

Ohio School Boards Association

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Lewis retires as OSBA executive director; McFarland named new executive director

COLUMBUS — Richard C. Lewis, CAE, announced his retirement as the sixth executive director/CEO of the Ohio School Boards Association effective May 22, 2023.

“This was a difficult decision, but my health has made the decision for me, and now is the time to say goodbye,” Lewis said. “I have spent my entire career with the association and have been privileged to be part of a tremendous organization with such a rich history of serving Ohio’s school boards as they make a better tomorrow for the 1.6 million students in our public schools. Working with the OSBA team and our members to tackle the challenges facing public education became a personal calling.”

Lewis joined the OSBA staff in 1984 as a labor relations specialist. He went on to serve as a policy specialist and business and marketing manager, and held numerous leadership positions within the association, including deputy director of information services, director of labor relations and management services, and director of communication and information services. He was promoted to deputy executive director in 2002 and served in that position until becoming executive director in 2006.

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Lewis steps down 2/2/2/2/

During his career he was inducted into the Amherst High School Gallery of Success and Buckeye Boys State Hall of Fame. He was also named by the Ohio University College of Education as the Samuel L. Hicks Executive in Residence, an honor that recognizes outstanding leaders in the field of education, and received the National School Boards Association Thomas A. Shannon Award for Excellence in School Board Association Leadership.

The OSBA Board of Trustees named Dr. Kathy McFarland as the association's executive director/CEO effective May 23, 2023. She replaces Lewis, who retires as the longest serving executive director in the association's 68-year history.

McFarland joined OSBA in 2018 as its deputy executive director. Prior to that, she was the principal at Olentangy Local Schools' Orange High School and Hyatts Middle School. She also was an assistant principal at North Union Local's North Union High School in Union County after teaching English, public speaking and other related courses at Dublin City and Olentangy Local schools.

"Rick Lewis' contributions to public education and the Ohio School Boards Association will continue to have a lasting impact," stated Christine Varwig, OSBA President and board member of Toledo Public Schools. "School board members throughout Ohio have become better leaders for their community via the training and services OSBA offers. Rick's leadership, guidance and his friendship will be missed by all. The Board of Trustees thanks him for his decades of service and wishes him well. We very much look forward to welcoming our newly appointed CEO Dr. Kathy McFarland to guide OSBA in the years ahead as the voice of public education."

Founded in 1955, OSBA leads the way as the respected voice of Ohio public education.