital edition on the OSBA website at www.ohioschoolboards.org/journal.

Welcome to the school board	20
Veteran leaders offer tips to board “freshmen.”	
Five rules to follow for great school board meetings	26
Use these tips to help your board meetings run smoothly.	
Connecting small districts	42
The OSBA Small School District Advisory Network helps small districts share solutions and learn from each other.	
Board of Trustees confirms OSBA 2014 president-elect	18
Ohio’s Ethics Law: What board members should know	32
OSBA is structured to serve	36
Ohioans to attend NSBA annual conference	39
A recipe for success — what highly effective teachers do	46
Executive Outlook	3
According to Law	4
Management Insights	8
Boardmanship	10
Capital Insider	12
OSBA: Working for You	34

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OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.

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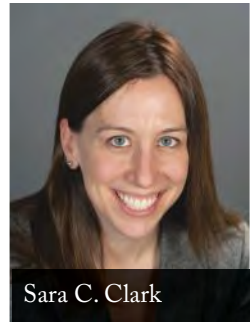
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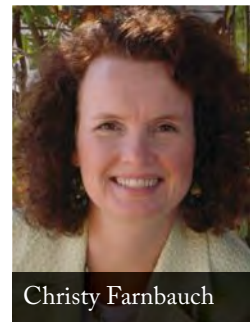
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Learning the ropes

A checklist for newly elected board members

Richard Lewis, CAE, executive director

The Ohio School Boards Association officially welcomed more than 750 newly elected school board members to the leadership team this year. OSBA congratulates members of the Class of 2014 on their elections and applauds each of these men and women for their dedication to the betterment of public education.

Ohio needs good school board members. While school management has always been challenging, it's becoming even more difficult. A good management team starts with a strong board of education. It is only through the team effort of local boards of education, their administrators and staff that we maintain our readiness to successfully address the educational challenges of tomorrow.

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other. These were the words of President **John F. Kennedy** in a speech prepared for delivery in Dallas the day of his assassination. To prepare for their leadership roles, newly elected board members should consider the following checklist as they embark on the journey of lifelong learning that lies ahead.

Become familiar with basic Ohio laws that govern education

Nobody wants to read the Ohio Revised Code cover to cover. To fill that gap, the OSBA website hosts a wealth of information. Be sure to check out www.ohioschoolboards.org/resources-by-topic and www.ohioschoolboards.org/five-fast-facts to get a quick overview of many major legal issues.

Read your board policy manual

Board policy manuals can vary in length, but are usually quite voluminous. You won't knock this read out in one night. Take the time to familiarize yourself with your policy and regulations, because you are bound to both. Solid policy manuals share with the board, staff and community what the board wants and why. When we speak about board policy, we speak about ideas with the power to set directions for the schools that will bring about prudent action by the administration, staff and board. The truest thing ever said about policy development is that it never ends.

Read your negotiated agreements

The obligation to negotiate with a union over terms and conditions of employment is a requirement in Ohio. It's the ability to administer the contract that allows the board to govern efficiently and effectively. The negotiated agreements between your unions and school board supersede board policy and Ohio Revised Code, with a few exceptions. It is imperative to know both your rights and obligations as agreed to in these legally binding documents.

Read other historical documents

Secure copies of past agendas, minutes, strategic plans, crisis plans and any other information that will provide a better understanding of the operation of the district's schools.

Meet one-on-one with your superintendent

If you have not already done so, make an appointment to talk to the district superintendent. Ask questions, listen and learn as much about the school system as possible. Do not depend

on hearsay as an accurate source of information.

Meet one-on-one with your treasurer

Likewise, meet with your district's chief financial officer. This is a great chance to get a better understanding of your five-year forecast as well as the many financial tools at your disposal. While you are not expected to be the district's bookkeeper, you are expected to ask the difficult questions. This begins with a fundamental understanding of the district's financial environment. Good treasurers welcome the opportunity to educate their boards.

Learn about the resources of your professional associations

OSBA is *your* professional association. We are the only association dedicated to singularly representing the governing leaders of Ohio's public schools. Our mission is to lead the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions. Whatever your question, whatever your need, OSBA is just a phone call or email away.

OSBA also is a member of the National School Boards Association, a federation of state associations that collectively represents more than 90,000 local school board members throughout the U.S. These local officials govern more than 13,600 local school districts serving the nation's 50 million public school students.

With the dedication of school boards and our education partners, the future of our children and those who follow will indeed be bright. ■



Making the move from days to hours

Sara C. Clark, senior deputy director of legal services

The state biennial budget bill passed in 2013 brought many changes to school districts. Many of those changes became effective in late September, but the legislation delayed at least one important change until the 2014-15 school year. This change, colloquially referred to as the “days-to-hours” change, modifies the definition of the “minimum school year” and requires districts to be open for a certain number of hours instead of a certain number of days. The impact of this change will vary by school district, depending on the local practices currently in place. Let’s review the change and some frequently asked questions on the topic.

What is changing?

Currently, each school district’s calendar should show a minimum of 182 days, which constitutes the district’s “school year” (Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3313.48). A district may exceed the 182-day minimum requirement, and many districts already extend the school year beyond that minimum. The decision to go more than 182 days is a local one.

The new law, which becomes effective on July 1, amends RC 3313.48 and defines “minimum school year” as a number of hours, not days, based on the grade level of the students served at the school:

- half-day kindergarten: 455 hours;
- full-day kindergarten and grades one through six: 910 hours;
- grades seven through 12: 1,001 hours.

Is a district required to switch to hours or is this just an option?

Districts are required to comply with the new definition of “minimum school

year” and will be required to switch their school calendars from days to hours. With that said, the changes from days to hours do not apply to any collective bargaining agreement executed prior to July 1 (Section 803.50 of Amended Substitute House Bill 59). If this exception applies to your district, it could allow your district to delay implementation of the new law until its current contract with its union expires. Districts are encouraged to work with their board counsel to determine if the collective bargaining agreement addresses the district’s calendar to the level of detail where the switch to hours might conflict with the agreement.

Will there be a required minimum number of hours in a school day?

Currently, RC 3313.48 requires the State Board of Education to adopt standards for defining “school day.” In section 3301-35-06 of the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC), the State Board has determined that scheduled classes for kindergarten students should be at least 2.5 hours per day; scheduled classes for students in grades one through six should run at least five hours per day; and scheduled classes for students in grades seven through 12 should be at least 5.5 hours per day.

The legislature deleted language requiring the State Board to adopt standards for defining “school day,” and new language now defines the term as the time during a calendar day that a school is open for instruction pursuant to the schedule adopted by the district’s board of education (RC 3313.481). As a result of the change, districts will not be required to adhere to the State Board’s definition of “school day” that includes a

minimum number of hours per day. The State Board may either rescind or amend OAC 3310-35-06 to comply with the new definition.

What activities may a district count toward meeting the minimum hourly requirement?

A district may count the time the district’s buildings are open and students are attending regularly scheduled classes, participating in supervised activities like school assemblies and participating in other “approved education options” (RC 3313.48). The statute specifically excludes time spent in breakfast and lunch periods, and any time students spend in extracurricular activities.

Additionally, a district may continue to count the hourly equivalents of the following toward the minimum number of hours:

- up to two full days for parent-teacher conferences and reporting periods (RC 3313.48(A)(1));
- up to two full days for teacher professional meetings (RC 3313.48(A)(2));
- morning and afternoon recess periods of not more than 15 minutes each for students in grades kindergarten through six (RC 3313.48(A)(3));
- up to three full days for 12th-grade students (RC 3317.01(B));
- up to three full days for the purpose of phasing in incoming kindergarteners (RC 3317.01(B)).

These hours count toward the minimum requirements, even though they are not technically hours where students are in attendance for instruction. If a district doesn’t wish to use these options, it is

not permitted to shorten the length of the school year or otherwise reduce the number of hours in the school calendar.

What happens to calamity days?

Currently, over the course of the school year, a district is allowed to cancel school and be granted a waiver (meaning that the day does not need to be made up) for a number of circumstances, including hazardous weather conditions, disease epidemic, law enforcement emergencies and other situations. Under the current law, a district may be granted up to five of these calamity days a year (RC 3317.01(B)).

In addition to these days, a district also must currently designate at least five “contingency days” to be used when a district’s students may need to make up days in excess of the five calamity days that can be waived pursuant to the statute.

Under the new law, calamity days no longer exist. Also gone is the requirement that a district designate a certain number of days as contingency days. A district may schedule “makeup hours,” but these hours are only legally required if a school closes enough that it will fall below the minimum number of hours required for the year.

What about school delays or early dismissals?

Currently, a school district may reduce the number of hours it is open for instruction by two hours due to hazardous weather conditions. Districts are not considered to have failed to meet the 182-day requirement when they use this option.

The new law removes the statutory language specifically authorizing school delays or early dismissals, but districts will still be permitted to do these things after July 1. In fact, it appears that a district could close for more than two hours due to hazardous weather conditions, so long as the closure didn’t drop the district below the minimum number of hours required for the year. A district may schedule makeup hours

to compensate for the hours lost to the delay or early dismissal, but these hours are only legally required if a school had so many delays or early dismissals that it will fall below the minimum number of hours required for the year.

How does a district make up hours?

As mentioned earlier, many school districts operate on school calendars that far exceed the state minimum of 182 days. As a result, if a district that has been exceeding the state minimum requirements maintains a school calendar that is comparable in hours to its current calendar, the district will have a substantial number of “extra hours” that will not be required to be made up.

However, it’s possible that a district without so many extra hours, or a district that has an exceedingly high number of closures and delays, may need to make up hours if a closure or delay causes the district to fall below the minimum number of hours required. Districts are still permitted to use “blizzard bags” to make up the missing hours. RC 3313.482 allows districts to submit a plan to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) that would allow them to use blizzard bags as an online learning option. The legislature renumbered the statute that discusses blizzard bags, but made very few other changes to that option. Currently, districts choosing to participate in the online option are required to submit their plans to ODE by Aug. 1 of each school year.

When developing their school calendars, districts should work with their board counsel to fully examine the consequences that any plan to make up hours may have on employees subject to a collective bargaining agreement. For example, a district’s ability to add hours to an existing school day or require only certain classifications to make up the hours may have collective bargaining implications.

Are there any procedural requirements that schools must follow when adopting their school calendar?

The new law requires all boards of education to hold a public hearing at least 30 days prior to adopting the school calendar (RC 3313.48(B)). At this hearing, the board is required to discuss the total number of hours in a school year, the length of a school day and the beginning and end dates of instruction.

Additionally, the new law prohibits a school district from reducing the number of hours scheduled for the coming year below the number of hours the district was open for instruction during the previous school year, unless the reduction is adopted in a formal board resolution (RC 3313.48(C)). This language is slightly peculiar and warrants a closer look.

First, the language of the statute does not actually prohibit a board from reducing the number of hours the district is open in a year. It requires only

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that the board pass a resolution in order to do so. Additionally, the resolution is required only if the district reduces the number of hours lower than the number of hours the district was *actually open* the previous year, and not the number of hours the district was *scheduled* to be open the previous year.

The new law also requires certain boards of education to work with outside entities prior to making any changes to their scheduled hours or days. These requirements, which have been creatively referred to as “calendar cooperation rules,” require boards of education to work with JVSDs in which any of the district’s high school students are enrolled, and community schools and chartered nonpublic schools to which the district is required to transport students.

With regard to JVSDs and community schools, a district is required to “consider the compatibility” of the proposed change with the scheduling needs of the JVSD or community school; consider the impact of the proposed change on student access to the instructional programs, opportunities, transportation and graduation offered by the JVSD or community school; provide advance notice to the JVSD or community school of any proposed change; and enter into a written agreement with the JVSD or community school specifying any “reasonable accommodations” that may be necessary to meet the scheduling needs of the JVSD or community school prior to implementing the scheduling change.

In addition, a district is required to “consult” with chartered nonpublic

schools, and “consider the effect” of the proposed change on the schedule for transporting students to the nonpublic schools. Nonpublic schools also must consult with traditional public schools prior to making any changes in hours or days.

ODE has issued a guidance document on the schedule change from days to hours, which is available at: <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/13809>.

If you have general questions on this topic, contact OSBA’s legal division. ■

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For more information, contact **Janice Smith**, chief financial officer and licensed insurance agent, at (800) 589-OSBA, (614) 540-4000 or jsmith@ohioschoolboards.org.

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'Horseplay' around the office can be costly

Van D. Keating, director of management services

As a general rule, schools don't seem to have a lot of horseplay going around their offices or buildings, which is good. Well, at least as far as employees are concerned.

So, whether you call it shenanigans, pranks or simply fooling around, schools prohibit these antics for several reasons, not the least of which is that someone could get hurt. In fact, I think we all heard (and experienced) the point about getting hurt growing up. However, as adults and employees, few of us have ever stopped to wonder exactly what happens when someone is hurt thanks to

clowning around in the office.

To help frame the issue, let's assume that everyone involved is a school district employee and the roughhousing takes place during work hours. Obviously, if an employee is hurt, the first response will be to get that employee appropriate medical help. Then what? Who pays for the injury — insurance, or perhaps workers' compensation? But we've also heard tomfoolery is not in anyone's job description, so is it *really* a workers' compensation issue?

In September 2012, Ohio's Tenth District

Court of Appeals heard such a case and its decision was enlightening on this issue. The case, *Sanders v. Fridd*, 213-Ohio-4338, is somewhat amusing to read. Both Sanders and Fridd were employees at the same business, a loan company. Sanders was a senior loan officer and Fridd was her supervisor and general manager of the company. While Sanders was carrying a loan package to the fax machine, Fridd jumped out of his office to "scare (her), and pushed (her) with both arms." Sanders fell to the ground and fractured her wrist. Of course, she denied being engaged in any form of horseplay at that time.

OSBA Student Achievement Fair

Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2014 • Greater Columbus Convention Center

The OSBA Capital Conference Student Achievement Fair highlights outstanding initiatives from school districts across the state. OSBA is seeking fresh, innovative programs or practices your district is willing to share with thousands of Ohio school district representatives. One hundred programs and practices will be selected based on creativity and impact on student achievement. The fair will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 11 during the OSBA Capital Conference.

Five performing groups from across Ohio will be selected to entertain attendees during the Student Achievement Fair. To be considered, you must submit an audio or video recording of the performing group. DVDs or CDs can be mailed to OSBA or a video or MP3 can be submitted with the online application.

OSBA is now accepting nominations for district programs and performing groups. While multiple programs may be submitted for consideration, no more than two per district will be selected, so districts should prioritize their submissions.

Nominate your district at www.ohioschoolboards.org/saf-nominations. The nomination deadline is June 27.

Conversely, Fridd testified that Sanders was engaged in horseplay with another employee immediately before the accident and was swinging her arms around like “a windmill” on her way to the fax machine. He said she did “the windmill” to employees frequently and he simply put his hands out to protect himself from the windmill’s flailing blades, which is what caused her to fall backwards. Nevertheless, Sanders applied for and received workers’ compensation benefits for her injuries.

In court, even more evidence of office buffoonery was introduced, including body bumping, hair yanking, bear hugs, punching, slugging, wrestling on the floor, lowering chairs, pulling arm hairs, pinching and waiting outside of bathrooms to jump out and scare other employees when they opened the door. In fact, testimony indicated Fridd had surprised Sanders before as she left the bathroom, although it was “uncommon” for employees to actually push each other down. It also was stated that Fridd initiated much of the horseplay, allowed other employees to engage in it and that no employee had ever been disciplined for office hijinks.

Interestingly, another supervisor, who was subordinate to Fridd, testified she had talked to the loan company’s owner about the office monkey business, who — not surprisingly — couldn’t remember the conversation’s specifics,

but then stated definitively that he did not condone horseplay in the office nor was horseplay in Fridd’s job description.

In ruling on the case, the court started out by noting in the jury’s instructions that, as a general rule, a co-worker is immune from liability for injuries caused to another worker while in the course of and arising out of his employment so long as the defendant can establish that he was an “employee” as defined by the Ohio Workers’ Compensation Act. An “employee” is defined by statute as “every person in the service of any person, firm or private corporation.”

Furthermore, an employee who causes an injury on his employer’s time and premises while engaged in horseplay, disconnected from his employment, is not in the service of his or her employer and does not qualify for statutory immunity unless the employer consents to or acquiesces in such horseplay, or if the employee proves he or she did not instigate the horseplay. The defendant has the burden of proving his conduct arose from and was in the course of employment.

The court went on to note that although Fridd was not a corporate officer of the loan company, the company’s owner had delegated complete managerial control over the office to Fridd and, therefore, Fridd’s

knowledge of office horseplay could be imputed to the company. At trial, the company had objected to the admission of other acts of horseplay as evidence. However, the court allowed the evidence because prior acts of horseplay are relevant to establish the employer’s consent or acquiescence.

In reaching a decision in Sanders’ favor, the court summarized the case fairly concisely. Fridd readily permitted horseplay at the loan company and the owner knew about it, but took no action. Sanders received workers’ compensation benefits for her injuries. The evidence shows that the loan company consented to or acquiesced to office horseplay, so Fridd’s antics were within the course of his employment, entitling him to immunity under Ohio Revised Code 4123.741.

What? Fridd was found immune? Immune in the sense that he was not personally liable to Sanders for her injuries, the loan company was. The evidence proved the loan company and its owner knew what was going on in the office and did nothing to prevent it. So, at some point, horseplay did really become part of Fridd’s job description. The lesson here is that even though fooling around in the office isn’t written in anyone’s job description, if schools, as an employer, tolerate an employee’s antics and do nothing about it, it might as well be. ■

Administrative salary analysis

Need help determining how to compensate your administrators? It’s more complicated than most people think, and OSBA has considerable experience in this area. We are able to assist school districts with a variety of important initiatives, including:

- compensation/classification system design;
- job description creation/modification;
- performance evaluation system design.

For more information, contact **Van D. Keating**, director of management services, at (614) 540-4000, ext. 241; or (800) 589-OSBA; or vkeating@ohioschoolboards.org.



Foundations, alumni can bolster scarce resources

Christy Farnbauch, community engagement strategist, Strategic Links LLC

In these tight economic times, most Ohio's school districts are focused on finding creative ways to either save money or raise funds to help solve budget challenges. As a school board member, your job is to work collaboratively with the district's superintendent and treasurer to identify ways to bolster scarce resources. K-12 education foundations and alumni associations are gaining traction across the country to help match public funding with private contributions from corporations and individuals.

OSBA joined other states in launching a survey in September to gauge the number of Ohio school districts exploring alternative sources of funding. Of the 147 districts that responded, 39.7% reported having a school foundation, while 27.6% have an alumni association. These statistics match national trends as reported by the National School Foundation Association.

The majority of survey respondents believe these organizations function somewhat effectively for their district.

And, almost 85% of the responding districts would like to learn more about ways to strengthen these critical partners in their communities.

Like their better-known higher education counterparts, K-12 school foundations are one way districts can raise additional money outside of their taxing authority. School foundations are generally able to apply for funding from private foundations and individuals, while seeking grants from other organizations that typically would be out of a public school district's reach.

K-12 school foundations first started appearing in the 1970s. Foundations have gained a strong foothold in states like California, Florida and Texas, where school districts' taxing authority became extremely limited several years ago. Today, there are approximately 13,600 school districts in the U.S. More than 4,500 of them have a school foundation in place, raising from \$10,000 to more than \$4 million in annual revenue.

Business magnate and philanthropist

John D. Rockefeller once said, "Most major donors have never been fully challenged to give their wealth away."

That trend can be seen in many places today as public school districts stand by and watch corporate and individual dollars support many other philanthropic causes in their communities, but not the local schools. Why? It's simply because school districts aren't asking for the funds.

Raising funds

In 2012, Giving USA reported that \$316 billion was contributed to charitable causes. Of that total, \$41.3 billion was given to the education sector by foundations and individuals. However, 75% of those dollars went to colleges and universities. The second largest beneficiaries were private schools, followed by community colleges. Individual donors contributed 72% of the total contributions in 2012, a statistic that rises slightly each year. This data provides compelling evidence for school districts to cultivate and build relationships with alumni in the community and across the globe.

The extra money a foundation can raise provides the district flexibility and increased options when looking at overall educational programming. OSBA believes foundations and alumni associations can play a critical role in supporting student achievement by leveraging critical new funding streams and community goodwill.

The OSBA survey revealed that in districts where foundations and alumni associations are in place, the funds raised are primarily used to support

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classroom projects and scholarships. This is only the tip of the iceberg. For example, the Hilliard Education Foundation in central Ohio secured a \$35,000 grant in 2012 from the Verizon Foundation to support the professional development of teachers involved in creating an innovative new learning center. Other foundations have raised capital funds to support new athletic fields, technology equipment and buildings.

Partnership with the district

Most K-12 foundations and alumni associations are established as independent, tax-exempt nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations. This structure creates less confusion for the public by keeping the budget and funding separate from the district's finances, and does not overburden the school board with another responsibility.

It is good practice to draft a memorandum of understanding between the district and the foundation or association to clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each entity. Typically, the district superintendent and/or treasurer serves ex-officio on the foundation's board of directors. This strategy helps ensure the work of the foundation or association is aligned with the district's goals and priorities.

Getting started

Districts should remember that starting a foundation takes time. **Jim Collogan**, a leading education foundation advocate with The Foundation Group, suggests forming a feasibility committee to study the creation of a foundation in the community. This process will take some pressure off the school board and superintendent. Once the planning and nonprofit paperwork is complete, it takes time to put sound policies and procedures in place.

Foundation organizers should carefully choose passionate and committed community members to guide the foundation's development until an executive director can be hired. It is often difficult for volunteer board

members to maintain the stamina to complete the formation of the organization.

In some communities, the school district assigns an administrator to manage the foundation's work on a part- or full-time basis. It can take three to five years for the foundation to begin having a strong impact in the district.

If your district has a foundation or is interested in starting one, OSBA is hosting a workshop on March 6 at its office in Columbus. A team of experts will facilitate an interactive conversation about steps for building a successful foundation in your community. Plan

now to join us; lunch is provided. For more information or to register, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/events. ■

About the author: Christy Farnbauch facilitates strategic planning processes, conducts feasibility studies, manages long-term projects and provides training for schools, foundations and nonprofits across the country and internationally. She was the business and community partnership coordinator for **Hilliard City Schools** from 2004 to 2009. She also served as a board member of the Hilliard Education Foundation from 2004 to 2012 in the roles of president, vice president and chair of the Grants and Development committees.

The value of K-12 foundations

Foundations deepen communication with your community and alumni, and increase financial and volunteer support for students' educational needs. They also improve and support academic and educational opportunities for students.

Other benefits include preparing future school board members for leadership roles and creating advocates who represent the district's needs in the community.

Deeper communication

Many activities sponsored by K-12 foundations bring parents, alumni and the community into the district's schools. Foundation leaders function as advocates who help tell your district's story in the community, assist with public funding campaigns and engage people in meaningful conversation in support of education.

Increased financial resources

The district's administrators and board of education are responsible for securing resources to support the education of the community's children. Foundations can help fill gaps by supporting academics, staff professional development, the arts, special projects, athletics and capital needs.

Increased volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of an

organization. And, volunteers who are meaningfully engaged with an organization are more likely to support the work financially. On average, foundations have more than 100 volunteers. They offer an opportunity for community members and retired district staff to be involved in educational activities.

Adults in children's lives

Foundation boards offer another set of organized adults structured around the mission of supporting the education of the community's children. Research proves that another set of adults in a child's life can be very influential. The average board size is 12, and the average board has three to five committees made up of another five to six people each. The board's members are creative and often very energized about getting others involved.

Trains future school board members

According to a RAND Corporation study, the foundation board and/or one of its committees is the perfect place for creative, energetic and dynamic community leaders to get involved. Not everyone wants to be, nor has the time to be, a school board member. The foundation is the ideal group and training ground for deeper service within the district.



Becoming an active advocate for education

Jay Smith, lobbyist

If you're reading this, it's likely you are interested in or have a stake in Ohio public education. Whether you are a new board member, veteran board member, public school employee or someone who simply wants the best for Ohio schoolchildren, you have the ability to become an active advocate for public education.

Advocacy is defined as "the act or process of advocating or supporting a cause or proposal." At its most basic, advocacy contains three elements: identifying a concern, taking a stand and letting others know what you believe or recommend.

As an individual interested in public education issues, you have taken the first steps toward becoming an active advocate. You have clearly taken these

initial steps if you are a school board member who ran a campaign based on your ideas or concerns. Now it's time for the next step — incorporating the do's and don'ts of active advocacy into your role on a board of education.

As an individual and citizen, you have the right to speak, petition or write freely on public policy issues. However, you cannot speak for your school board unless the board has taken an official position or you are authorized to do so on its behalf. Unless you are designated or authorized to support or oppose a particular cause or policy, you must represent the position of the group, not your own opinion. Whether you are speaking as an individual or as a representative of your board, it is important to always identify whom you are advocating for.

To become an effective advocate you must become informed about issues affecting your cause. Whether it's district governance, school funding, curriculum or personnel issues, you need to learn about the issues you will be advocating for or against. OSBA has a variety of resources to educate you on an array of issues, including OSBA's Legislative Platform, email updates, workshops, webinars and publications. It also is important to make legislative updates a regular and expected part of school board meetings. This allows for public discussion on how an issue could impact your district.

Next, you should learn all you can about your district and understand the potential impact certain state and federal legislative policy can have on your schools. This is



Ohio School Boards Association
2014 Capital Conference
Nov. 9-12, 2014 Greater Columbus Convention Center

Call for conference breakout session proposals!

The hallmark of the OSBA Capital Conference is the educational programming. Breakout sessions feature practical advice that attendees can take back to their districts. The conference offers sessions on innovative programs, cost-saving strategies, key legislation and other timely and important topics.

OSBA is now accepting proposals for breakout sessions for the 2014 Capital Conference. Proposals will be selected based on strong interest; relevance; creativity; innovation; proven success; and practical, how-to information.

The deadline for proposals is 5 p.m. on March 17. We encourage online nominations, but paper submissions will be accepted. Download a nomination form at the website below.

Visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/nominate-a-session to submit your proposal today!

information you will want to share with legislators, district staff and other community advocates. Again, OSBA can help you get this information.

After becoming well-informed on the issues and their potential impact on your district, it's time to get to know your decision makers. The ones we are most concerned with are state and congressional legislators. Building relationships with these individuals will help educate them on the issues that are most pressing to their home district and build your credibility as an education expert and constituent they can rely on.

To initiate these relationships, you should introduce yourself by phone, email or letter and request a personal meeting. It is preferable to meet with the representative in their home district, where you can have the legislator's undivided attention. This relationship also can be expanded to include meeting with other school officials or legislative networks, or inviting a legislator to discuss issues at a regular or special board meeting. Also, be sure to take advantage of opportunities to invite legislators to your school district to showcase special programs or events.

When contacting decision makers, don't make it a one-time event, such

Legislative liaisons are OSBA's 'boots on the ground'

Legislative liaisons are a vital part of OSBA's advocacy efforts. That's because local board members are uniquely positioned to inform their legislators about the local impact of legislative decisions.

Each OSBA member district is entitled to appoint one of its board members to serve as its legislative liaison. Liaison's duties include:

- sharing information from OSBA about state and federal education legislation with their fellow board members;
- establishing and maintaining relationships with local legislators;

- encouraging school board colleagues to contact their legislators on important legislative issues;
- participating in *Kids PAC*, OSBA's political action committee, and encouraging fellow board members to join;
- reading the legislative liaison monthly newsletter, "The Link";
- following OSBA's "Facts in a Flash" weekly email updates, which are distributed when the legislature is in session and are an excellent resource for staying informed on legislative proposals and hearing schedules.

as only meeting during OSBA's State Legislative Conference, which will be held March 13. Plan for ongoing communication. You can do this by simply following up with legislators on calls-to-action issued by OSBA and after important votes are taken, as well as regularly meeting with them when they are back home in their district.

OSBA is here to help you become an effective school advocate in any way we can. We encourage local boards to embrace the role of the OSBA legislative liaison and stay on top of

state and federal happenings. For more information on serving as a legislative liaison, see "Legislative liaisons are OSBA's 'boots on the ground'" above.

The OSBA Division of Legislative Services is always available to answer questions about legislation and communicating those concerns to decision makers. Should you have any questions, don't hesitate to call.

For more information on OSBA's advocacy efforts, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/legislative. ■

You really can make a difference ... because kids count!

Children are our future and there is no greater investment than a child's education. By joining OSBA's political action committee, *Kids PAC*, you are helping to ensure all children in Ohio receive the quality education they deserve!

You can donate online at www.kidspac.org. To learn more about *Kids PAC*, contact **Marcella Gonzalez** at mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org or call (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA.



Lawson leads



OSBA President Susie Lawson inside the halls of Wayne County Schools Career Center. Lawson, a 26-year school board member, took office as the association's 59th president on Jan. 1.

OSBA in 2014

*Bryan Bullock,
assistant editor*

OSBAs President **Susie Lawson**'s enthusiasm for students can be seen on her face when she walks in a classroom — which she does often. Lawson, who serves on the **Tri-County ESC** and **Wayne County Schools Career Center** boards, is all smiles when she interacts with students.

The 26-year board veteran has been active in her school community for decades and is a regular volunteer, including a judge at Skills USA competitions at the state and national levels.

Chosen by her peers to lead OSBA in 2014, Lawson also is passionate about supporting students and advancing the cause of public education across Ohio. She took office on Jan. 1 as OSBA's 59th president.

Lawson strongly supports OSBA, participating in an extensive range of association governance and activities. She serves on numerous committees and holds key offices at the regional, state and national levels (see "Lawson service snapshot" on page 16).

Lawson earned the OSBA Master Board Member Award in 2006, a lifetime distinction, and has received numerous OSBA Awards of Achievement. In 2002, she was named to the All-Ohio School Board, OSBA's highest honor. The awards recognize board members who enhance their leadership skills through professional development, service to OSBA and work on behalf of their own boards. Lawson also has been honored nationally on multiple occasions with the National School Board Association School Board Member National Recognition Program award.

Lawson's involvement in public education began as a classroom volunteer when her children were in kindergarten. She began her school board service in 1986, when she joined the **Chippewa Local (Wayne)** Board of Education in northeast Ohio. Today, when she is not busy with her commitments to public education, Lawson said she enjoys spending time with her grandchildren.

The *Journal* asked Lawson to share her thoughts on the rewards and challenges of school board service, her plans for her year as president and the value of OSBA.

Why did you first decide to serve on a public school board and why have you continued to serve over all these years?

My parents cultivated my belief in the basic right that grants children a quality education. I wanted to ensure that each and every child continued to have that right.

What challenges have your districts faced in your time on the board?

The challenges over the past 26 years have been many, but the one constant has been the lack of adequate funding for educational programs. We continue to advocate for the state to provide its fair share of school funding and stop shifting more and more of the funding burden to local taxpayers.

What achievements are you most proud of in your districts?

First and foremost, I am most proud of the excellent education our students receive. Our support system is second to none, and our administrators, teachers and board of education members are dedicated to ensuring a quality education for every student.

At Tri-County ESC, I am very proud of the International Baccalaureate program we offer to our high school students in the tri-county area. I'm also very proud of the services we provide to our districts that would be difficult, if not impossible, for them to afford on their own.



Lawson pets a guinea pig and chats with students in the Animal Care & Management program at Wayne County Schools Career Center.



Lawson talks with administrators at Wayne County Schools Career Center.

At the JVS, I am extremely proud of the implementation of the Academic Assistance Area (AAA). The program is for students who need extra help in an academic area. A full-time coordinator and certified teacher/tutors assist students with testing, papers and homework. AAA is available to any student for any reason.

The Student Assistance Center (SAC) is another program that helps students succeed. It assists special education students who need extra help in either an academic area or career-tech program. SAC is staffed with two tutors who provide appropriate accommodations to meet student needs.

We also offer credit recovery and accelerated learning through a program called ILAB; there is no tuition for this course.

What are the most significant changes on the horizon for public education in Ohio?

The most significant changes involve increased efforts to privatize public education, with more and more funding being diverted from our public schools. Attempts to diminish local control and accountability, as seen in recent changes to JVSD governance, are another challenge Ohio is likely to continue to face.

In providing a high-quality education and preparing our students for the jobs of the future, we face the obstacles that come with implementing the Common Core standards and the new assessments. The new teacher evaluations and new high school graduation requirements also present a challenge. While all of these changes present difficulties, I am confident Ohio public schools will overcome them.

You serve on the board of a career center and an ESC. Why are these two types of institutions an important part of public education in Ohio?

Career centers and ESCs play a critical role in the public education of our children.

ESCs primarily provide services to local school districts. Districts, in many cases, contract with ESCs for services that would be much more expensive to provide on their own. ESCs also are engaged in a variety of shared services with Ohio school districts.

Examples of noninstructional shared services include: group purchasing consortia, bus driver certification and physicals, teacher licensure, BCI/FBI background checks, juvenile court liaisons and student attendance officers.

For the instructional shared services, some of these include: preschool special education, shared teachers, curriculum and assessment, alternative schools, Head Start programs, special education transition coordinators, public preschool, after-school programs and summer enrichment opportunities. These are just a few examples of the cost-effective instructional and noninstructional services that ESCs can provide districts.

Career center students have the opportunity to enroll in a career-technical education course of study. This means that in

Lawson service snapshot

Board of education

Tri-County ESC, 2005-present; Wayne County Schools Career Center (WCSCC), 2003-present; Chippewa Local (Wayne), 1988-2004

Local board offices

Tri-County ESC annual Legal Updates; Tri-County ESC Legislative Committee; Tri-County ESC legislative liaison; Tri-County ESC Grass Roots Advocacy Group; WCSCC Curriculum Committee Chair; WCSCC Diversity and Gender Equity Committee; WCSCC Finance and Legislative chair; WCSCC legislative liaison; WCSCC Levy Committee; WCSCC Negotiation Committee

OSBA Northeast Region offices

President; president-elect; immediate past president; executive committee member

OSBA offices

President; Executive Committee; Board of Trustees; Ambassadors for Education; Arrangements and Hospitality Team; Audit Committee; Board Mentor; Capital Conference Planning Task Force; Credentials Committee; Delegate Assembly; Federal Relations Network; Nominating Committee; Student Achievement Leadership Team

National School Boards Association offices

Central Region Nominating Committee; Delegate Assembly; Election Committee; timekeeper; Pre-K Legislative Committee; sergeant-at-arms

Occupation

Retired

Family

Husband **Dean**; two children, **Kevin** (wife **Kari**) and **Wendi** (husband **A.J.**); and four grandchildren, **Susette**, **Kayla**, **Kaden** and **Konnor**



Lawson learns about some of the cutting-edge technology available to students and staff at Wayne County Schools Career Center.

In addition to the rigorous academic requirements, students take specific classes in their chosen field. Some of these students go on to college, while others are specifically trained to go directly into the workforce. Career centers tailor their educational programs to the needs of the ever-changing job market so students are equipped with relevant and valuable 21st century skills.

Why is OSBA membership valuable?

OSBA is the voice of public education. OSBA provides districts access to services at a much lower cost than they can obtain on their own. OSBA’s extensive outreach to all groups and individuals that support a strong public education system add to the collective power of the association’s members. Through that collective power, we are able to more effectively promote the importance of a high-quality education for the economic future of our students, citizens and state.

How has your involvement with OSBA over the years benefited your districts?

OSBA’s workshops and networking opportunities are invaluable. My active participation in OSBA programs and activities has enabled me to more effectively represent my districts by learning the best ways to cut costs while continuing to provide a high-quality education.

What would you say to encourage other board members to be more involved with OSBA?

I strongly encourage you to participate in association programs and activities. Serve on committees and play a role in OSBA

planning, training and governance. I urge you to advocate for your schools, locally and at the state and federal levels. OSBA provides tremendous support and resources to help promote your grassroots advocacy efforts, so take advantage of that support.

What do you hope to accomplish as OSBA president?

First and foremost, we must ensure all Ohio students receive a high-quality public education and are prepared for the jobs of the future. Second, we must be vigilant in opposing mounting efforts to privatize public education. Third, we must stand firm against attempts to diminish local control and accountability. Fourth, we must continue to advocate for the state to provide its fair share of school funding and stop shifting more and more of the funding burden to local taxpayers.

What advice do you have for new board members?

Professional development — you really do need to be a lifelong learner. A commitment to leadership training shows that you are accountable to your schools and communities. In these tough economic times, it is more important than ever for board members to learn the best ways to govern effectively and provide a high-quality education.

Is there any other advice you would like to offer or anything you would like to add?

You will find no stronger ally to support you in your difficult role as a board member than the Ohio School Boards Association. The more involved you can be in OSBA, the stronger that support will be. ■

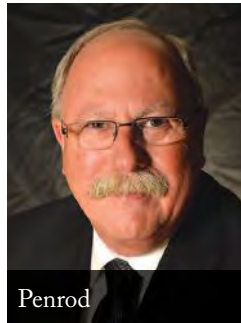


Board of Trustees confirms OSBA 2014 president-elect

Penrod to lead OSBA in 2015

Gary Motz, managing editor

The OSBA Board of Trustees recently confirmed the Nominating Committee's selection of **Ed Penrod, Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking) and Tri-County Career Center**, as OSBA's 2014 president-elect.



Penrod

The president-elect's duties include serving on OSBA's Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, and chairing the Legislative Platform Committee. Penrod was confirmed by the Board of Trustees on Jan. 16, and will become OSBA's president in 2015, following his term as president-elect.

Penrod, in his 18th year on the Logan-Hocking school board and 15th year on the career center board, has served on numerous OSBA committees. They include the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, Federal Relations Network, Delegate Assembly and Southeast Region Executive Committee.

He also served as Southeast Region president in 2004 and has represented OSBA on several national committees. In recognition of his dedication to professional development and service, OSBA has presented him with multiple Awards of Achievement and the Master Board Member award.

On his local boards, Penrod has worked on policy, finance and strategic planning committees, and served multiple terms as board president and vice president. He also has served as an OSBA legislative liaison for both of his districts.

In addition, the veteran board member oversaw a major

Ohio School Facilities Commission construction project at Logan-Hocking that resulted in six new school buildings and a major upgrade and addition to the middle school. Based on community input and support, the project also included a new state-of-the-art auditorium and athletic complex.

A professional clinical counselor, Penrod is committed to his community, as well. A founding member of the Hocking County Family and Children First Council, he also served as a board member and finance chair of the Southeastern Regional Council on Alcoholism and a member of the United Way Board of Hocking County and Hocking County Farm Bureau.

Local honors include the Logan-Hocking Local School District 1989 Distinguished Service Award; induction into the Logan High School Academic Hall of Fame in 1991; and Ohio House and Senate resolutions for outstanding efforts on behalf of area youth and dedication to promoting services to children.

Penrod is president and chief executive officer of PRISM Behavioral Healthcare in southeast Ohio and has extensive experience at all levels of clinical counseling, supervision and administration. A U.S. Army veteran, he served as a chaplain in the Army National Guard and Reserves following his active duty tour.

He earned a bachelor's degree in communications from Asbury College in Wilmore, Ky., and master of divinity and master of arts degrees from the Methodist Theological School in Ohio in Delaware.

Penrod and his wife, **Debbie**, live in Rockbridge. They have two sons who are Logan-Hocking Local School District graduates, and one granddaughter. ■



OSBA Business Honor Roll highlights school supporters

Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

OSBA is kicking off its fourth annual Business Honor Roll program. Launched in 2011, the highly popular program offers school districts a way to recognize local businesses for their support.

Local businesses play an important role in supporting their communities' schools. This help is especially important as Ohio school districts face budget challenges, ever-increasing accountability demands and an uncertain economic climate.

The Business Honor Roll provides districts a way to recognize their local businesses and say "thanks" for their contributions. If there are firms in your district deserving of this recognition, OSBA strongly urges you to select them for the Business Honor Roll.

Businesses help support their schools in many ways; following are just a few examples:

- internship/job shadowing programs;
- offering employees time off to volunteer in schools;
- serving as a mentor or tutor;
- supporting extracurricular programs;
- hosting company tours or sponsoring field trips;
- supporting programs with in-kind or financial support;
- delivering presentations to individual classes or at assemblies;
- buying ads in event programs;
- donating to scholarship programs.

These are just a few of many ways businesses support their schools, so don't limit yourself to this list.

"The businesses our district nominated were honored to be included in the OSBA Business Honor Roll," said **Troy City** Superintendent **Eric J. Herman**. "This program helped to confirm and strengthen our relationship with the companies and provided an excellent method for our district to say 'thank you.'"

School-business partnerships are good for all involved.

Schools receive additional support they so badly need. Students get real-world experience and the benefits of learning from professionals in many different fields. And, businesses gain a better understanding of their school systems and let educators know about the critical workforce skills they need.

"The OSBA Business Honor Roll provides a great opportunity to thank our work-based learning partners who have been instrumental in providing hands-on, real-world work experiences for students in the various career-technical programs at our career center," said **Rick Smith, Springfield-Clark Career Technology Center** superintendent.

Districts that participate in the program are limited to five choices; four single businesses for any kind of support and one category for project-specific support that can name all of the businesses.

To make your selections online, go to the OSBA Business Honor Roll Web page, www.ohioschoolboards.org/business-honor-roll, and click on the nomination form link. The deadline to submit selections is March 17; OSBA cannot accept nominations after that deadline.

The Business Honor Roll Web page also features a resource kit with everything districts need to recognize the valuable contributions of their business partners. The kit includes a sample board resolution, sample press release and tips on ways to recognize honorees.

Some winners will be recognized in the *OSBA Journal* magazine and all winners will be listed on the association's website. OSBA will mail personalized certificates and copies of the *Journal* to district superintendents so board members can present them to each firm at a board meeting.

For questions on this program, contact the article's author at (614) 540-4000; (800) 589-OSBA; or afinney@ohioschoolboards.org. ■

Welcome to the



Veteran leaders offer tips to board 'freshmen'

OSBA welcomes and congratulates the more than 750 new school board members who recently took office. OSBA commends you for your commitment to serve on a leadership team that provides educational opportunities for your community's children. There is no greater contribution a citizen-servant can make.

You will face many challenges. The duty you've stepped up to perform will demand much time, energy and patience. It also will require working well with other members of your board through teamwork, collaboration and communication.

As an elected leader, many people will be counting on you, which means you must be able to balance concerns, requests and demands from throughout the community. And, there will be much to learn about your new role and responsibilities.

But, know this: OSBA offers countless resources to help you succeed. From publications, training, legal consultation and policy services to legislative advocacy, labor relations, pooling programs and more, OSBA's expert staff is at your service.

As part of OSBA's welcome to the world of school board service, much of this issue of the *Journal* focuses on new board members. For this opening article, OSBA asked veteran board members and association staff to offer their insights on board governance and educational leadership.

Respondents' answers were condensed due to space limitations. To view their full responses, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/for-new-board-members. You'll also find a wealth of other new board member resources and information on that page.

school board

Gary Motz,
managing editor

School board members

What is the most valuable piece of advice you would give to a new member on your school board?

Susie Lawson, OSBA president; board member, Tri-County ESC and Wayne County Schools Career Center; 26 years of board service: I strongly encourage new board members to attend OSBA workshops, network with other board members and always make educating children their No. 1 priority.

Eric Germann, board president, Lincolnview Local (Van Wert); Northwest Region immediate past president; four years of board service: Listen to your constituents; they put you there. Listen to your fellow veteran board members. They have the institutional knowledge of “how we got here.” And listen to others via professional development. Take advantage of OSBA’s invaluable resources and networking opportunities. You may not agree with some or all of the opinions you hear, but listening will broaden your horizon and base of knowledge and help you make more informed or confident decisions.

Randall E. Smith, Forest Hills Local (Hamilton); 10 years of board service: On any issue, make sure you get all the facts before making a decision. There are usually at least two sides to a story. You don’t want to find out there was additional information that would have changed your mind about a decision after you have announced your position or voted.

What is the hardest thing to learn about being on a board of education?

Sue Steele, board president, Goshen Local (Clermont), board member, Great Oaks ITCD; 16 years of board service: Do not become a board member with a personal agenda. You need to remember every decision you help make affects every student, not just the students you have personal contact with. Do not try to micromanage; hire people who are educated in their field to do what is best for your district.

Ruth M. Nau, Noble Local (Noble); 26 years of board service: It’s very difficult following the unfunded mandates that cost our schools so much each year.

Walter S. Armes, board president, Whitehall City; 21 years of board service: Some people make decisions based on emotion — not knowledge of the issues involved.

What do you wish you had known when you started on the board?

Lawson: I wish I had known how political educational issues are, and that not all politicians make decisions based on what is in the best interests of children.

Germann: That the board sets the “what” and lets the administration figure out the “how.” For those who come from a management background, it is difficult to let others do the “how.”

Smith: There is a cultural difference between the education community and the business community. In business, there is a much greater focus on measurable results, i.e., you get what you measure. But it’s much harder to measure education output than it is to measure how many cases of toothpaste you sold or how much profit you made. The culture in business is to drive a meeting to a conclusion with clear next steps that are put in writing. Education meetings don’t seem to be as rigid and frequently don’t have outcomes that can easily be summarized.

“Listen to your fellow board members and others involved in your district; you won’t always agree, but respect each other’s opinions.”

— Sue Steele

What are your top priorities as a board member?

Steele: Making sure every student succeeds because your board is giving them the courses and tools they need to become successful. I have always wanted to make sure each and every student leaves our district with high self-esteem and able to say, “I am the best I can be; I am special.”

Lawson: Providing a high-quality education and preparing our students for the jobs of the future. To be vigilant in opposing increasing efforts to privatize public education and stand firm against attempts to diminish local control and



accountability. Advocating for the state to provide its fair share of school funding and stop shifting more and more of the funding burden to local taxpayers.

Nau: Providing our students 21st century technology and learning tools to enable them to succeed in the future.

Armes: I want to work cooperatively with the other board members, administration and staff. I also want to support our staff and help them meet the district's objectives by providing the resources for a high-quality education.

What was the best advice you received?

Germann: When a situation is done, it's done. Whether it's student discipline, controversial changes to policy or process, or employee discipline, once it's decided, it's done. You can't rehash it at every meeting and you can't hold it against anyone over the long haul.

Smith: Remember that as a board member, you cannot speak for the board or the district unless the board has specifically authorized a position or a specific statement.

Steele: You need to put students' education above everything else by making sure you have the correct curriculum and students are learning about life and how to succeed in the world today. You will find out that the time some students spend at school provides them with the most security and attention they get in their lives.

Armes: Listen and respond to your constituency no matter what their social or economic status. Each person is important. You may not agree with them, but disagree in an agreeable manner. Be careful what you say and to whom; it is easy to be misinterpreted. Also be careful when talking to reporters. Do not be afraid to refer constituents to the superintendent or other school official for the best answer.

How can board members increase student achievement?

Nau: School board members need to be up-to-date on the latest technology and work hard to ensure their staff is educated, qualified and able to provide the best for all students.

Lawson: Focus on professional development. Investing in learning and leadership pays big dividends in student achievement.

Germann: Encourage people to step outside their comfort zone and take risks. Many are afraid to do that because of the current culture created by OTES/OPES (Ohio teacher and principal evaluation systems). Encourage risk-taking to enable people to "break the mold" without fear of retribution for good-faith efforts. Encourage staff to take those risks and meet students where they are or implement student ideas that may have merit. If a new idea fails, regroup or drop it.

Smith: Support programs that provide high-quality curriculum for your students. Support new programs that provide education in emerging areas. The world is changing more rapidly than ever. We need to keep up with new programs to prepare our students for college and/or careers now.

What part of being a board member is the most personally rewarding to you?

Armes: Seeing that you have a strong staff to work with your students and help them succeed. Graduation and awards ceremonies are strong indicators of success and are very rewarding, as is helping build new facilities for students and the community.

Nau: There are so many things. The kindergartner smiling with a new book bag and excited to ride the bus; giving seniors their diplomas along with a handshake and a hug; awards banquets; seeing students' successful class projects; watching our community support their schools and students. I love my work and have *never* regretted getting involved.

Steele: One that stands out for me is that at every board meeting we have students in to explain what they are doing in class and what it means to them. The pride you feel about being able to help students succeed is like no other pride you will feel. We are a small community, so people know just about everything that is going on in our district. To walk into the grocery store and have someone without children in school tell you they read about the great job the district is doing makes you stand up a little taller, like a proud parent.

Germann: Watching the child I know had a hard life and struggled their entire academic career walk across the stage and receive a diploma, in spite of the odds.

Lawson: Visiting students in the classroom is always a rewarding experience for me.

Smith: Seeing individual students succeed because of the programs that we offer, and seeing our district ranked as a top district in the state in various measures.

Is there any other advice you would offer?

Armes: Remember you only have power to take action when you are in a regular meeting. As a single board member, you do not have the authority to give staff orders. If there are conflicts among board members, do your very best to not air them at a

board meeting. Remember, you are a very important part of a team; don't embarrass yourself, the board or the community.

Steele: Stay involved in what is going on in your district and community and keep the doors of communication wide open. Being trusted and respected by your staff, community, students and parents is crucial to your district's success. Listen to your fellow board members and others involved in your district; you won't always agree, but respect each other's opinions.

Lawson: Again, professional development. A commitment to leadership training shows you are accountable to your schools and communities. In these tough economic times, it is more important than ever for board members to learn the best ways to provide a high-quality education.

Germann: My overall goal is to create an environment where people (administration, staff and students) succeed or fail on their own merits and streamline the process to get them the resources they need in a challenging statutory and fiscal environment.

Smith: If your district is going to succeed long term, your

decisions need to not only be in the best interest of students, but also fair to district employees and your property taxpayers. It would be easy to make decisions that are in the best interest of students, but you cannot forget about the impact on others. It has to be a partnership and a fair financial balance.

OSBA staff

What is some basic advice that you would give to new school board members?

Rob Delane, deputy executive director and former superintendent at Lucas Local (Richland): Moving from private citizen to public school official, and from being an individual to a member of a team can be difficult. Old knowledge must be weighed against new knowledge and tempered in light of a new role.

Be informed. Learning what it takes to be a board member is like trying to drink out of a fire hose. There is so much information — and it's coming at you so rapidly — that it's hard to take in only what is important. Unfortunately, there is no single body of knowledge that will make you an effective board member. Take the time to become knowledgeable about your district's policies, procedures, financial picture,

Vets offer rookies guidance in OSBA 'mini-poll'

Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

In January, OSBA conducted a "mini-poll" of veteran school board members statewide, asking them to provide tips, insights and advice for newly elected board members. Following are the responses from these seasoned board members.

The association hopes new board members find this information helpful as they embark on their board service journey. And remember, OSBA is always here to help, and is just a phone call or email away.

Top five most common responses

- Listen and be open-minded with fellow board members, district staff, parents, students and the community.
- Don't come with your own agenda.
- Teamwork is imperative.
- Do not micromanage the district staff. Allow administrators to do their jobs; as a board member your role is to handle the "big picture" items and set policy.
- Be an educated board member by attending OSBA events and using the association as your resource for all things related to boards of education.

Additional responses

- Learn and understand your district's mission statement.
- Take time to learn all of your duties and go slow. Not everything has to be done overnight.

- Learn from veteran board members as much as you can.
- Do a lot of listening and learning before committing to major decisions.
- Being on the school board is not an easy job. Give yourself plenty of time to digest your role and all that is done by the board.
- Be honest.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Never lose sight of why you ran for office — the students.
- Do not make issues personal; consider the district as a whole when making decisions and policies.
- Get involved legislatively and understand what is going on at the local, state and federal levels.
- Make professional development a priority by attending OSBA workshops and seminars.
- Do your "homework" on your district and know what is going on at all times.
- Always be respectful.
- Attend the OSBA Board Leadership Institute.
- Have patience.
- Understand the legal rules of board meetings, such as the Sunshine Law.
- Review minutes from the previous year, especially the January minutes.
- Sit down with your district's treasurer and review the five-year forecast and monthly financial statements to make sure you understand what is going on.
- Above all, students are the No. 1 priority.

strategic goals, state report card and other significant topics. Then commit yourself to ongoing training to help you be more effective. Board members expect staff members to pursue meaningful professional development. Board members send a strong message when they model that behavior.

Damon Asbury, director of legislative services, whose extensive career in public education administration includes serving as Columbus City superintendent, associate superintendent of management services and assistant superintendent; and as Worthington City superintendent:

Remember that you are elected to serve the educational needs of the children in your community. Your neighbors are counting on you to keep that mission firmly in mind. If you can honestly say that your actions are in the best interests of the children, you will be doing a great job.

Steve Horton, school board services consultant and former Mount Healthy City Board of Education member: First and foremost, don't be afraid to ask questions, no matter how elementary or insignificant you think they might be. It really is baptism by fire for new members. There is no way to be fully "trained" and comfortable when you first sit at the table and look out at those in the room. My caution is to be aware of a desire to be the expert and take control from the start. Pay attention to all that goes on around you and open dialogues with all the board members and administration.



What can a new board member do to improve his or her boardmanship skills?

Cheryl W. Ryan, deputy director of school board services and former Hilliard City Board of Education member: Attend OSBA and other legitimate training events. Network with regional and statewide board members. Read research and articles on education. Commit to partnering with your board colleagues.

Kathy LaSota, director of school board services and former communications director at Delaware City and Hilliard City schools: Participate as much as possible in professional

development as a team. Take individual responsibility to seek full understanding of issues before the board.

Hollie F. Reedy, chief legal counsel: Ask a variety of people, including your superintendent, treasurer and people in the community, what they think the challenges are. Then listen carefully to their answers. The most important issues for the district may not be as important as their perception of what the issues are. You have joined an ongoing effort — start by understanding what your role is and what's already in progress. OSBA has many training opportunities, including custom learning, that can help you.

What are the biggest challenges facing Ohio public education today?

Van D. Keating, director of management services: Fiscal challenges have always been at the forefront, but in many ways, student achievement will eclipse that issue in the eyes of board members. As more and more performance data become available, the public will easily be able to compare how districts are performing on multiple levels. The phrase "bang for the buck" will come into play as a result of these comparisons and boards will have to critically evaluate the overall efficacy of their operations in a whole new light.

Delane: Board members have high expectations for positively shaping education. However, those goals often flounder on a complex mix of obstacles, scarce resources, special interest groups, hidden agendas, legislative mandates, vague initiatives and spotty information. Closing the achievement gap, improving learning opportunities for all students and preparing them for college or career readiness in the 21st century are some of the greatest challenges facing school boards.

Asbury: It is hard to narrow this down to a few items, but I believe the achievement gap among students poses the greatest challenge, not only to school performance, but also to the future well-being of our nation. We cannot let continuing generations of students leave school unprepared for their future.

How can board members best address these challenges?

LaSota: Communicate, listen, learn the facts, be patient.

Keating: Board members have to view these challenges with an eye toward the "big picture." All the little components that feed into student performance and district ratings are important. Boards need to understand the "hows" and "whys" to a much greater extent than ever before.

Horton: Be willing to listen to other board members, employees and community members and look for the nuggets of truth in what they say. This requires a civil, adult dialogue devoid of personal pride, one that engages in a give and take that can lead to the best we have to offer.

How can board members help students perform better?

Horton: Set a positive example, along with attainable goals and strategies for the administration to work toward. Then get out of the way! Good teachers want to teach — the vast majority of them love children and want to make a difference in their students' lives. Boards must enable teachers to be their best. They also play a crucial role in creating classroom environments in which students can thrive, regardless of socioeconomic and demographic realities.

Ryan: Work closely with the superintendent, who is presumably in partnership with school staff. Learn how other districts are succeeding and consider whether any of their methods might work in your district. Focus on student achievement when considering any other issue to keep it a priority in thought and behavior.

LaSota: Become knowledgeable about all things educational. In work sessions, talk with administrators about trends, challenges and opportunities surrounding teaching and learning. Ask questions focused on how the board can support teaching and learning through policy and resource allocation.

What do new board members need to know about OSBA?

Reedy: I say it all the time: OSBA is *your* member resource. Use that resource by calling us, attending training and reading

publications. OSBA works hard to constantly offer relevant information to help board members and district staff. Create a connection and use it. OSBA's website, publications and experienced staff are here for you — incorporate using your association into achieving your goals as a board member.

Keating: I have found that new board members do not seem to realize the breadth of our expertise and services. They seem very surprised to find out there is someone here that can help them individually or as a board with their questions or issues. OSBA has been serving school boards since 1955, and while the staff has changed over time, much knowledge and experience has been handed down. OSBA prides itself on member service, and its large and diverse membership requires it to have an equally large and diverse base of knowledge.

Delane: The Ohio School Boards Association is a member-driven organization whose only reason for existence is to provide programs, services and guidance to help board members and other members of the leadership team carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively in the diverse districts they represent. OSBA advocates for Ohio's public schools each and every day, and is actively engaged with myriad stakeholder groups in working toward the common purpose of promoting high-quality public education at the local, state and national levels. ■

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Five rules to follow for great school board meetings



Steve Horton, school board services consultant

Meetings! Go ahead — insert your sigh here. One could ask the question, is there such a thing as a great meeting? The answer depends on your personal perspective.

However, there is one constant truth about school board meetings all board members must take seriously: They are where a large portion of the public's opinion of the district is formed and, therefore, deserve our attention.

While parliamentary procedure is crucial to efficiently and professionally conducting meetings and is something all board members should be familiar with, that is not the focus of this article. Instead, we will explore five rules for creating great meetings that have purpose and provide the opportunity

for connecting the governance of your district with its community.

Be a great board member

The basic rules of boardmanship must apply to all members of the board; this should not be an optional requirement. The general issue with boardmanship is that it gets in the way of personal agendas and, for too many board members, that simply will not do.

OK, what are the rules? Well, given that there are entire books written on the subject, I will stick to a high-level view.

First and foremost is the realization that you are a single member of a governing body. As such, you have no official

authority outside of board sessions. So does that mean you can never talk about school business outside of board meetings? No. Conversations with other board members, administrators, teachers, parents and others from around the district can and do happen frequently, but remember, they are just conversations. No debate, decision making or votes happen during those conversations. They are where you learn and gather information to help you prepare to make an informed vote when the real business of the meeting is conducted.

Second, as an individual member of a governing board, it is never appropriate to act or speak on behalf of the board without the board's permission. The proverbial "limb" is a tough place to be, so don't purposefully put yourself out there. Also, ethics and trust are invaluable assets. Nothing can damage those more completely than divulging information shared in confidence. If it is shared behind closed doors, keep it behind closed doors.

Not too short, not too long

One of the stigmas about meetings is they often are perceived as being unnecessarily long. While it is a good idea to get in, handle the necessary business efficiently and get out, don't forget that people's time is valuable. This applies not just to long meetings, but also to very short meetings. For many sessions it is easy to introduce the agenda items, call the vote and be done in 15 to 20 minutes. The meetings are held in public for a reason — to allow people in the district to be informed about the board's decisions.

When I was a school board member, a community member once cornered me and said she watched one of our meetings on TV. I thought that was great. To my surprise, she did not agree with me. She told me she "learned that we all knew our names and how to say yes." Remember, the agenda items that are just normal business to you are not common knowledge to people outside of the schools. Take time to educate community members and let them hear your questions and answers. Even if it is not what they want to hear, it will help bring them closer to the board's work.

There is not much to say about unusually long meetings. They happen, but they should be the exception. I once heard a board member say that his board could not accomplish anything in under two hours. At the time I thought, if that is the case, you need to fix it. Figure out how to conduct your business more efficiently. Rein in those who like to talk a bit too much. In the end, everyone's time is valuable.

Love your fellow board members

Are you kidding me? Well, no, not really. I am not suggesting you all gather around the campfire and sing "Kumbaya," but I am talking about mutual respect. There are plenty of boards with members who will not communicate with each other during a meeting, let alone outside of the meeting. If you

think the district employees and community members are not acutely aware of relationship issues, guess again.

Be aware of the fine line between debate and arguing or fighting, especially during a meeting. This is a tough one, but be willing to listen and seek middle ground. Politically, we don't want to hear it, but there is always truth in an opposing position.

Little things also count during a meeting. Interruptions, eye rolling, negative body language, side conversations, passing notes and texting are all forms of disrespect. And those behaviors are noticed as if they have a spotlight on them.

I know what you are thinking. How can I control what others do? In reality, you can't, but you should feel the responsibility to set an example and be willing to constructively communicate your expectations to your fellow board members. I realize this is a tough pill, but also be willing to receive that in return. It won't solve every issue, but it is an important step in the right direction.



Board meetings provide an opportunity to educate community members on education issues and the needs of the district.

Respect the community

Inviting the public to appear and address the board can be intimidating, but remember — these people elected you to represent them. It is incumbent on board members to hear and consider public input. Nothing separates a community from its schools like shutting it out of meetings.

If you consider that adults' No. 1 fear is public speaking (death is seventh on that list), then a citizen who has summoned the courage to address the board certainly deserves the board's full attention and respect. This is especially important when you do not agree with that person's perspective. As difficult as it may be, do not allow that time to degenerate into a debate, or worse yet, an argument. The rules of respect that apply to engaging with other board members apply double for community members.

'No man (or woman) is an island'

I love the **John Donne** verse, "no man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent." So it goes for school board members. That's right ... I am talking about the dreaded "C" word. Consensus is the board's job. Give thought to this quote from **O. Garfield Jones**' book *Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance*: "For a group to be of maximum effectiveness, it must have complete leadership and also a high degree of competence among its members. Among other things, this implies that the members know how to deliberate and to crystallize these deliberations into group action."

If the board is going to be truly effective in its work, it has to reach a consensus. This does not mean you must be a "rubber stamp" for the superintendent, nor does it mean you cannot express yourself when your opinion is different from the rest of the group. No, far from it. But if the board cannot come together and accept and support a final decision, then the result is always dysfunctional and very damaging for the district.

This also relates to the overall conduct of each of the board's members, individually and collectively. I saw a YouTube video of Boston Red Sox player **David Ortiz** obliterating a dugout telephone with his bat after being ejected from a game.

On my first viewing, I got a chuckle out of the extremely overt temper tantrum. Then I thought about the impression that would leave on anyone who did not know Ortiz. I thought about him being the face of the Boston Red Sox and the team leader. If that tantrum is your only knowledge of him, or the Red Sox, then you will certainly never appreciate the longstanding legacy of the organization. That is a shame, but this is unfortunately what individual board members regularly do to their districts.

I will leave you to ponder two strong success stories. In the December 2013 issue of the *American School Board Journal*, **Del Stover** wrote a story about the recent success of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in Charlotte, N.C. Like so many other districts, increasing poverty and dwindling operating funds were fraying its fabric.

At the heart of the story were the considerable efforts of the board and newly hired Superintendent **Heath Morrison** to restore community trust in the schools. Morrison had this to say about the role of board governance: "In this challenging environment to improve public education, at a time when resources are going the wrong way and expectations are getting higher, the ability of the governance team to work together is critical."

Board Vice Chair **Timothy Morgan** added, "A lot of trust had been lost, but we've worked really hard in our interactions at the dais and how we behave in public ... we've worked hard to build community trust in this board."

NPR aired a story on Aug. 20, 2013, "What's Behind the Turnaround at Miami Public Schools?" The Miami-Dade County Public School system was an absolute zoo. Local residents actually treated the videotaped board meetings like they were reality TV entertainment. The new superintendent, **Alberto Carvalho**, who has been referred to as a miracle worker for turning the situation around, realized that a major point of emphasis had to be the dysfunctional board.

Board member **Raquel Regalado** had this to say about Carvalho's work: "He quickly made peace with the school board, which was seen as inept, disreputable and hopelessly divided. Carvalho has helped change that image." ■

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Administrators offer advice for new board members



Crystal Davis, editor

OSBA collected advice from superintendents and treasurers to help new school board members start things off on the right foot with their district administrators. Several superintendents and treasurers, selected at random, sent us their opinions on topics such as audits, finances, and superintendent and treasurer evaluations.

Superintendents

What is the most important piece of advice you would give a new board member about working with district administration, especially the superintendent?

Keith Horner, Wapakoneta City; eight years experience as a superintendent: Enter boardmanship presuming good intentions on behalf of all these individuals ... these individuals go into the job attempting to help kids learn and grow every day. In addition to that ... the superintendent and administration should presume good intentions about the new

board member as well.

Kevin D. Kimmel, Bucyrus City; 19 years experience as an administrator: Do your homework before making decisions on big issues. If you don't fully understand an issue and/or need additional information, request it.

What area of district operations or finances would you encourage board members to ask more questions about?

Horner: School operations and finances are very complex with many rules, laws, policies and procedures in place, and they are, in particular, different from the private sector. Asking a simple "why" question can be very valuable, as it forces us educators to clarify and justify what we do.

Kimmel: Take the time to fully understand the assumptions that the treasurer is making in calculating the (five-year

forecast. It's also important to know that the five-year forecast ... is a moving target that is very difficult to accurately predict further out than a year or two.

What advice might you offer on superintendent evaluations?

Horner: Superintendents need feedback from all of their board members, and it is often difficult to obtain that to provide us with clear guidance. So I would recommend honest, productive feedback, remembering that the superintendent has a global perspective of the district rather than a micro-perspective.

Kimmel: It is important that the board as a whole work with the superintendent to establish a few goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely. This gives superintendents direction on how they should prioritize their time. ... I believe it also is important for the superintendent to address concerns in the district before they reach the board level, and this can be addressed in the evaluation.



When you first became a superintendent, did you discover anything surprising about the position that might help new board members better understand your role?

Horner: The item that most surprised me was the interrelationship of the school district as part of the broader community that I did not see as a classroom teacher or building administrator. The success of a school district in most communities truly has a very large impact on that particular community.

Kimmel: I did not realize how important it was to have a team that trusted each other and was all on the same page. In order to effectively run a district, the board and the superintendent must trust each other, and that also goes for the administrative team. If there is a divide in your structure, it will be very difficult to move the district forward.

Do you have any other advice for new board members that can help ensure a productive and positive relationship between the superintendent and board?

Horner: Schools are very complex organizations that are

typically in a state of constant change. That means it is extremely important for the superintendent and board to think from a global perspective in building each district's capacity to serve kids first, and then the community.

Kimmel: To ensure a productive and positive relationship between the superintendent and the board, I would encourage new board members to schedule work sessions so that the full board and administrative team can discuss issues and provide direction for the district.

Treasurers

What is the most important piece of advice you would give a new board member about learning the ins and outs of district finances?

Joyce A. Boyer, Canal Winchester Local (Franklin); 36 years experience as a treasurer: Ask the treasurer to describe the fiscal year from start to finish. What financial terms will you be hearing and at what time throughout the year?

Roxanne S. Mazur, Carrollton EV; 19 years experience as a treasurer: They should be looking at the "big-picture" view. Focus on the five-year forecast with particular attention to the last two completed years. People need to understand that the forecasted years are based on assumptions that may or may not come true. ... You can only use experience from previous years and look at government/industry forecasts to make educated guesses. It is important that the notes to the forecast explain how numbers were derived, so that all can understand.

What area of district finances would you encourage board members to ask more questions about?

Boyer: Understand the tax levies for the district, the reduction factor and the effective millage rate, and how to calculate the cost to the taxpayers.

Mazur: Have we spent more than we brought in? If not, then you are probably on solid financial ground and there should be planning to prioritize spending to accomplish educational goals, while maintaining financial integrity. If spending was more than revenue, was it a planned major project or are routine expenses outpacing routine revenues? What was our cash balance at year-end? How long can we sustain overspending revenue? What have we done in the past to tighten our belts? Do we need a levy? Can we cut to correct overspending? It is important to understand that when you routinely overspend your revenues, the sooner you take corrective action, the less severe the correction needs to be.

In what areas do you feel new board members often fall short in being prepared for board meetings?

Boyer: Read through the entire agenda before the meeting, and then call the office and ask questions on any area that you do not understand. This gives the treasurer the opportunity to check into a situation and give a thoughtful and well-prepared response. It is very difficult to be blindsided with questions at

a public board meeting that you are not prepared to answer.

As a treasurer, what advice would you provide regarding the use of audits?

Boyer: The audit should be used to determine if the treasurer is doing a good job when evaluated by an outside organization. If there are remarks or suggestions made in the audit, the treasurer should prepare a response to the audit comments for the board to review.

Mazur: This is your key to knowing whether or not you have effective procedures in place to protect district financial resources as much as possible. ... One to five citations in an audit report are normal. Repetitive “findings” or any “findings for recovery” are signals that something is wrong.

What advice might you offer on treasurer evaluations?

Boyer: The treasurer evaluation should be done as a written document, but then the board should meet with the treasurer to present and review the document. At this meeting, the board should be prepared to discuss concerns, areas for improvement, items or conditions that need to be changed, the office environment, working conditions and any other items that are presented.

Mazur: It is not much help to have an evaluation where one

person rates you as a one on a point and another rates you as a five on that same point. ... I find it to be a more meaningful experience if I tell the board the major things my office has been working on and the challenges of the previous year, and what the challenges and goals are for the upcoming year. This opens up the conversation, so the board is aware of what is truly going on and enables them to give meaningful input on current and upcoming challenges and goals.

Do you have any other advice for new board members that can help ensure a productive and positive relationship between the treasurer and board?

Boyer: Keep the lines of communication open. Call or email the treasurer with any questions you have. Encourage the treasurer to share communications with all board members, along with the superintendent. This will help to foster a positive working relationship between the board and administrative team.

Mazur: It is extremely important that when you make tough financial decisions, you make them with a great deal of forethought and then stand behind them. The decisions should be made as a team and supported as a team. Above all else, we need to be positive role models for our kids, who need us to be mature enough to show true leadership by meeting disagreement with open conversation. ■

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Ohio's Ethics Law: What board members should know

Susan Willeke, education and communications administrator, Ohio Ethics Commission

The topic of ethics has been given considerable public and media attention in the past several years, which is a positive step in increasing awareness of and compliance with Ohio's Ethics Law. The Ethics Law steps into action when a public official has a direct personal or outside business or family interest that has the potential or character of conflict of interest. This assures taxpayers that public decisions are made to serve the public's interest, not to benefit a specific public official or employee.

The Ethics Law governs more than half a million public officials and employees throughout Ohio. Public school board members, administration and staff are subject to the entire Ethics Law and related statutes, which includes issues such as post-employment, confidentiality, conflict of interest, representation, public contract and supplemental compensation restrictions.

While each area of the Ethics Law warrants its own discussion, let's focus on specific areas about which the Ethics Commission often receives question from public school board members: gifts and public contracts, which includes the issue of nepotism.

Gifts, entertainment and other things of value

Imagine a beautiful spring day: cloudless blue skies, low humidity, a light breeze — perfect weather. Perfect golf weather, that is. When preparing for a day of fun and relaxation, the last thing on a committed golfer's mind is likely the Ethics Law. If the golfer also is a public official, however, he or she should devote a few minutes to the topic before teeing up.

The Ethics Law prohibits a public official from soliciting or accepting "anything of value" if the thing of value could have a substantial and improper influence on him or her in the performance of public duties. "Anything of value" is defined in state law to include, essentially, anything with any monetary value. Gifts, golf outings, theater or sporting event tickets, vacations and jewelry are all items the commission has specifically identified as things of

substantial value.

When a person chooses to enter public service, he or she must recognize that some gifts and entertainment will be prohibited. If an official is offered a gift, golf outing, entertainment or other item of substantial value, the official needs to identify the giver or source to determine whether it is acceptable. Individuals and other parties who are doing or seeking to do business with, interested in matters before or regulated by a public agency are improper sources of substantial gifts and entertainment to the agency's public servants.

For example, a school board member would be prohibited from accepting anything of substantial value from a vendor doing business with the school district. If a company employee were to invite the school board member to golf at an exclusive club, the board member would have two (lawful) options: decline the offer or pay the fair market value for the green fees, cart rental and any meals or beverages consumed. For more information, see the fact sheet at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/66066>.

Public contracts

Like all public entities, school districts must enter into public contracts; essentially, a public contract exists whenever the school district buys goods or services, regardless of whether there is a written contract. Examples include purchasing goods such as computers or paper products, paying for services such as construction, seeking grants or hiring employees.

While such public expenditures are routine and expected, the Ohio Ethics Law prohibits public officials, including school board members, from having an interest in the profits or benefits of the districts' public contracts. Therefore, the Ethics Law prohibits all school officials and employees from selling goods or services to the school district.

For example, a school district employee or teacher is

prohibited from selling printed materials, such as T-shirts, to the school district. School board members would likewise be prohibited from entering into a consulting or construction contract with the district, unless very specific exceptions are met. For more information, see the fact sheet at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/42834>.

Nepotism

Many families have a strong tradition of public service. There is nothing in the Ethics Law that prohibits multiple family members from pursuing and securing jobs with the same public entity. However, the Ethics Law prohibits nepotism, which means that a public official cannot hire, or use his position to secure the hire, of a family member. The commission has explained that a public official’s family members are his parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, spouse and siblings, regardless of where they live. Also included are individuals related to a public official by blood or by marriage (aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews, cousins and in-laws) and residing in the same household with the official.

The law also prohibits an official from using his or her position to influence another person to hire a family member. In other words, a school board member can’t

recommend or otherwise use his connection to secure employment for a family member. For example, a school official or employee cannot hire his sister for a job at the school. The official or employee also is prohibited from calling other school officials or employees and asking them to hire his sister. For more information, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/19471>.

These are just a few of the restrictions within the Ethics Law and related statutes. The examples are general, and may seem obvious, but all are based on cases that have been referred to the Ethics Commission. If you have questions about the law, or would like specific guidance or an advisory opinion, visit the Ohio Ethics Commission’s website at www.ethics.ohio.gov or contact the commission at (614) 466-7090.

The Ohio Ethics Commission is here to assist you and the public by encouraging ethical actions and decision making. A brief investment of time, before you act, may help save you and your school district a tremendous amount of resources, money and lost goodwill. The vast majority of public servants act ethically; the Ohio Ethics Commission welcomes the opportunity to work with them to support the highest ethical standards for Ohio’s citizens. ■

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Connecting with members

OSBA is here for you

Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

As a newly elected board member, you are learning a great deal of information about your district and community. Over the next four years, you will be making a multitude of decisions — some large and some small — that impact your district’s students, staff and community members.

OSBA understands the critical decisions all board members must make for their district. OSBA is *your* association and we want you to know no matter where you are in your boardmanship journey, OSBA is here for you.

OSBA offers a multitude of programs, services and benefits to help you. Your association is dedicated to board members and the districts they serve. When a newly elected board member first learns about OSBA, they might wonder, “What does OSBA do? How can this organization benefit my district?”

To answer these important questions, let’s take a look at OSBA’s services.

However, to get the full scope of how your association can help you, visit OSBA’s website at www.ohioschoolboards.org. You will find there truly is something for everyone.

Many of OSBA’s services are free as part of your district’s membership, including legislative representation and consultations with experts in board development, policy, school law, communications and labor relations.

Fee-based services also are available for districts that need additional assistance. By charging for services that not every member district needs or uses, OSBA keeps its membership dues among the lowest of any state school boards association.

A few examples of fee-based services include: arbitration and bargaining consultation; customized workshops; a workers’ compensation program; and publication subscriptions such as the *Briefcase*, *CommunicationPlus*, *Policy Development Quarterly* and *School*

Management News.

Since 1955, OSBA has been serving school board members and their districts with innovative and outstanding services. The association fulfills its mission by offering members access to a variety of specialized services. Each OSBA division offers great opportunities for school districts. Examples include:

Division of Business and Finance — Insurance programs for school districts (life, AD&D and disability) and treasurer and position bond programs.

Division of Communication Services — Publications, including the *Briefcase*, *CommunicationPlus* and the *Journal* magazine; the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show; biweekly video updates; and workshop coordination.

Division of Legal Services — Legal Assistance Fund; legal consulting; legal publications; and a legal blog found at www.ohioschoolboards.org/wpmu.

Division of Legislative Services — Education Tax Policy Institute; “Facts in a Flash” and “The Link” electronic legislative updates; Federal Relations Network; *Kids PAC*; legislative publications and articles; and legislative representation.

Division of Management Services — Arbitration representation; bargaining consultation; labor relations consulting and training; management and policy publications; safety programs; policy development consulting; strike assistance; transportation services; and workers’

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compensation pooling program.

Division of School Board Services —

Administrative and executive searches; Award of Achievement program; board self-evaluation; the Board Leadership Institute and other specialized board and administrator training; board retreats; strategic planning; customized workshops; school safety and security workshops; and the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show.

Other outstanding services districts can take advantage of are offered through OSBA's endorsed programs. The association selectively endorses outside providers to deliver products and services to members when a program offers special value or unique benefits. These endorsed programs save districts money and provide services necessary to effectively manage schools.

OSBA's endorsed programs include: bond program; electricity purchasing

pool; energy benchmarking software; insurance programs; management consulting; National School Boards Association National Connection Program; online payment program; paperless governance solution; online purchasing cooperative; procurement card program; online safety compliance program; school safety and security software; and risk management program. Further descriptions of these programs

Regions: Five regions – Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest

Composition: 716 school boards and their 3,377 elected and appointed board members representing Ohio's local, city, exempted village, career center and educational service center districts

Website: www.ohioschoolboards.org

can be found at www.ohioschoolboards.org/osba-endorsed-programs.

As you can see, OSBA offers a variety of services and resources that boards of education need for effective school management. If you have any questions about these services, or would like to schedule a visit from one of our consultants, call (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. ■

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OSBA is structured to serve

A guide for new board members

Gary Motz, managing editor

The Ohio School Boards Association has been serving Ohio's public boards of education for nearly 60 years.

Founded in 1955, it is the *only* statewide association with the expertise to serve Ohio's diverse range of more than 700 school districts and their nearly 3,400 board members. It is through that experience and expertise that OSBA has earned a reputation as the recognized and respected voice of Ohio public education.

Although OSBA became a statewide association in 1955, southeastern Ohio school board members began meeting at Ohio University in 1950 to examine the challenges facing public schools. Those meetings led to the creation of the Southeastern Ohio School Boards Association.

The next few years saw four other regional school boards groups form across Ohio. On Dec. 3, 1955, the five regions came together at Ohio State University in Columbus

to establish a statewide association and hold OSBA's inaugural meeting. The following day, members adopted the preamble to OSBA's original constitution:

"Recognizing that the nation's future is dependent upon the education of its youth, that in unity there is strength, that exchange of ideas is important at all times, that coordination of effort on the part of all educational forces interested in the betterment of education is necessary, and that school boards are in a strategic position to bring about needed improvement of public education, we believe an Ohio School Boards Association should be organized."

From the foresight of the founders to the innovative leadership of today, OSBA's dedication to the success of school boards and Ohio public education has never faltered. Whether you are a new board member or a veteran with decades of experience, serving your needs is the association's fundamental purpose.



School board members and district administrators network with colleagues and OSBA staff at the spring and fall region conferences.

That commitment to success is reflected in the association’s mission statement: “OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio’s public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.”

Following is a basic guide to OSBA’s organizational structure to help new school board members better understand how their association works, as well some of the resources and tools the Columbus-based association provides to help them succeed.

OSBA website and contact information

OSBA’s Web address is www.ohioschoolboards.org. Certain pages are for members only and require a username and password for access. If you don’t already have them, contact OSBA for your username and password.

OSBA’s phone numbers are (614) 540-4000 and (800) 589-OSBA (toll free). The fax number is (614) 540-4100. For staff members’ email addresses and phone extensions, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/staff-directory. The page also provides brief staff biographies.

OSBA staff members are experts in school district operations and state education policy. To learn who can answer your questions, visit the Staff Resources page at www.ohioschoolboards.org/osba-staff-resources. For information on OSBA’s divisions, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/organizational-structure.

Governance structure

OSBA’s policies are determined by its members, making it a truly member-driven organization. A Board of Trustees and Executive Committee govern the association. These two groups comprise the governance team.

The Board of Trustees is made up of the association’s officers (president, president-elect and immediate past president), presidents of the five regional associations, one representative from the each of the six districts in the state with the largest student enrollment and from 14 to 16 other school board members. The Executive Committee consists of the OSBA officers and one Board of Trustees member from each region.

Each member school board is entitled to appoint one of its members to the Delegate Assembly. The assembly conducts an annual business meeting during the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show. Its responsibilities, carried out through the democratic process, include amending the OSBA Constitution and Bylaws; adopting resolutions to amend OSBA’s Legislative Platform; and electing the OSBA president-elect.

The OSBA Constitution and Bylaws guide the association, while the Legislative Platform publicly states OSBA’s

Meet the regional managers

OSBA is divided into five regions; each has an OSBA staff member who serves as the regional manager. The managers and their contact information are listed below.



Central Region
Jeff Chambers
(interim manager)
Phone: (614) 540-4000
Email: jchambers@ohioschoolboards.org



Northeast Region
Terri Neff
Phone: (216) 470-6395
Email: tneff@ohioschoolboards.org



Northwest Region
Dr. Judy Jackson May
Phone: (419) 575-0663
Email: jjacksonmay@ohioschoolboards.org



Southeast Region
Paul D. Mock
Phone: (740) 385-5240
Email: pmock@ohioschoolboards.org



Southwest Region
Ronald J. Diver
Phone: (937) 746-7641
Email: rdiver@ohioschoolboards.org

To learn what region your district is in, see the map posted at www.ohioschoolboards.org/regions. The page also offers links to each region that provide information on officers, events, awards and activities.

positions on public education issues and advocacy efforts. These governance documents are posted at www.ohioschoolboards.org/osba-governance.

OSBA regions

To enhance and customize member services, OSBA is divided into five regions: Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest. The regions host spring and fall conferences, annual Treasurers’ Clinics, open houses and other activities. Regional officers and managers also staff the Region Resource Center at the Capital Conference. OSBA’s statewide leadership is drawn from those who serve on regional governance bodies.

Regional governance is aligned with OSBA’s statewide structure. Each region is represented by a president, president-elect, immediate past president and executive committee. The executive committees determine policies for their regions; recruit regional and statewide leaders; represent regional interests; help assess needs; conduct regional legislative platform meetings; and increase awareness of OSBA among school districts and the public.



Each region is served by a regional manager, who is an OSBA staff member assigned to coordinate activities. Managers also serve as liaisons to the association's Columbus staff and the region's school district leaders. See the box on page 37 for the managers' photos, phone numbers and email addresses.

To learn more about the regions, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/regions. The page features links to region Web pages, contact information for regional managers and a map showing what counties are in each region.

Special organizations

Several specialized groups provide board members opportunities to work with peers from other districts with similar challenges and interests: the OSBA Black Caucus; Small School District Advisory Network; and Urban School District Advisory Network.

The OSBA Black Caucus promotes and provides education on challenges African-American board members face. It offers a statewide forum on the issues facing black school board members; builds public awareness of racial diversity in schools; promotes equity in education; and supports initiatives to increase African-American student achievement.

The Small School District Advisory Network consists of about a dozen small school districts that are representative

of all small district interests. For more on the network, see "Connecting small districts" on page 42.

The Urban School District Advisory Network represents Ohio's largest urban school districts. The network acts as a state and national advocate for urban public education by identifying issues facing urban public schools and their students; providing a forum to address urban concerns; and advocating for effective responses to urban communities' needs.

Another group, the OSBA Board Member Cabinet, was created in 2008 to increase OSBA's collaboration with the governor and the Ohio Department of Education. The cabinet, composed of about 20 veteran school board members, meets several times a year with the state superintendent of public instruction and other ODE officials, as well as top representatives from the governor's office.

Web links to these special OSBA organizations can be found at www.ohioschoolboards.org/osba-groups.

This is just a brief outline of how OSBA is structured and the many different resources available to you as an OSBA member. To learn more about OSBA programs, services and benefits, see "OSBA is here for you" on page 34, visit the OSBA website or contact any staff member. ■

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Ohioans to attend NSBA annual conference

OSBA staff, Ohio school leaders to learn and share with peers nationwide

Bryan Bullock, assistant editor

Ohioans will have an active role in the upcoming National School Boards Association (NSBA) Annual Conference & Exposition. The 74th annual event will take place April 5-7 in New Orleans.

“OSBA and Ohio public schools have maintained a strong presence at the annual conference,” said OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis**. “This is a great opportunity for Ohioans to learn from their peers around the nation, as well as share challenges and success stories from our state. The conference is another platform for Ohio to contribute its voice to the national dialogue on public education.”

At NSBA’s invitation, three OSBA staff members and one Ohio school district are scheduled to present educational sessions at the conference this year. OSBA state and regional leaders are participating in the NSBA Delegate Assembly Meeting and Council of Urban Boards of Education sessions. Following are the sessions Ohioans are participating in, according to NSBA’s schedule as of late January.

NSBA Delegate Assembly Business Meeting

The assembly — NSBA’s governing body — is composed of 150 representatives from state school boards associations around the nation. OSBA delegates to the assembly are: President **Susie Lawson**, **Tri-County ESC** and **Wayne County Schools Career Center**; President-elect **Ed Penrod**, **Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking)** and **Tri-County Career Center**; Immediate Past President **Sharon E. Manson**, **Waverly City** and **Pike County Career Technology Center**; **Bob Vasquez**, **Toledo City**; and alternate member **Robert M. Heard Sr.**, **Cleveland Municipal**.

If elected by the NSBA Delegate Assembly, **Charlie**

Wilson, Worthington City, will be named to the NSBA Board of Directors. Wilson was chosen as the NSBA Central Region nominee for the board during the region’s annual meeting last summer in Minneapolis. If elected, Wilson will begin serving a three-year term on the NSBA Board of Directors. While the Delegate Assembly sets NSBA policy, the 25-member Board of Directors translates policy into action, including programs and services administered by NSBA’s executive director and staff.

Lewis also is attending the NSBA Delegate Assembly Business Meeting, as well as the Organization of State Association Executive Directors Meeting.

Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE)

This NSBA group helps urban school board leaders find solutions to challenges at the local level by sharing



OSBA Immediate Past President Sharon E. Manson, Waverly City and Pike County Career Technology Center, acts as timekeeper during the 2013 NSBA Delegate Assembly.



innovative practices through conferences, legislative advocacy, research projects, networking, publications and more. OSBA members participating in council activities include CUBE Steering Committee members **Bruce D. Alexander, Akron City**; and **Willetta Milam, Cleveland Municipal**.

National Association of Superintendent Searchers (NASS)

NASS collaborates with NSBA to provide a forum for state and national school board association superintendent searchers to share information and best practices. Superintendents and those interested in becoming a superintendent also are welcome to meet with NASS representatives. OSBA Director of School Board Services and NASS Past Chair **Kathy LaSota** and Deputy Director of School Board Services **Cheryl W. Ryan** will help staff the NASS station. Ryan also will be presenting a breakout session for NASS on the topic of superintendent searches. Both will attend the association's Annual Business Meeting.

Educational sessions

The NSBA conference features a wealth of professional development opportunities, including engaging educational sessions. A team of presenters from Cleveland Municipal will lead the session "Community Collaboration in the Transformation of an Urban School District" on April 6. The session will highlight how the mayor-appointed board of education — working with the mayor, governor, business community, teachers union and state legislature — devised, lobbied for and implemented a plan to transform education in the urban school district.

OSBA staff also will lead a variety of different educational sessions at the conference. OSBA Deputy Executive

Director **Rob Delane** will present "Unraveling From The Inside: The High Cost of Dysfunction" on April 6. The interactive session will cover conflict management, communication techniques and other information boards of education can use to work effectively together and seamlessly incorporate new board members.

LaSota and Ryan will lead "Strategic Planning Chemistry: Mixing the Right Elements to Achieve the Best Solution" on April 6. The session will guide attendees in choosing the right elements to give their strategic planning efforts an easy formula for sustainable and positive district solutions.

LaSota will present "You Don't Need All That! Focus on the End Results" on April 7. The session will address visioning, goal-setting and role clarification for districts, giving attendees a step-by-step guide to a process that builds unity and eradicates micromanagement.

Ryan will lead "Six Things You Hope To Never Hear Spoken in the Boardroom — and How Best To Respond If (And When) They Are" on April 7. The session will cover school board conflicts — including words better left unsaid — and possible recourse to minimize long-term damage to trust and forward momentum.

Region reception

OSBA invites Ohio's conference attendees to attend the NSBA Central Region Joint Reception on April 5 at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel. The festivities will take place from 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. in Grand Ballroom C and D.

The reception provides an informal atmosphere for education leaders to discuss current issues and share their



OSBA Communication Coordinator Bryan Bullock co-presents a session on social media with OSBA Staff Attorney Candice L. Christon during the 2013 NSBA Annual Conference & Exposition.

thoughts with peers. Ohioans registered for the conference will receive invitations to the reception in early March.

The NSBA Annual Conference & Exposition offers Ohio school district leaders and OSBA staff members outstanding opportunities to share their expertise and gather information, ideas and contacts that enable them to better serve Ohio

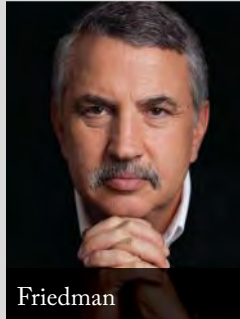
schools and their students. Networking and learning at this national level also provides fresh approaches that help OSBA provide its members with the superior services and creative solutions they need to successfully lead their districts.

For complete conference details and to register, visit <http://annualconference.nsba.org>. ■

NSBA conference features top-notch speakers

Saturday General Session, April 5 – Thomas L. Friedman

Best-selling author of *The World is Flat* and columnist for *The New York Times*, **Thomas L. Friedman** is renowned for his direct reporting and sophisticated analysis of complex issues facing the modern world. According to *Foreign Policy* magazine, “Friedman doesn’t just report on events; he helps shape them.”



Friedman

Winner of three Pulitzer Prizes, he has covered monumental stories from around the globe for *The New York Times* since 1981. *Vanity Fair* called him “the country’s best newspaper columnist.” His latest best-seller, co-written with **Michael Mandelbaum**, is *That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back*.

Sunday General Session, April 6 – Sir Ken Robinson

Sir **Ken Robinson**, Ph.D., is an internationally recognized leader in the development of education, creativity and innovation. Videos of his TED Conference talks have been seen by an estimated 200 million people in more than 150 countries. He speaks to audiences throughout the world on the creative challenges facing business and education in the new global economies.

His book, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*, is a best-seller and has been translated into 21 languages. His latest book, *Finding Your Element: How to Discover Your Talents and Passions and Transform Your Life*, provides readers with a practical guide to finding – and developing – talent and skills.



Robinson



Bailey

Monday morning General Session, April 7 – Nikhil Goyal, Erin Gruwell and Angela Maiers

This General Session features a TED Talk-style format with three speakers each giving roughly 20-minute presentations. Lauded by *The Washington Post* as a future U.S. Secretary of Education at age 18, **Nikhil Goyal** is the author of *One Size Does Not Fit All: A Student’s Assessment of School*.

As a teacher, educator, author and consultant, **Angela Maiers** has spent the past 22 years working diligently to help learners of all ages succeed by recognizing their power as readers, writers, and global communicators.

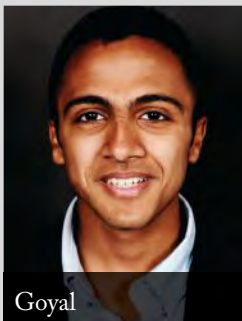
An educator and catalyst for social change, **Erin Gruwell** has earned an award-winning reputation for her steadfast commitment to the future of education.

Monday closing General Session, April 7 – Simon T. Bailey

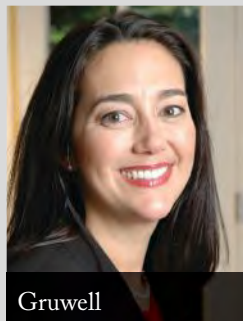
Simon T. Bailey is a leadership catalyst whose expertise equips emerging leaders with tips, tools and techniques on how to unleash potential in the world’s most important asset – people.

He is the former leader of the world-renowned Disney Institute and founder of the Brilliance Institute Inc. Harrison College in Indianapolis has partnered with him to launch the Simon T. Bailey Emerging Leaders Certificate for individuals, corporations and organizations.

Bailey is the author of seven books, including *Release Your Brilliance*. His most recent book, *The Vuja De Moment! – Shift from Average to Brilliant*, is receiving rave reviews.



Goyal



Gruwell



Maiers

Connecting small districts



Fairlawn Local (Shelby) Vo-Ag teacher Nathan Sailor, right, speaks with SSDAN members during a tour of the district's building. SSDAN members visited classrooms and spoke with teachers and students during the September site visit.

SSDAN helps small districts share solutions and learn from each other

Angela Penquite, assistant editor

Small school districts are doing more with less. And their students are thriving despite these obstacles. During a September OSBA Small School District Advisory Network (SSDAN) meeting, board members and administrators from these districts — which average fewer than 675 students per district — shared their successes and challenges. The network used to meet at the OSBA office in Columbus, but now gathers for “site visits” at one of the

member districts, which take turns hosting the visits.

Although small, these districts are providing their students a high-quality education. They have learned to make their size a strength in meeting their many challenges.

“Waynesfield-Goshen Local (Auglaize) has implemented two reductions in force and operates a program very close to

state minimums,” said Superintendent **J. Chris Pfister**. “Yet we moved up 125 positions in the academic performance index state rankings and our students grew more than one year’s growth (value-added data).”

“In this part of the state, small school districts are extremely successful,” said **William Reichert**, superintendent at **Jackson Center Local (Shelby)**. “We have good test scores, great graduation rates and our students go on to be productive members of society. Small schools are able to provide a personalized education that many parents want.”

Started in 1971, the Small School District Advisory Network represents the diversity of small school districts across Ohio, including rural, urban and suburban districts, and districts of differing property tax wealth.

“Small school districts are part of the fabric of Ohio’s education system,” said **Richard Lewis**, OSBA executive director. “Like its urban counterpart, the Small School District Advisory Network was established to provide a forum to discuss unique educational concerns.

“SSDAN provides a vehicle where members of the group can exchange information concerning the educational problems related to small districts; develop programs to meet the educational needs of small districts; and share concerns, ideas and suggestions with OSBA’s executive director and build a network of support with other similarly sized districts.”

Current members of the network are: **Berne Union Local (Fairfiled); Bridgeport EV; East Guernsey Local (Guernsey); Fairlawn Local (Shelby); Jackson Center Local; Jennings Local (Putnam); New Knoxville Local (Auglaize); Rittman EV;** and **Waynesfield-Goshen Local**.

Fairlawn Local hosted the September SSDAN meeting, which included a presentation on how the district implemented a one-to-one iPad program. Participants toured the pre-K-12 school and visited a classroom, where students and the teacher showed innovative ways they are using the iPads to collaborate in class and beyond (see “Fairlawn Local shines during site visit” on page 45).

“I love visiting the other districts in the network; to see the school in operation and what teachers are doing is powerful for me,” Pfister said. “I have been impressed with what I have seen and I am grateful for the demonstrations of how things work in the real world.”

Waynesfield-Goshen Local hosted a 2012 site visit. Board member **David Pepple** said he valued the chance to share the district’s successes.

“It gave us an opportunity to show off our school, staff and students, and all of the positive things going on in our

district,” he said. “In addition, we were able to bring in two state legislators to that meeting to help them hear directly from SSDAN members about their issues and concerns.”

Those concerns range from a lack of resources and unfunded mandates to how best to meet the diverse needs of students when a district is operating at the state minimum.

“In a nutshell, we often do not have the resources to cover everything,” Reichert said. “Teachers and administration are often asked to wear multiple hats and be experts in a wide range of areas. Most of the time, there is no such thing as a curriculum coordinator, special education director, transportation director and so on. We cover classes quite often, occasionally drive bus routes, coach teams and so on.”

One example of this: Reichert drove a school bus route that morning and took a group of students to a field trip before attending the SSDAN meeting.

East Guernsey Local failed to pass levies in August and November, and its enrollment increased by 5% this year. Guernsey County is expected to “grow from 35,000 to 100,000 within five to 10 years because we’re in the hub of where Utica shale is,” said **Dennis Douth**, a board member at East Guernsey Local and **Mid-East Career and Technology Centers**. “We have a lot of workers in our area; that’s where our influx of kids has come from.”

Despite these challenges, small school districts are not just getting by, they are thriving.

“Small school districts traditionally outperform larger districts and we do it for less money,” said Dr. **Daniel R. Kaffenbarger**, then-superintendent at **Mechanicsburg EV**



SSDAN members listen to a presentation during the September meeting.



Students at Fairlawn Local conduct an experiment in a science class.

and current superintendent at **Madison-Champaign ESC**. “Our biggest challenge is offering our students the same opportunities that are afforded students in more affluent districts.”

Smaller school districts can benefit from strong community connections, which can pay off in several ways.

“I have found that a strong sense of community is the great strength of a small district,” Pfister said. “A small school allows for a sense of caring for all; all adults know the students by name and involve the whole community in the school. No one is anonymous, and it is one for all and all for one ... a strong sense of identity and culture of caring.”

Pepple described his school as the center of the community. “We have many people that continually support our school.”

Kim Waterman, superintendent at New Knoxville Local, agreed.

“A local farmer nominated us for a Monsanto grant and we were awarded a \$10,000 grant,” she said. The funds will be used to purchase equipment for high school science classes.

Having SSDAN to connect the districts has helped members share information and find new ways to address common concerns.

“The network has provided information on school safety, technology, departmentalization of elementary grades and

the list goes on,” Kaffenbarger said. “It has been an important resource when considering how smaller districts are dealing with the massive amount of reforms coming from the legislature.”

“Quite often I have left meetings thinking, ‘What a unique way to approach that; I wonder why we didn’t think of that before?’” Pfister said. “That is the power of the SSDAN group, a group of similar districts with common interests. I see SSDAN as a significant contributor to our focus on continuous improvement. We make a conscious effort to learn new, more effective ways of doing things.”



State Board of Education member Tess Elshoff gives an update on the State Board’s recent activity during the SSDAN meeting.

“It’s good for us to go out, and visit and see, and watch what the kids are doing; we absolutely can learn from them,” said **Steve Mascho**, Fairlawn Local superintendent. “There are little school districts that do good things in Ohio and we don’t need to be consolidated to become big school districts that

may not do a very good job.”

For more information about SSDAN, contact Lewis at (614) 540-4000; (800) 589-OSBA; or rLewis@ohioschoolboards.org. ■

Fairlawn Local shines during site visit

Fairlawn Local (Shelby) hosted the September OSBA Small School District Advisory Network (SSDAN) site visit, where attendees toured the district’s pre-K-12 building and saw how students are using technology in the classroom.

The district launched a one-to-one iPad program in 2012 for students in grades nine to 12. Students can access classwork and information 24/7, rather than be limited by using a traditional computer lab.

“The goal was to get access to resources, technology, data, knowledge and tools into kids’ hands more than we were able to with traditional PCs and laptops,” said **Aaron Cox**, the district’s director of technology. “We wanted a standard device so it was the same for everyone in every room.”

Students can use their personal iPads or parents can purchase iPads through the district, which also offers a payment plan. Nearly 90% of families bought iPads for their students. The school has iPads for the remaining students to borrow during the school year.

“Parents demonstrated that they were going to invest in their kids’ education,” Cox said. “It’s been very successful.”

During the site visit, students demonstrated the apps they use to study flash cards, write papers, compose music and create presentations. High school English teacher (now assistant principal) **Rebekka Egbert** showed how teachers can provide assignments, quiz students, assess their work and update grades.

The iPads also are used by staff throughout the building. Secretaries, custodians and the head cook have incorporated iPads in their work. Teachers use the technology during peer-to-peer walkthroughs for their federal Race to the Top grant, and students and teachers read daily announcements on them.

The program was so successful that by January 2013, teachers asked for it to be expanded so middle school students could take advantage of the technology.

Cox attributes part of the program’s success to teachers’ readiness to embrace the technology.

“If you can get the teachers enthusiastic about it and they know that it’s a tool to help them, it makes everything that much better,” he said.



A high school student shares how he uses an iPad to collaborate with other students and complete assignments.

Additional programs help students prepare for college and future careers. Students can take eight dual enrollment courses through Urbana University. The district received an AVID grant to provide college and career readiness for students in grades six to eight.

“We try to get as much grant money and get as many programs in here as possible,” said principal **Jo DeMotte**. “Poverty is a big issue for us; we’re doing all we can for our kids.” The district has 650 students in K-12 and 36 students in preschool. More than 40% of the students are in the free or reduced-priced lunch program.

The district opened an after-school learning center for students in grades six to 12 with funds from a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant. The center is open 102 days of the year and includes a summer component. The district also operates a grant-funded after-school program for kindergarten through third-grade students.

“We have the potential to see kids in grades K-three and six-12 every afternoon for additional instruction,” DeMotte said.

“We’re proud of the things our district has done,” said Superintendent **Steve Mascho**. “This is the second year for the iPad program. We began departmentalization this year, so we have a K-one team and a two-three team that are working with the children so that in the second and third grade, you have the same reading teacher all the time, the same math teacher all the time.

“This is a pre-K-12 building, so kids are intermixed,” he said. “We don’t break down our building. ... We’re one big team doing it all.” ■



A recipe for success — what highly effective teachers do

Dr. Jim Mahoney, executive director, Battelle for Kids

One of my favorite quotes is, “The grass isn’t greener on the other side; it’s greener where you water it.” It follows then that if you want innovation — you water ideas. If you want results — you water expectations. If you want improvement — you water development. It is the latter we must focus on if we hope to really improve the practice of teaching.

In today’s reform-minded world of education, you rarely get an argument that improved teaching is not *a* key or even *the* key to improved student outcomes. However, simply rating teachers with letter grades or often disingenuous labels does little to promote improvement. Do any teachers really aspire to be “Approaching Average” or “Partially Effective,” as some states use to differentiate teacher effectiveness? Can every teacher be great? Probably not. But we can improve the practice of every educator by teaching, promoting and applying the practices and lessons learned from the work of highly effective teachers.

What do highly effective teachers do, and can we scale those practices to ensure more students benefit from extraordinary teaching?

Battelle for Kids has spent the past six years systematically studying the practices of more than 350 highly effective educators in Ohio, Tennessee and Texas who, year after year, have made extraordinary academic gains with kids. We have conducted hundreds of hours of focus groups and in-depth interviews with these educators from urban, suburban and rural settings to discover what they do that contributes to student success.

Developing children’s intellectual capital is not a task that can easily be distilled into five easy steps, or just that “one thing,” as Mitch Robbins, played by **Billy Crystal**, realized at the end of “City Slickers.” Teaching and learning are complex. Battelle for Kids’ goal in researching highly effective educators is not to simplify, but rather make it easier to understand all the factors that go into being a great teacher.

To do that, we began with a model framework developed by Dr. **Robert Quinn** from the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business. The Competing Values Framework (CVF) has been used worldwide for the past three decades to show the tensions that exist in all organizations. Understanding these tensions, while at the same time integrating them coherently, is what accounts for leader and organizational effectiveness. And, like most things in life, it’s a lot easier to describe than to do.

With Quinn’s help, Battelle for Kids has adapted the CVF to develop the BFK•Connect Framework, which identifies and connects the central aspects of great teaching. The framework retains the CVF’s original meanings, but uses terminology that is more relevant to education to illustrate the relationship between four core dimensions of educator effectiveness:

- Relationships — cultivating a supportive community.
- High expectations — maximizing every student’s achievement.
- Continuous improvement — adapting and embracing change.
- Stable environment — creating structures and processes.

Our research shows that highly effective educators successfully integrate practices in all four quadrants to improve student learning. We call this synergy “powerful practice.”

The BFK•Connect Framework (see chart on page 47) provides a common language to help educators assess their strengths and opportunities for growth relative to these dimensions. The framework also can be used to align actions across multiple levels of the education system — from the classroom, to the school, to the district levels.

Relationships (yellow) — The yellow quadrant is about building high-quality relationships with and among students. Educators who are skilled in this area get to know their students’ interests, offer one-on-one support and foster collaboration, respect and a sense of belonging in the classroom. How might this contribute to improved

outcomes? Kids will work harder for someone who shows they genuinely care about their well-being both in and away from school. However, teachers can overuse this strength if they become so focused on developing a caring and nurturing environment that they no longer expect much from their students. You may know a teacher who truly loves kids, but, candidly, the kids don't learn much from them.

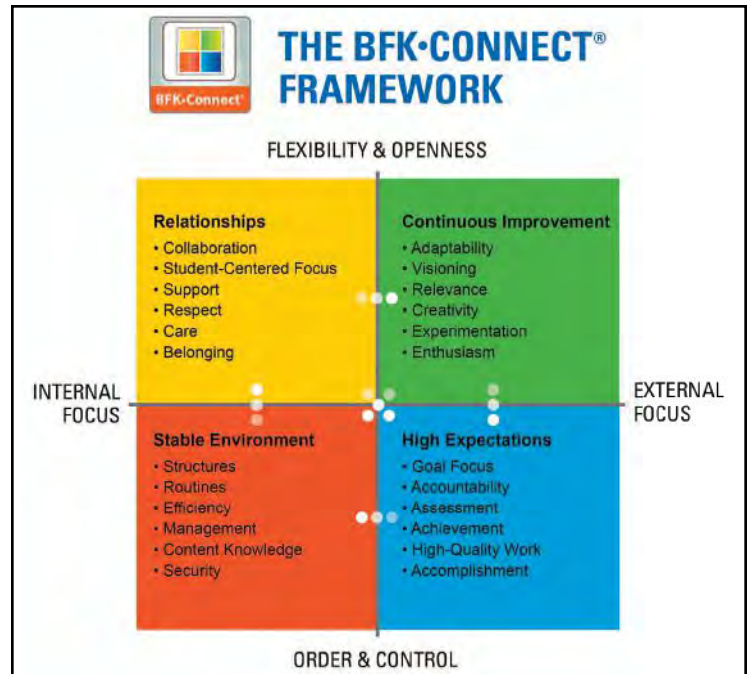
High expectations (blue) — The blue quadrant, which embodies high expectations and results, lies across from the yellow quadrant. Teachers with strengths in this area actively help students set goals, hold them accountable and expect high-quality work. They understand that the pain is temporary, but the pride of really demonstrating a new or improved skill or knowledge lasts forever. These teachers care about outcomes and will help students get there through feedback, focus and expectations.

Think of a teacher that really expected more of you than anyone else did. Did you perform better? The answer is likely yes. But, if a teacher overemphasizes results to drive up student achievement, what good does that do if that child never wants to do another math problem? You can easily see how the blue and yellow quadrants could be at odds but, when integrated, become very powerful.

Stable environment (red) — The red quadrant is about establishing structures and processes to create a stable learning environment. There has never been a teacher who did not have to figure out classroom management strategies. Routines provide order and security for students about “how things get done in this classroom.” Is there one best way? No. There are a variety of approaches, but certainty and repetition are at the core.

As a student, were you ever with a group of kids whose behavior changed drastically when the only difference was the person at the front of the room? In her new book, *The Smartest Kids in the World*, **Amanda Ripley** concludes that children in high-performing nations take school much more seriously because it is a more serious business in their country. Processes help communicate seriousness and how the business of learning will get done. When students know how they are to behave, outcomes are improved. However, when taken to the extreme, the classroom can become a place where boredom reigns and structured activity is mistaken for accomplishment.

Continuous improvement (green) — The green quadrant is about adaptability, creativity and continuous improvement. Educators who are skilled in this area provide students with opportunities to experiment and discover the intended learning for themselves. Kids will work harder for a teacher who provides rich and relevant content presented in an engaging way. At the same time, enthusiasm without goals or some sort of order is like



running full speed at night. It's dangerous. Learning can become chaotic, overzealous and exhausting.

Too much structure or an overemphasis on creativity and experimentation in the classroom can be toxic. But, when red and green practices are integrated successfully, they become powerful complements to accelerate student learning.

If only one word could be used to describe what highly effective teachers do, it would be *integrate*. When educators draw from all four dimensions of the BFK-Connect Framework, they can create an environment — in the classroom, school or district — that fosters a sense of belonging (yellow), accomplishment (blue), security (red) and enthusiasm (green). This is a recipe for success. Think of teaching as a movie and any one day as a snapshot. The one-day snapshot might appear all green or too heavily blue, but the complete movie is a distinct combination of all colors.

Can these skills and practices be further developed in all educators? Absolutely. If we return to the commonly held belief that teachers are the key to student outcomes, we really only have two choices. Either get new teachers or improve the ones we have. My bet is on the latter if we truly hope to provide all students with an education that prepares them for success in college, a career and in life. ■

About the author: Dr. Jim Mahoney is the executive director of Battelle for Kids, a Columbus-based, national, not-for-profit organization that provides strategic counsel and innovative solutions for today's educational improvement challenges. Learn more about the practices of highly effective teachers in the new book, *The Best Teacher in You*, coming in June from Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

OSBA in Washington, D.C.

► *The National School Boards Association's Advocacy Institute, Feb. 2-4, included a day on Capitol Hill, where OSBA met with Ohio members of Congress. Meeting with U.S. Rep. Bob Gibbs are, from left, OSBA Director of Legislative Services Damon Asbury; Dr. Marguerite Bennett, Mount Vernon City and Knox County Career Center; Gibbs; and John W. Halkias, Plain Local (Stark).*

▼ *Board member Ruth M. Nau, Noble Local (Noble), listens to a presentation during the institute.*



▲ *OSBA members Warren Stevens, Urbana City and Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, left, and Linda Haycock, Shawnee Local (Allen), prepare for a meeting at U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan's office.*

► *OSBA members pose with Sen. Rob Portman, center, after a breakfast with the legislator.*





◀ OSBA President-elect Ed Penrod, Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking) and Tri-County Career Center, left, and board member Ken Morlock, Madison-Plains Local (Madison), visit U. S. Rep. Steve Stivers, center, during the day on Capitol Hill.

▼ OSBA President Susie Lawson, Tri-County ESC and Wayne County Schools Career Center, meets with Sen. Sherrod Brown at a breakfast with the legislator.



▲ FRN members Gary Baker, Columbus City, center, and Walter S. Armes, Whitehall City, meet with U.S. Rep. Joyce Beatty's aide.



◀◀ OSBA members meet with U.S. Rep. Brad Wenstrup. Shown are, from left, Alexander Poccia Kubns, Cincinnati City, Wenstrup, OSBA Immediate Past President Sharon E. Manson, Waverly City and Pike County Career Technology Center, and Randall E. Smith, Forest Hills Local (Hamilton).

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Stay at the Hilton Columbus/Polaris for \$125 per night if booked by April 11. Call (614) 885-1600 and mention OSBA to reserve a room.

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