

Director's Update



June 2008

Dan Farley - Executive Director

New deadline for school board candidates to file petitions

A new state law changed the deadline for school board candidates to file petitions to run for election. This year candidate petitions must be submitted for certification by the county clerk from July 11, 2008 through noon on July 18, 2008.

This filing deadline is 15 days earlier than previous years. Petitions must contain at least 20 signatures of qualified voters of the district (and of the electoral zone if directors are elected by zone).

Legislative Update

I recently sent letters to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi on two matters that affect funding for Arkansas schools.

The first letter expressed ASBA's support for funding for the "Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act" in the final Fiscal Year 2008 Supplemental Appropriations Bill.

In Arkansas, 55 counties received federal payments-in-lieu-of-taxes in 2007 to compensate those jurisdictions for federal forest lands. Those payments totaled more than \$3.2 million. Without Congressional support, the loss of this funding would hurt many school districts in Arkansas.

The second letter addressed Medicaid reimbursement for school provision of services to low-income children with disabilities. ASBA asked for inclusion of a moratorium on the school-based Medicaid rule (CMS-2287) in the same Appropriations Bill.

Without the moratorium, 217 school districts in Arkansas stand to lose more than \$8 million. These funds help schools offset a portion of their costs of providing needed health services to low-income students with disabilities, transporting children for such services and the coordination and monitoring of their medical care.

Without these resources, school districts may have to lay off nurses, social workers and other personnel; curtail their administrative outreach and referral services; and/or scale back specialized transportation for students.

I know that school board members and administrators are following closely what Congress decides about both of these important issues.

– Dan Farley

ASBA Board retreats to the Rockefeller Institute

The Arkansas School Boards Association (ASBA) Board of Directors held its annual work session and quarterly meeting earlier this month at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute on Petit Jean Mountain.

The Board identified critical issues that are currently impacting education in Arkansas and forecast concerns expected to have an effect in the future. Among items of concern discussed were:

- Legislative session
- Source of new education leaders and teachers
- Energy costs/gas prices
- Renewed interest in alternative energy
- Health insurance costs and access
- Cultural diversity
- New school/teaching paradigm
- New school day model
- Technology and its changing role
- Presidential election
- IDEA: autism
- Children's health issues
- Generational divide
- Teacher shortages
- Enrollment shifts/demographic changes of U.S. population/language and cultural barriers
- Economic changes
- Diminishing national status
- NCLB
- Job loss
- School safety
- Facilities
- Consolidation and Lake View issues

The Board reviewed a preliminary 2008-09 ASBA budget, approved the launch of some new web-based tools and devoted time to the study of the Key Work of School Boards and its use as the basic framework for professional development.

Six seniors earn ASBA scholarships

Six Arkansas high school seniors recently received \$650 scholarships from the Arkansas School Boards Association Education Foundation.

The scholarships are awarded annually to graduating high school seniors who are children of Arkansas school board members and who will attend Arkansas institutions of higher learning.

The awards are based on a student's academic record and leadership potential. One award was made in each of the four Congressional districts and two at-large. This is the 15th consecutive year for the awards. Congratulations to:

- Whitney Brown, Lamar High School, daughter of Bryan Brown, Lamar School Board
- Jillian Carroll, Brinkley High School, daughter of Jon Carroll, Brinkley School Board
- Jena Marie Lockley, DeWitt High School, daughter of Johnny Lockley, DeWitt School Board
- Ethan Passmore, Bryant High School, son of David Passmore, Bryant School Board
- Jacob Smith, Horatio High School, son of Pollyanna Smith, Horatio School Board
- Callie Ann Wagner, Tuckerman High School, daughter of Randy Wagner, Tuckerman School Board

2008 NSBA Southern
Region Conference
July 21 - 23, 2008
New Orleans

Visit ASBA online at
www.arsba.org

ASBA's new "home"

Signed contracts to sell ASBA's current building to Arkansas Children's Hospital and to purchase the Baldwin & Shell Construction Company building signal an exciting new step in the association's history.

ASBA moved into its current building 21 years ago. The association has grown substantially during that period, expanding its services and programs to members. To accommodate this growth, additional personnel have stretched the physical limits of the current site, as well as its parking availability.

The plan is to close on the sale and purchase in May of 2009, after the legislative session and before Arkansas hosts the 2009 NSBA Southern Region Conference in Little Rock July 8 - 10, 2009.

Board members attend legal training

What you don't know can't hurt you? Right? Well, not when it comes to legal and ethical matters.

A couple of recent training sessions provided school board members, superintendents and school attorneys information about nepotism, conflicts of interest, personnel disciplinary process, student searches, tort immunity and child abuse reporting.

The Northwest Arkansas Service Co-op hosted a gathering in Farmington of more than 40 school board members and administrators. ASBA staff attorney Kristen Gould presented information and numerous examples related to ethics and self-dealing.

In early June a Law Seminar in Little Rock featured Gould; ASBA general counsel Paul Blume; Jeannie Denniston, Dependency-Neglect Ad Litem, Arkansas Supreme Court; and Doug Adams, an attorney and South Conway County School District Superintendent.