

REPORTER

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Accountability: Who is really responsible?

By *Kathy Morledge*

Accountability. We hear so much about it. What does it mean in terms of student achievement? How do we measure it? Who is actually accountable? For what are we accountable?

We hear these questions debated over and over. Let's take a look at accountability in terms of student achievement and see if we can begin to answer some of these questions—or at least lay the groundwork to answer some of these questions.

First, we must accept that accountability involves much more than student achievement. Here we are going to focus on the learning, because, after all, the learning is the thing.

Usually when we talk about student achievement we are talking about measuring accountability in terms of some sort of achievement test. One of the biggest controversies today seems to be what kind of test is best. Should we measure student progress with a norm-referenced test or a criterion-referenced test?

Norm-referenced tests (NRTs) are those that compare students to one another and are usually reported with a percentile rank. For example, if your child scored at the

78th percentile on an NRT, then that means that your child scored as well or better than 78% of the students who took the same test at that same level during that same testing time frame. It gives us comparative data.

Criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) are those tests that compare how a student is performing based on a set of curriculum standards. These tests usually render scores that tell us if the child is below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced in that curricular area. Children who score basic have skills commensurate with that grade level, but are unable to apply those skills. Below basic says that they don't even have the skills. Proficient means that they have the necessary skills AND they can apply or use those skills. Advanced means that they perform above and beyond the expected level of performance.

Currently in Arkansas we use the Stanford Achievement Test-Ninth Edition (SAT-9) as an NRT at grades 5, 7, and 10. Some districts may choose to test other grades or to use other NRTs in addition to the SAT-9.

In Arkansas, we assess our students with the Benchmark Exam at grades 4, 6, and 8, as well as the

Algebra End-of-Course Exam, the Geometry End-of-Course Exam, and the 11th grade Literacy End-of-Course Exam. The state is in the process of developing more CRTs in science and also Benchmark Exams at other grade levels in response to requirements necessitated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

The debate is whether we should test our students solely with CRTs or solely with NRTs (which NCLB will not allow) or some combination of the two. Since each type of test yields different kinds of data, it seems prudent to include both.

The Arkansas CRTs were developed by the ADE based on the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks which were developed based on national models of curriculum. *Education Week* rated the Arkansas curriculum a B which means, in es-

See *Criterion* on page 3

SCHOOL BOARD BRIEF CASE

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- ▲ July 16-19—NSBA Southern Region Conference in Savannah, GA

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Criterion- and norm-referenced tests yield different data

Continued from page 1

sence, that it is a good curriculum and has what kids should learn and compares favorably nationally. There is a high correlation between our test and our curriculum which means simply that we test what we are supposed to teach.

The CRTs tell us whether a child is learning what we believe he should learn based on our curriculum.

Since Arkansas students must be able to compete in a global market, we need to know where they rank among their national counterparts. NRTs tell us this information.

Both kinds of tests yield data that are helpful in teaching our children. CRTs yield a broad look at the performance of the students; NRTs yield a narrower view of that performance.

If we are to hold our students accountable for learning, to what shall we hold them accountable? According to NCLB, it is the curriculum standards that we have developed. We cannot abandon the CRTs because that is how we measure that accountability.

The students are accountable for what they learn. Teachers are accountable for teaching the stated

curriculum.

What if the kids aren't learning? Who is responsible for that? Well, (gulp), all of us are!

Test data were never meant to be sticks with which to pound school districts over the head. Test data were always intended to be used as diagnostic tools—tools that could identify weaknesses in curricula and weaknesses in instructional delivery systems.

School districts that spend time reviewing the data from both NRTs and CRTs use that information to align the curriculum and make sure that it makes sense. Yes, I said “makes sense.” Curriculum decisions should take into account what is being taught as well as when it is being taught and if that makes sense. Alignment means that districts have weeded out the duplications and filled in the gaps in the learning based on what test data tell them.

Wise school districts also use those test data to make decisions about professional development for staff. Once the curriculum alignment process is fully in place (which, by the way is NEVER completed, because curriculum should be able to flex to meet the needs

of the kids!), then the next step is to hone the skills of the teachers.

Dr. Bill Sanders of the University of North Carolina has said that the impact of a teacher can be positive or negative for up to four years. If a child has a highly skilled teacher one year, that will benefit him for up to four years. Sanders further says that if a child has a poorly skilled teacher one year, he may recover. If he has two poorly skilled teachers, it will be very difficult. If the child has three poorly skilled teachers, that child is doomed to failure.

Think about what Dr. Sanders said about weakly skilled teachers this way. If a child is climbing a set of stairs and one step is missing or is in ill repair, that child may continue to climb the stairs, with difficulty, by stepping over the missing step. If the child encounters two missing steps, he may overcome that chasm, but will certainly require LOTS of help to do so. If there are three missing steps, the gap is too large to overcome and to reach the top of the stairs. The child will fail or “fall through the cracks.” Scary, isn't it?

With quality targeted professional development for all teachers—highly skilled teachers as well as those with lesser skills—we can raise the level of the delivery of the instruction.

Researching education is difficult at best. It is nearly impossible to isolate the variables within a classroom because they are so intertwined and closely connected. However, many researchers agree that *the single, greatest impact on a child's learning is the skill of the classroom teacher.*

Let's follow that logic trail for a moment. If the skill of the teacher has the greatest impact on a child's learning, what would have the

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Ninth annual Team Leadership Conference May 7

Mark your calendars now for the ninth Team Leadership Conference on May 7 at the Peabody Hotel. The Arkansas Association of Education Administrators (AAEA) and the Arkansas School Boards Association (ASBA) jointly sponsor this conference.

The conference title for this year is *Critical Issues for School Leaders* and will focus on many of the education issues that have been debated by 2003

General Assembly.

Although many of the controversies may remain unsettled until this fall, it is important for school board members and superintendents to seek the most current information available.

The workshop fees will be \$100 per person if you register by the Apr. 25 deadline and \$125 after that date. If you wish to include a copy of the *2001-2002 Arkansas School*

Laws Annotated book, the workshop fees will be \$175 by Apr. 25 and \$200 after that date. The law book also includes the cost of the supplement that will follow the 2003 session and will include the updates from the entire session.

For more information, please contact Paulette Walker at (501) 372-1415 or (800) 482-1212 or email her at paulette@arsba.org or visit our web site at www.arsba.org.

Carol Brown takes office as NSBA president

Carol Brown of the Wynne School Board acceded to the presidency of the National School Boards Association on April 6 at the annual national conference in San Francisco.

Brown succeeds Mossi White of Utah. White spoke at the annual ASBA conference last December.

Brown has been a member and an officer of the Wynne School Board for 15 years. She is a director and past president of ASBA having served continuously on the ASBA board since 1992. In 1996, Brown was elected as a director from the Southern Region for the NSBA Board.

Brown is the first Arkansan to serve on the NSBA Executive Committee and the first Arkansan to become the president of the national organization.

When asked what has motivated her to serve as a director and officer on the NSBA Board, Brown says, "I ran for my local school board from a strong sense of commitment to the children of my community, and in the hope that through my efforts, ultimately, the community—because of those children—would become a better place for all of us: a healthy, productive, nurturing place to live and work. That same motivation drives to me to serve on the NSBA Board of Directors."

As a long-time advocate for children, Brown has worked with the Arkansas delegation in Washington, D. C. to promote legislation that would benefit children.

Sen. Blanche Lincoln has spoken highly of Brown. "I know Carol well and have worked with her on various education issues ever since becoming her congressional representative in the First District of Arkansas. I am very impressed with her keen knowledge of education

matters and her dedication and desire to improve public school education through her work on local, state, and national school boards associations."

Carol Brown is truly one of Arkansas' diamonds. She has used her leadership skills, her political acumen, and her sunny disposition to advance public education throughout Arkansas and now our nation. ASBA is very proud to honor her as president of NSBA.



Newly elected NSBA President Carol Brown and NSBA Past President Mossi White enjoyed a few free moments together at the annual ASBA conference last December.

It takes 'real courage' to engage the public

By Heather Gage

Author Tom Robbins said, "Real courage is risking something you have to keep on living with, something that might force you to re-think your thoughts and suffer change and stretch your consciousness."

Citizen participation takes this kind of courage. Being involved in the education of every child takes this kind of courage. A person who decides that he or she must not just complain about the decline of our educational system in Arkansas, but will take an active role in changing that system has this kind of courage.

Due to the Lake View decision, there are many people, especially at the Capitol, talking about what it will really take to make our education system equitable and adequate for every child. There are, of course, many different views on how to achieve that. Currently, there are hundreds of bills that have been presented to the House and Senate Education Committees. There has never been a more critical time for communities all over the state, no matter how large or small, to sit down together and participate in deliberative dialogue on this issue.

ASBA Executive Director Dan Farley often says, "Schools are only as strong as their communities." No matter what may or may not happen to a school or district, the community must find its courage and remember that it is both a right and a responsibility to be involved in the decisions that affect the public schools. Education affects us all.

When citizens come together to discuss issues like education, it takes

courage for some to talk about their views and it takes courage to listen to different points of view. Either way, the Arkansas Study Circles Project (ASCP) provides a model for communities and schools that will encourage positive, open discussions on important topics in education.

With a neutral facilitator monitoring the discussions and materials helping to guide the conversations, citizens can begin to understand and take ownership of what will happen to their schools.

Even when new laws are enacted by the General Assembly this year, it is the community and the way it chooses to work together that will make the changes productive and positive for the children and their future.

The ASCP currently has two discussion guides that have been used throughout the state to promote discussions which can lead to productive and positive change. The discussions are as relevant today as they have ever been. The first discussion is called "Education: How Can Schools and Communities Work Together to Meet the Challenge?" This guide brings community members through four discussions on the challenges for our society and schools today.

▲ Session one: How have schools affected our lives, and how do they affect our community?

▲ Session two: What do we want our graduates to know and be able to do?

▲ Session three: Issues in Education

- Meeting every student's needs
- Making our schools safer
- Dealing with racial and ethnic diversity

- Providing quality education with limited resources

▲ Session four: What can the community do to make a difference?

The second discussion guide was developed after *Speak Up, Arkansas!* last April. The discussion was written using the ideas from these forums.

"The Conversations Continue: Schools and Communities Working Together—Helping Arkansas Students Succeed" focuses on what students need to succeed in schools today and was designed around the Rose Standards on which the Lake View decision was predicated. Again the guide brings the community through four discussions:

▲ Session one: What does a good education mean to each of us?

▲ Session two: Why are so many students in Arkansas not succeeding?

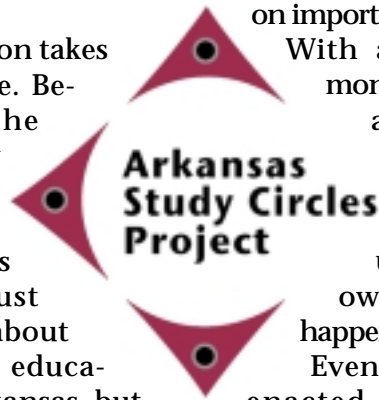
▲ Session three: Picture a state where schools and communities help all students do their best.

▲ Session four: Making a difference—What specific actions do we want to take?

Discussion guides are currently being developed to support community Study Circles on early childhood education and parent involvement. ASCP is working in partnership with the Arkansas PTA and Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families to promote these discussions.

If you have the courage to start these important conversations in your community, please contact Heather Gage or Diane Vibhakar at (800) 482-1212. You can also email Heather at hgage@arsba.org or Diane at studycircles@arsba.org.

Heather Gage is the director of the Arkansas Study Circles Project.



LELAND WELLS ASBA PRESIDENT



We have a clear mission to provide the best education

These are difficult times in Arkansas. As an association of school boards in our state, we find ourselves facing divisive forces. This is a time when we need to come together with clear minds and focus on a clear mission of providing the best education for all of our children.

Although we may not agree on every aspect of the issues, we must find the common ground that we

share and build on it. We cannot allow ourselves to be divided by the small school district versus large school district controversy. All of us have chosen where we live based on personal and professional preferences. We must honor those choices and respect one another.

As the leaders for our school districts, we must model mutual respect as we seek a solution that

will best serve the needs of all of our children.

As I have thought through this dilemma that we are facing, I have returned to the Fundamental Beliefs of the Arkansas School Boards Association. These beliefs outline our basic tenets as an association and should serve as our guide as we seek our common ground.

“The public schools of

See *Public School* on page 8

DAN FARLEY ASBA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Professional development is key to student learning

The legislative session continues well beyond its 60th day. The lawmakers have set an end date of April 11, which as I write, is less than two weeks off. That may change and days may be added, but most observers believe little education reform will occur until after the expected report of the official Adequacy Study, which is due on Sept. 1. Lawmakers at that time will have a short while left to complete a plan to respond to the Lake View rulings by the Supreme Court's Jan. 1 deadline.

It seems to us that one of the points made very clear in the Lake View decision is the importance of the teacher in the learning process. The courts also thought so and we completely agree. Skillful teachers

working in an environment of teamwork can make a huge difference. Professional development is key to giving our teachers the tools and approaches they need to help students learn and the time they need to work with each other in carrying out teaching strategies. We don't suggest there's a one-size-fits-all approach. We believe professional development can and should be very strategic. It should be targeted to deal with specific problems. Approaches should be based on best-practices data and they should be targeted to the specific needs of students.

That kind of targeted professional development can also help bridge the achievement gap,

which we don't see spelled out in anyone's school reorganization plan. We thought that coming to terms with the achievement gap was a major concern expressed by the courts.

We think professional development can be a silver bullet for education reform in our state. Not only will teachers benefit from strategic professional development, so too will administrators and school board members. When we all focus on the needs of the children we serve and let data drive our decision-making, we can begin to make significant strides for students. That is, after all, where our focus needs to be. That kind of approach may be the least

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Censorship is in the eye of the beholder



Nobody's for censorship, right? Of course not. Problem is, some people (or groups) define "censorship" in a way that you would never expect. In addition, the courts concede to school boards the decision on whether to buy a book, or not, but, once the book is in the school, chances are you're not going to be able to do anything about it.

In the U.S. Supreme Court case of Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 vs. Pico, 457 U.S. 853 (1982), that Court suddenly discovered a "right" for students to access particular books in a school library (and that "right" probably extends to any public library). The Island Trees case tells you that, as stated above, your school doesn't have to buy any particular book; but if you (i.e., the school) buy a book and it turns out to be completely offensive and inappropriate, getting it out of the school, if it can be done at all, will be a nightmare.

Therefore, it is advisable for you, as board members, to review books (whether textbooks or library books) and/or establish a committee to review them to determine whether they are appropriate. The final decision should be the board's, with any committee serving only in an advisory capacity.

Should anyone complain that a book already in the school is somehow inappropriate, you certainly may review that book for appropriateness with a view toward deciding whether the book should be removed. However, just because someone finds a particular book to be "offensive" in some manner does not mean that it doesn't belong on the shelves. But, once the board begins even to review whether a book should be removed, it's likely that the yogurt will hit the fan.

There are plenty of groups around whose members (or leadership, at least) think that removing a book from a library constitutes censorship. No burning piles of books, mind you. No laws passed which forbid any and all to read the book. Just removing a book from the library of, say, an elementary school, because it has some graphic sexual references or pictures will bring them out, and after you.

See *School Boards* on page 9

Public schools are a shared responsibility

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Arkansas, united in the Arkansas School Boards Association, believe that the maintenance and operation of the public school district is a partnership, a shared responsibility between the state and the local school district and its community. Throughout our nation's history, this arrangement has kept the schools close to the people, stimulated wholesome and creative flexibility within schools and adaptability to local needs, and worked toward equality of opportunity without imposing uniformity.

The Arkansas School Boards Association believes locally elected school boards are the most pro-

The Arkansas School Boards Association believes locally elected school boards are the most profound expression of grassroots democracy and that local governance of public schools is fundamental to the continued success of public education.

found expression of grassroots democracy and that local governance of public schools is fundamental to the continued success of public education. Adequately funded, student-centered public schools can provide a safe and supportive environment and a comprehensive education for all children that will prepare them for a lifetime of learning in a diverse,

democratic society.

By focusing on student achievement and by actively engaging the community, Arkansas school boards provide leadership for academic success in our public schools. By providing a vision of excellence and equity for every child, Arkansas school boards will ensure performance-oriented schools that meet today's problems, as well as the challenges of the ever-changing future."

Our association should continue to provide the leadership necessary to seek a solution to the question of how to provide an adequate and equitable education for all of our public school children. To paraphrase our mission statement, we are the champions for excellence in our public schools.

People support what they help build

Continued from page 6

expensive strategy for significant gains. It could be the most effective and efficient approach to help close the achievement gap in our state.

Other Thoughts

Ultimately and unfortunately, money becomes the sticking point to whatever we end up doing to address our public schools crisis. Things don't look good in that area and it makes what we are all facing even more difficult. As we have an opportunity to improve our schools, we also have a major impediment—our capacity to pay for what we need. As I write this, I am listening to the President tell us we are going to war.

If ever there was a time in Arkansas history for all of us to sit down and talk to each other—citizen to citizen—about our problems and

how we might work together to fix them, now is certainly the time. We continue to believe that people tend to support what they help to build.

We need to build some new ways of educating our young people. We need to do it as effectively and efficiently as possible. We need to be creative in how we make sure all our students are getting a fair shot at a meaningful education. We need to have parents involved. We need our communities to be involved. Since they are the ones most affected, we need to have students involved. We don't need pep rallies. We need thoughtful, deliberative dialogue about how we as a people can work together to build a system that will work.

We all have our ideas and we have different interpretations of the Lake View ruling, but ultimately it's about the kids. I am

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convinced we can come to workable solutions. But we need to be listening and talking to one another and there isn't much time.

School Boards must maintain some form of book review

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Several years ago, a school had a book in its high school library which, among other charming contents for the amusement and education of the boys and girls, included lists of colloquial names for various body parts, including genitals. Perhaps understandably, some of the patrons (and teachers, administrators and board members) failed to grasp the educational value of the book or how it possibly could be appropriate for a school library. The school board began to consider removing the book, and the usual suspects starting screaming censorship. The book's "author," if he may be called that, even threatened to sue the school district and board if the book was removed. (I'm not sure how they do it, but the authors of books being considered for removal always seem to find out about it and have their lawyers write you nasty, threatening letters, calling you names). In that example, however, I recall that the book was not removed, but was placed on a reserve shelf, where the parent of a student under the age of 17 had to give permission for the student to see it.

To some, however, even that halfway resolution is unacceptable. The American Library Association (which, as I understand it, has few or, perhaps, no members in Arkansas) has drafted and adopted what it calls the "Library Bill of Rights." At their website www.ala.org, that group, in its "interpretation" of their "Library Bill of Rights," says, "The American Library Association opposes all attempts to restrict access to library services, materials and facilities based on the age of library users."

In other words, as far as they're concerned, the concept of "age-appropriateness" of any book or other material, regardless of the content, is foreign. They believe that anything and everything should be available to anyone and everyone, with the age of the student not being a valid concern. If a school board (or anyone) thinks that restricting access to something which most sentient beings can discern is inappropriate for children is a good idea, that violates the Library Bill of Rights (which is, mercifully, not the law), and they consider it to be censorship. Censorship! Censorship, censorship, censorship!!!

They generously would allow a parent to restrict her child's access to a book or other material, but don't look for any help from an ALA member: Within the "interpretation" of the Library Bill of Rights is this: "The mission, goals, and objectives of libraries do not authorize librarians or governing bodies to assume, abrogate, or overrule the rights and responsibilities of parents or legal guardians. Librarians and governing bodies should maintain that parents—and only parents—have the right and responsibility to restrict the access of their children—and only their children—to library resources. Parents or legal guardians who do not want their children to have access to certain library services, materials or facilities should so advise their children. (Emphasis supplied). In other words, tell your kids, but don't tell the ALA librarian. The librarian will let your kids have whatever. Apparently judgment is not a top priority of the Library Bill of Rights. ("Why, of course, little Susie, you may check out *The Illustrated Book of Bestiality*. If your mom didn't want you to have it, she'd have told you. Would you like a couple of "Playbooks" to go with that?")

Well, the moral of all of this is that your board must maintain some form of review of what books are being recommended for purchase. Once it's on the shelves, it's probably there for good. One other thing that the ALA recommends is that you should delegate the selection of books to, among others, the "professionals," so that you won't have to worry your pretty little heads about such matters. Those professionals, of course, would be those who agree with the good ol' Library Bill of Rights, the underlying philosophy of which is, apparently, anything goes. In another segment of their website, "The Censor: Motives and Tactics," they want to ensure that such crude considerations as "family values" and "religion," among other things, must not be used as criteria for book purchase or removal. Under the *Island Trees* case, in fact, it is likely that the removal of a book or other material on such a basis would not be permissible. That's why it's so important to make the determination on the front end: Should we buy this book or not?

And, by all means, when you're looking at adopting a library policy, make sure that it doesn't incorporate the concepts of the Library Bill of Rights. You, as a school board, have the authority to determine what is appropriate—and what is not appropriate—for your school, and you should not delegate that authority to someone who might not have the students' best interests at heart. (Yes, I know that almost all librarians are wonderful, concerned, trustworthy people. I'm not talking about those librarians, okay?) If you do, you're likely to have some mad mommas on your doorstep, and you'll have to try to explain why you let THAT BOOK into the library. And they won't be in a mood to listen.

Okay. Now go out there and warm up your readin' finger.

When the Lake View dust settles, the No Child Left Behind Act will still remain

By Ron Harder

Parental involvement has historically been a difficult issue for some schools and school districts. When the dust has settled from Lake View, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) will retake center stage and one of its major components is the insistence of involving parents in the education of their children. As it appears to be evolving, parental involvement in various forms is very likely to emerge from the present legislative session. This will serve to augment, and in some instances supercede the requirements of NCLB.

If the thought of increasing and improving the level of parental involvement in your district

makes you nervous, remember that research says that parental involvement is one of the most important factors in educating children. Since the number one reason for being a school board member is to improve the educational opportunities of the children in your district, it is important to remember that people will support what they help create.

As a board member it can be a great ego stroke to think in terms of the power you have resulting from your position. True leadership, however, comes when you empower other people like parents and community members, to help themselves. In the difficult times ahead resulting from both Lake

View and NCLB, parental support can be the lifeboat of your district.

Parental involvement can take many forms and should be able to accommodate the different levels of desires and interests of parents. Some parents devote a lot of time and energy actively engaging in school activities while other parents may have less time and feel most comfortable helping with PTA functions. The more variety of involvement opportunities your district can offer to parents, the better your parents will be able to find a level that works for them.

Gone are the days when parents can simply drop off their children at school when they are 5 and pick them up, fully educated, when they are 18. NCLB requires parents to be involved in developing school and school district strategic plans, updating those annually, and helping to write policies on several topics. Various bills before the General Assembly require similar requirements to those of NCLB while others create parent councils with greater levels of authority to affect district policy.

Historically, the tendency in education is to believe that *this too shall pass*. The ultimate winners of parental involvement are your students because support for them will grow as support grows for your district in general. If the initial thought of parental involvement makes you nervous, take a deep breath, and get over it. The requirement is not going to go away and it is indispensable in raising student achievement which is really what school is all about.

Ron Harder is the ASBA director of policy service and a former school board member. He has devoted extensive time to studying every aspect of NCLB.

In the difficult times ahead resulting from both Lake View and NCLB, parental support can be the lifeboat of your district.

The Wynne School Board
and
Administration
cordially invite you to attend a
Reception honoring
Mrs. Carol Brown
President
National School Boards Association
Sunday, May 18
1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Wynne High School Cafeteria
800 East Jackson • Wynne, Arkansas

Jason Sylvester joins ASBA

ASBA welcomes our newest staff member, Jason Sylvester. Jason will be working in our insurance division.

Jason comes to us with a strong background in insurance. Before working for ASBA, he worked for Encompass Insurance (formerly CNA Personal Insurance) as a project manager, automobile field claim manager, total-loss adjuster, risk management property operations, and claims technician.

Jason also has experience in the



field of sound and lighting having been a managing partner in a live sound-reinforcement company. His myriad of duties there included sales, management, and day-of-show operations.

Jason graduated from the Art Institute of Dallas with an associate degree in applied science.

The ASBA staff has already come to enjoy Jason's ready smile and easy-going "can do" attitude. We look forward to a long and happy relationship with him.

NSBA remains loyal to the intent of NCLB

Alexandria, VA—The following is a statement by National School Boards Association Executive Director Anne L. Bryant on the one-year anniversary of the Act.

"Local school boards remain committed to the goals and objectives of the new federal law, No Child Left Behind. The increased focus on accountability and flexibility for local school boards, and the increased emphasis on student achievement for every student regardless of race, ethnicity, economic status, disability or proficiency in English reflect our nation's strong support for public education. NSBA supports the intent of the law to ensure that every child has a quality education. But we also must work collaboratively to address effectively many of the critical issues related to the implementation of these new federal requirements.

"NSBA urges President Bush and the U.S. Congress to increase federal funding for education so that the high expectations set forth in this landmark law can be realized. Many states and lo-

cal school districts remain overwhelmed with the new federal requirements at a time when there is a lack of adequate resources at the federal, state, and local levels to implement it successfully.

"Recognizing these challenges and the commitment of state and local leaders to improve student achievement, the fact remains that the design of the accountability provisions of No Child Left Behind will result in a majority of the nation's schools ultimately being identified as in need of improvement. Such across-the-board labeling of the nation's public schools is misleading and threatens the American public's trust and commitment to the nation's public school system.

"NSBA respectfully urges President Bush and the Congress to listen to the growing concerns expressed by governors, mayors, superintendents, local school boards, and other state and local elected officials and to take the actions needed to adequately fund our nation's public school system as we implement these major education reforms."

JOB BULLETIN

Superintendent, Weiner School District. Deadline: Until filled. Apply to: Charlotte Wright, Supt., 313 N. Garfield, Weiner, AR 72479

Superintendent, Lockesburg School District. Deadline: Until filled. Apply to: Gene Slaton, Supt., P.O. Box 88, Lockesburg, AR 71846, (870) 289-5161 or fax to (870) 289-5189

Superintendent, Hampton School District. Salary negotiable. Deadline: Until filled Apply to: Rodney Strickland, Board President; Hampton SD, Rt. 2, Box 147, Hampton, AR 71744, 870-798-4826

Superintendent, Umpire School District. Salary negotiable. Deadline: Until filled; Apply to: Janie Krantz, Board Secty; Umpire SD; 236 Krantz; Dierks, AR 71833

Superintendent, St. Paul School District. Deadline: Until filled. Apply to: St. Board of Directors, P.O. Box 202, St. Paul, AR 72776, (479) 677-2522

Superintendent, Pea Ridge School District. Salary negotiable. Apply to: Billy Clark, Board President, 781 W. Pickens Rd., Pea Ridge, AR 72751, (479) 451-8181

Resources targeted for professional development are dollars best spent

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greatest impact on the teacher's learning? Bingo! Quality, targeted professional development!

It would seem logical to spend our precious resources on that which will get us the biggest bang for our bucks—quality, targeted professional development.

Now back to accountability. Administrators are responsible for coordinating those professional development sessions that will bring about improved skills in our classrooms. School board members are responsible for the policies that

will allow that to happen and for allocating the resources.

Parents and the community don't get off the hook either. Parents should know what the curriculum is and what their children are learning. Community members should be working with the schools to communicate what skills and knowledge are needed and also to provide the resources to meet those needs.

There we are again. Right back where we always land. We are all accountable for our education system—for what our kids learn. After all, we have said it over and over, the learning is the thing.

Now, how do we make that happen? That's another article and another day.

Kathy Morledge is the assistant executive director of ASBA and a former school administrator.

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