

Director's Update



March 2008

Dan Farley - Executive Director

Make Your Board Meetings More Productive

Do your school board meetings run like clockwork? Does every board member contribute to an efficient meeting that addresses the critical academic, personnel and business issues of concern to your patrons?

Jim Slaughter has conducted parliamentary training for ASBA and serves as Parliamentarian for the ASBA Delegate Assembly at our conference each year. Here are some tips from Jim on how your board can conduct more effective meetings.

- Plan agenda items for a specific outcome, such as information items or proposed action items
- Ensure all board members participate by assigning them responsibility for agenda items (lead discussion, provide report); this helps to prepare them for future leadership roles
- Use proper procedures to prevent one or more members from monopolizing discussion
- Prevent conflict by ensuring board member remarks are addressed to the chair — not to one another

Parliamentary Procedure at NSBA

Jim Slaughter will teach "Parliamentary Procedure - Basic Survival Skills for School Board Members" at the NSBA Conference on Saturday, March 29, from 2 - 3:15 p.m.

Jim is President of the American College of Parliamentary Lawyers and is a Certified Professional Parliamentarian-Teacher and Professional Registered Parliamentarian. His website at www.jimslaughter.com contains many articles and charts on meeting procedure.

The NSBA annual conference is less than three weeks away, and almost 200 Arkansas school board members have registered to attend. This conference provides an excellent opportunity for professional development and networking.

In order to receive training credit for the NSBA Conference sessions you attend, you must submit in writing a list of the sessions you attended. Please include the title, the date and time, and the presenter's name. You must provide the information to ASBA to guarantee that you get credit.

All Arkansas school board members who attend NSBA's annual conference are encouraged to attend the ASBA Breakfast at the Peabody Orlando on Sunday, March 30. Invitations will be mailed to our NSBA registrants, and I sincerely hope everyone from Arkansas who attends NSBA will join us. — *Dan Farley*

Don't Miss Brainstorm!

Have you ever wondered why middle school students typically score lower on standardized tests than they did in elementary school? Or why student discipline varies so much from elementary to middle to high school? And how can schools fully harness the power of, and student interest in, technology to improve academic performance?

At our upcoming Brainstorm! seminar, you can learn more about how students learn based on powerful brain research, as well as how your schools can engage students in learning through the use of technology. Dr. Patricia Wolfe, author of *Brain Matters: Translating Research into Classroom Practice*, will share her 20 years of insight into how the adolescent brain works and how this impacts student learning and behavior.

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Upcoming Events

- Brainstorm! The Human Brain & 21st Century Technology, March 20, 2008, Embassy Suites, Little Rock
- NSBA 68th Annual Conference, March 29 - April 1, 2008, Orlando, FL
- ASBA-AAEA Joint Leadership Conference, May 13, 2008, Little Rock
- NSBA Southern Region Conference July 20 - 23, 2008 New Orleans, LA
- ASBA Annual Conference, December 3 - 5, 2008, Little Rock

Fast Facts

- 466,391 – Number of children enrolled in Arkansas public schools in 2007-08
- 146 – Number of Arkansas school districts with fewer students enrolled in 2007-08 compared to last year

Brainstorm! - Continued from page 1

Also, David Warlick, called our country's foremost pioneer in education technology, will describe how to use technology – not just computers – to motivate our “wired” students to become excited about learning.

Brainstorm! will be held from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. (including a networking lunch) on March 20, 2008, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Little Rock. The seminar will provide six hours (state and ASBA), and the registration cost is \$125 per person.

A registration and information flier is on the ASBA website (www.arsba.org). Board members and superintendents are encouraged to invite teachers, counselors, curriculum specialists and technology leaders who would benefit from these presentations.

*Visit us on the web at
www.arsba.org*

No Child Left Behind: Time to “Fix It”

When the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was passed in 2002, few educators could have anticipated the impact of the sweeping legislation. With six years of implementation behind us, most board members and educators would agree that, while the law has had some positive impact, it has had significant unanticipated consequences as well.

On the plus side, NCLB requires schools to support and measure the academic growth of every child. No child can, or should, be ignored because he or she brings educational challenges to the classroom. However, board members and educators in Arkansas have complained, and rightly so, about the unworkable and punitive parts of NCLB, as well as the unfunded mandates that accompanied this law.

It is doubtful that Congress would repeal NCLB at this time. Accepting that premise, it makes sense for education groups to recommend improvements in this law.

The National School Boards Association developed over 40 suggestions to improve NCLB, and many of those recommendations have been incorporated into House Resolution 648, which has 30 Congressional co-sponsors, including Rep. Mike Ross of Arkansas.

Among the requirements of H.R. 648 are revisions affecting the following:

- Alternative approaches to measuring adequate yearly progress (AYP)
- Students with disabilities who require alternate assessments
- Assessments of English language learners
- More flexibility for states
- Reduction in student transfers based on assessment results
- Allowing schools to provide supplemental services
- Private schools that receive public funding would be required to administer assessments and report results

For more information about H.R. 648, please visit NSBA's website, www.nsba.org, and click on the “Advocacy & Legislation” link.