



ARKANSAS SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

REPORTER

SUMMER 2004

Volume 21, Number 6

ASBA announces 2004 scholarship winners

The Arkansas School Boards Association Scholarship Foundation is pleased to announce five scholarship winners from the 2004 graduating class. All five winners are children of Arkansas school board members.

The recipients of the \$500, one-year grants are Ashley Disretti of Greene County Tech, Micah Higgins of Alma, Lori Hux of Junction City, Erin Riley of North Little Rock, and Valerie Sherwood of Rose Bud. These young people were chosen from an outstanding field of many applicants. One student is chosen from each Congressional district plus one student at large.

The competitive program, which was created to recognize the academic achievement of students whose parents serve on local school boards in Arkansas, is in its 12th year. Gifts honoring former ASBA Executive Director J. K. Williams upon his retirement in 1992 were donated to establish the scholarship fund.

Like the previous 46 winners, this year's recipients are outstanding young folks. Factors influencing their selection included: academic performance, demonstrated leadership and community involvement, a personal essay, and

written recommendations from school and community representatives.

Ashley E. Disretti is the daughter of Jannie Disretti of the Greene County Tech School Board. Ashley's career goal is to be a pediatric physical therapist. She plans to pursue her bachelor's degree at Arkansas State University and then seek a master's degree and perhaps a doctorate in the field. She believes that she has been fortunate to have many positive influences in her life, especially her extended family.

Ashley has been very busy at

school with activities that included Student Council, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Future Farmers of America, Spanish Club, Key Club, Leo Club, and National Honor Society.

Ashley tied for valedictorian of her class.

Micah J. Higgins is the daughter of Michael Higgins of the Alma School Board. Micah's long term goal also includes a doctorate in physical therapy with the intention of focusing on disabled or injured children. She plans to begin this pursuit by beginning a bachelor's degree program in biology at Arkansas Tech University this fall.

Micah's activities over the past few years have included Girls State, Student Council, Science Club, National Honor Society, Spanish Club, Mu Alpha Theta, the Morgan Nick Foundation, Alma Community Team Service, and Special Olympics. She cited her family as a major influence and shaper of her life.

Micah was in the top 10 percent of her graduating class.

Lori A. Hux is the daughter of Kevin Hux of Junction City. Lori plans to attend the University of Central Arkansas this fall where

SCHOOL BOARD BRIEFCASE

- ▲ **October 25** - New Board Member Workshop, DoubleTree Hotel, Little Rock
- ▲ **October** - Regional Meetings via CIV (dates to be announced)
- ▲ **November** - Statewide collaboration project - Arkansas Tax System (page 13)
- ▲ **November 30 - December 2** Annual ASBA Conference, Statehouse Convention Center and Peabody Hotel, Little Rock

See Scholarship winners on page 6

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Above left: Bill Weichmann of Valley View and Charles Thornberry of St. Paul earned recognition last December as Master Board Members. Above right: James Baker of Osceola was honored as a Pinnacle Award winner. Left: Harrison Jones of the East End School District is another Pinnacle Award winner.



ASBA Corporate Members 2003-2004

Continued from page 2

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Training can make all of the difference

As we head into a new school year, professional development for all of those who work in the field of education is vital. Custodians receive additional training in areas of cleanliness and safety. Clerical staff receive training in areas of accounting and technology. Aides receive training in areas specific to their instructional assignment in order to become highly qualified. Teachers receive training in the areas of instructional skills, assessment, and curriculum. Administrators receive training in leadership and deep knowledge of teaching and learning.

With all of these professional educators receiving additional training to hone their skills, school board members must also continue their upward learning track to become better leaders and better keepers of the vision.

The summer issue of the Reporter features training concepts and honors those board members who have achieved various levels of boardmanship awards.

ASBA salutes those school board members who have pursued excellence in the field of boardmanship through training and service to

their local boards and to all of the children of Arkansas.

ASBA's boardmanship program seeks to enhance personal boardmanship skills and promote local boards. The purposes are: 1) to recognize individual school board members for the service to school governance; 2) to certify that board members have participated in training and seminar activities; and 3) to acknowledge board members for participating in local community/civic activities; leading workshops and seminar activities for ASBA and other school board affiliate organizations; serving on state, regional, and national association committees; assuming leadership roles through such activities as testifying before legislative panels, etc.

In one prong of the program, boards are recognized for their collective service. Honor Boards are those boards in which a majority

of the directors have achieved Honor Board Member status.

Outstanding Boards are those in which all members have achieved the minimum criteria required for

ASBA salutes those school board members who have pursued excellence in the field of boardmanship.

individual board outstanding board member award, plus significant other hours ranking them among the top 10% of boards in the state in their participation in training and other criteria.

Master Boards are those that have met the maximum objective criteria and are among the top 5% of such boards in the state.

The Honor Board Member Award is earned by accumulating 15 hours by participating in training events; serving on task forces; serving as a speaker, moderator, or panelist; testifying before legislative panels; attending legislative committee hearings; and others as designated by the ASBA Board.

The Outstanding Board Member Award is earned by accumulating 25 hours from the listed activities.

The Master Board Member Award is earned by accumulating 50 hours.

The Pinnacle Award is earned when a board member accumulates 200 hours or more in training and other activities.

The Dr. Daniel L. Pilkington Award is presented to an outstanding board member, educator, school attorney, or other community member who merits special recognition for his/her service to public education. The "Dr. Dan Award" is determined by a panel selected from the ASBA Board of Directors.



ASBA Secretary-Treasurer Arnell Washington receives the Pinnacle Award from President Jack Garner.



Master Board Members are shown above. Standing are Alan Halman, Wonderview; John Taylor, Mansfield; Tom Hill, Dover; Charlie Hix, Jr., Sulphur Rock; Robert Eichelberger, Ashdown; and Norman McCray, Elaine. Seated are Leta Taylor, Delaplaine; Susan Heil, Fayetteville; Dorothy Ragland, Leslie; Sherrie Barrentine, Bald Knob; and James Smith, Marvell.



Other Master Board Members include, standing: Eddy Kelly, Carlisle; Felix Bell, Lockesburg; Steve Trusty, Lakeside-Hot Springs; Don Murray, Booneville; Kenneth Hammons, Magnet Cove; Dennis Stevenson, Cross County; and Howard Kitchens, Bauxite. Seated are Patricia Blake, Prescott; Kay Hendrix, Prescott; Hugh Hardgrave, Lavaca; and Joan Cadorette, Mountainburg.



Additional Master Board Members include, standing: Ben Walsh, Crossett; Robert Chism, Nashville; Tommy Fink, Western Yell County; and Leon Anderson, Russellville. Seated are Sally Willson and Ollie Collins of Osceola.



Receiving a Pinnacle Award from ASBA President Jack Gardner is ASBA Region 10 Director Vonda West Cranford of Malvern.



Another Pinnacle Award winner is ASBA Region 5 Director Mike Sawyer of Plainview-Rover.



President Gardner awards a Pinnacle Award trophy to ASBA Region 8 Director Amy Daniel of Benton.



Also receiving a Pinnacle Award is John Etherly of Pine Bluff.

Scholarship winners seek noble careers



Ashley Disretti, Greene County Tech



Micah Higgins, Alma



Lori Hux of Junction City



Erin Riley of North Little Rock



Valerie Sherwood of Rose Bud

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she will pursue a degree in speech-language pathology. She hopes to work with children in daycare centers as well as public schools.

Lori, too, was very active in high school. Her activities included Student Council, Cheerleading, class officer, softball, FBLA, and 4-H. Lori believes that she is fortunate to come from a home where education is a top priority and cites her parents as having heavily influenced her.

Lori graduated as the salutatorian of her class.

Erin E. Riley is the daughter of John Riley of the North Little Rock School Board. Erin plans to attend the University of Arkansas where she will pursue a degree that will lead to becoming a pediatric dentist.

Erin's activities at North Little Rock High School included Student Council, Key Club, yearbook, Mu Alpha Theta, National Beta Club, Spanish Honor Society, and speech and drama productions. She was also a delegate to Girls State and selected by the North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce for the Leader Renais-

sance program. Erin has been an avid soccer player and fan since she was a small child.

Erin cites her family as being a major influence in her life. She is the fourth of six children and looks to her three older brothers for guidance as she serves as a role model for her younger sister and brother.

Valerie L. Sherwood is the daughter of Bart Sherwood of the Rose Bud School Board. Valerie plans to pursue a degree in physical therapy from the University of Central Arkansas. She has volunteered in nursing homes and attended a two-week medical program and believes that this is the field of work where she wants to spend her life.

Valerie has been a member of the school band as well as the jazz band, played varsity basketball, and has been a member of the student council and other school clubs. She has also been a class officer. Valerie also has been active in her community in many ways including raising funds to build a public library.

Valerie was the valedictorian of her class.

ASBA congratulates all of this year's Scholarship Foundation winners.

ASBA continues to train members

Consolidation Workshop

On Feb. 27, ASBA hosted a workshop for school districts affected by consolidation. Over 500 school board members and superintendents attended.

Although the Arkansas Department of Education was working diligently to publish rules, many districts were concerned that they would be hard pressed to meet the requirements of submitting a petition by the April 1 deadline.

ASBA Staff Attorney Kristen Gould discussed Act 60, the new consolidation law, and advised the group from a general point of view about how to proceed. Participants were given a model for creating a petition as well as a draft set of ADE rules.

Dr. Kellar Noggle, executive director of the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, offered an overview of the financial impact of the law.

Ideas about how to address the impact that consolidation will have on curriculum and professional development were presented by ASBA Assistant Executive Director Kathy Morledge.

ASBA Study Circles Director Heather Gage Detherow outlined a communications plan for presenting ideas to the public.

The final session of the day was a question and answer period with ADE General Counsel Scott Smith and Gould.

Team Leadership Conference

The 10th annual Team Leadership Conference that is sponsored jointly by the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators and the Arkansas School Boards Association was held April 7 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Little Rock.

The agenda was filled with critical current issues. The opening session concerned accountability.

Arkansas Department of Education Assistant Directors Janinne Riggs and Dr. Charity Smith presented a side-by-side explanation of No Child Left Behind, Act 35—the Arkansas Accountability Act, the Omnibus Act, and ACTAAP.

ADE Assistant Director Patricia Martin presented the new funding formula and Springdale Assistant Superintendent Dr. Greg Murry presented other school business-related issues.

Many school board members and superintendents had questions about the school facilities study. Sen. Shane Broadway, who co-chairs the study committee, discussed the process of assessing all of the school facilities in the state as well as the anticipated date of the report.

Dr. Benny Gooden, superintendent of Fort Smith Schools, and Don Murray, school board member from Booneville, talked about alternative learning environments. Both are members of the Pygmalion Commission.

ASBA Staff Attorney Kristen Gould discussed staff issues. Because of the time of year, these issues always elicit many questions.

Janie Huddleston, Director of the Early Childhood Division of the Arkansas Department of Human Services talked about how the newly allocated \$40 million will be applied during the coming year to early childhood education. She praised the courage of the Arkansas General Assembly for focusing attention on preschoolers.

The final session was presented jointly by Benton Superintendent Dr. Diana Julian and Pine Bluff Superintendent Frank Anthony. They answered the questions: “Where do we go from here in Arkansas education? What impact will recent legislation have on the

future of Arkansas education?”

For more information about any of these presentations, visit the ASBA website at www.arsba.org. Downloadable versions of all Powerpoint presentations and handouts are available.

Summer CIV

On July 21, ASBA hosted a workshop for school board members via CIV. Staff Attorney Kristen Gould aired her popular workshop “School Board Meetings from A to Z” as the morning offering on the menu.

The afternoon slot was filled with Arkansas Study Circles Projects Director Heather Gage Detherow’s presentation on engaging community members. Detherow was accompanied by a panel of experts who cited many ways for school districts to meet new laws regarding public engagement.

On-line Learning

Need some hours of training? Like to pace yourself through your own learning? Want to be able to start now and finish later? Want to be able to learn at 2:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m.? Enjoy using the Internet as a resource? Want to learn more about building consensus with groups? or managing change in your district? or building partnerships with your community? or parliamentary procedure? or the Key Work of School Boards? or other topics that board members should know?

Check out ASBA’s on-line learning campus. Visit our website at www.arsba.org and click on Training Opportunities or go directly to the courses at www.nsba.org/olc/olc.cfm?assn=22. Courses are available for \$75 each. Upon completion of a course, a school board member may earn 9 hours of board credit for each course.

JACK GARDNER ASBA PRESIDENT

Training can hone our skills as we mature as school board members



Board training is critical for all school board members. Regardless of the talents and knowledge that we bring to the job, the education picture is shifting so rapidly that training is no longer just a one-shot event for board members. It must be an on-going, relentless program of study.

As beginning board members, we start building our knowledge base with basics in school funding and budgets, how programs

work, the purpose of those programs, the basics of legal issues, foundations in curriculum, and community leadership. Without a solid base, we have nothing on which to grow and expand.

As we gain experience and knowledge in the job, we grow in our understanding of how a school organization functions year in and year out. The training sessions that we attend make more sense to us, and we begin to ask more probing

questions of ourselves and of our school districts. We anticipate events as the cycle of the school year becomes second nature to us. Our questions become more thoughtful about how to hone the functions to best meet the needs of our districts. We move beyond the rudiments of being board members and we fine tune our service to our districts.

Through board training, we
See Honing skills on page 10

DAN FARLEY ASBA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Membership services: Moving ahead with ASBA



The impact of school consolidation is going to affect ASBA during the coming year, the extent to which we can only estimate. Someone asked me a few weeks ago if that meant the association would be increasing its membership fees. The answer to that is yes and no.

It was my hope to hold off for another year before we rework our fee structure because I knew full well it would have to be done. As we began to prepare a budget for the 2004-05 fiscal year, it became increasingly clear that the organization would suffer substantial budget shortfalls in the year ahead. The largest stream of revenue for ASBA comes through membership fees.

During its annual work session in early-June, the ASBA Board spent a lot of time looking at the budget and discussing ways to keep all existing programs and services intact. A number of services and programs have been added during the past five years, and many boards and districts are taking advantage of them. Not only was the Board's focus on maintaining those association offerings, but at a level of quality you have come to expect of us.

Our mission is clear and our efforts at making that mission a reality require that we have a competent and committed staff. And that, I say proudly, we have. I often marvel at how much is done by so few, and so well. Yes, the staff

has grown over the past five years, but so have our offerings and so has your participation. Virtually all of the work done by the association is done with 11 full-time employees, four part-time employees, and three who provide contract services. Most of those folks perform numerous duties. If you work at ASBA, chances are you have done or will do just about everything there is to do to make the organization work.

We have listened to our members and we have tried to respond to their requests. A classic example is development of the Model Policy Service. Another is for more training. In addition to training opportunities we provide in Little

See Membership on page 11



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through training, advocacy, and service
for local school boards.*



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Special ed hearings:
protracted,
expensive, and
not fun



So, my world-famous pooch, Mary Margaret, is p.o.'d (Put out. Not what you're thinking!). She accuses me of inadequate planning, not looking ahead. Seems that, since she's been mentioned in several of these columns (she always gives excellent advice, some of which I take), Kristen's canine companion, Jackson the Enormous (black Lab. Really BIG black Lab), has taken umbrage at not getting some ink, as well. As a result, he has been calling Mary Margaret, giving her a hard time about the human she owns (me) not saying anything about him. Mary Margaret is p.o.'d about the harassing phone calls and blames me for not having the foresight to mention Jackson so as to allow her beauty sleep (approx. 20 hours per day) to continue uninterrupted. Seems I should've known about Jackson's ego. ("What were you thinking? Oops! You weren't thinking, were you? You know how black Labs are! Everyone knows how they are!")

Although I disagree with Mary Margaret that I was inadequately prescient with regard to Mr. Jackson Gould's recent demands, it does lead us to today's discussion of special education due process hearings: They are not good things to have to go through, and a stitch in time will save nine. See? Let's plan.

Special ed due process hearings are what sometimes happen when the parents of a special ed student and the school folks can't agree about the student's education. More often, however, hearings happen when the school people didn't look ahead to try to ward off the problem.

First, the hearing, itself: It's much like a trial, but different. There is no judge, as such. Instead, the Arkansas Department of Education assigns what they call an "Impartial Hearing Officer" to hear the case. There are very short deadlines for the Officer to meet in hearing and deciding the case, so everyone is under the gun to get the hearing done. Although the parent usually requests the hearing (a school district may request, however), the school always has the burden of proof. That means that, even if we're not real sure what the parents are angry about, the school

See Special ed on page 12

Honing skills sharpens board members' abilities

Continued from page 8

learn the skills that are necessary for leadership. Some leadership qualities are natural. Most board members must exhibit some leadership qualities in order to be elected to serve. Other leadership skills must be learned. Learned skills include building consensus, working together as a board rather than individuals, setting direction for the district versus micromanaging, sifting through mountains of information to glean what is necessary to guide the district, listening with an ear to hear rather than formulating an excuse or offering a pat answer—these skills go beyond natural talent and ability. These build on our innate gifts and move board members to more mature contributors to the process.

On-going, relentless training allows board members to keep abreast of cutting edge issues in curriculum, community involvement, funding, laws, national education, employee hiring and termination practices, student discipline, and student life.

We say that we want the best educated students and the best trained staff. We must also lead that

group by being the best trained school board members.

Perhaps, the most critical issue that often goes unmentioned is

Since we serve organizations that are all about learning, modeling that learning must come from the leaders—the board members.

board members' accountability to the communities they serve as well as accountability for their schools. School board members have been identified in survey after survey as the most trusted elected officials in the country. Because of the trust that our communities place in us, we must maintain a continuous and vigorous program of learning to hold true to that trust. We must be accountable to them for that trust.

That poses the question: How should school board members be held accountable? Corollaries to

that question include: Is the ballot box enough of an accountability measure for our public? Should school board members be removed from office if they fail to execute the duties to which they were elected? Can school board members execute these duties proficiently without on-going training? How much training is sufficient?

School boards have been criticized for being grossly underinformed. Many people have even suggested that school board members are unable to perform their duties because of lack of training and skill. What is enough training and how should school board members be held accountable?

I invite you to engage in an on-going dialogue with your colleagues on your board as well as those across the state. Please share your ideas with your colleagues and with me. Let's start a conversation that we can continue and that we can share with our legislators. We owe it to our communities to be highly-qualified, highly-skilled decision makers in our school districts.



Edward Spears of Altheimer receives his Pinnacle Award trophy from ASBA President Jack Gardner.



Marlyn Tate of Hoxie receives his Pinnacle Award from ASBA President Jack Gardner.

Membership services continue to expand yearly

Continued from page 8

Rock, we have used co-ops, done on-site training, and developed some on-line courses (with others in development).

I don't think a better example can be made than to look at the past year. With the consolidation legislation enacted earlier this year, many districts—both small and large—were suddenly faced with merging, and doing it in very short timelines. Questions were flying and we were trying to answer them, or find the answers to help you jump through all the requisite hoops. In a little over two weeks, the staff put together a one-day workshop dealing with the myriad issues confusing and confounding school boards and their administrators. Over 500 of you showed up and most, I think, got your questions answered. We saw a need and we responded as quickly as we could.

Calls to our attorneys have never been as many, or as constant, as they have been during the past year. As Kristen likes to say of her telephone advice:—"I'm free and I'm toll-free." That's one of your membership benefits. If you were calling someone else for legal advice and being charged billable hours, I think you'd find quite quickly that your annual membership fee is more than fair.

All that being said, I'll return to membership fees for the coming year.

For many, many years, ASBA membership has been based on a sliding scale of fees predicated on your district's previous year's expenditures. The lowest annual membership fee on the scale, for county boards (a very diminished number) and co-ops, has been \$160. For the 2004-05 school year, that fee will increase to \$300. The only other change is at the top end

of the schedule. Through this year, the highest fee was \$1,330 for districts whose expenditures were \$7.5 million and up. The ASBA Board voted to amend the cutoff and add two new tiers to the top of the schedule. It will now include the following changes:

- With expenditures from \$7.5 million to \$11.5 million, the fee is \$1,330.
- With expenditures from \$11.5 million to \$16 million, the fee is \$1,580.
- With expenditures from \$16 million and up, the fee is \$1,830.

The rest of the fee schedule remains intact, exactly as it has been for the past five years.

We will be carefully analyzing our fee structure during the coming year. I have been collecting information from other state school boards associations and making comparisons to ours. I can tell you this, we have kept costs extremely low, sometimes to the extent that we have undervalued the quality and quantity of services we provide you. We will be looking at changing the membership fee structure during the coming year, but that won't take effect until July 2005, and we will certainly provide you with all the facts when the Board ultimately makes that decision.

Until then, we are, like all of you, watching our spending, economizing in every way we can, and trying to continue to serve you at the level you have come to expect of us.

A memorandum from me with further explanation was mailed to you (with an annual membership statement also included to superintendents) near the first of July.

I know the new school year will be fraught with much that is new. We'll all be feeling our way, hopefully working *together* to stay afloat in a sea of change. What we must always remember is the first question that must be asked: Is it good for kids? That, after all, is ultimately the mission we all share.

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Special ed hearings must follow a protocol

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has to go first at the hearing, showing that it has, indeed, given the student a FAPE, i.e., a free, appropriate public education. Usually, the request for a hearing is so vague that your special ed people and others (and your lawyer) will spend some time with the hearing officer, telling him just about everything that has been done for the student, and why.

Why is looking ahead so important? Well, if your special ed people and others (regular classroom teachers, administrators) keep an eye on things, both with special ed kids and regular ed kids, you might head off problems at the pass. Example: We have a student who has not been identified for special education services, who is struggling in school and is having serious, regular behavior problems. Those problems consistently get the student sent home, suspended, for some period for that behavior. The problems with his studies and his behavior could be related to some disability, and it might be a good idea to talk to mom and dad about referring the student for evaluation and testing.

Another example: We have a special ed student who has an IEP (Individual Education Program), as all special students must; but he is not performing well, not meeting the goals and objectives in his IEP. Usually, that means that the IEP should be reviewed to determine whether it's appropriate. Mind you, all IEPs must be reviewed annually. But if the IEP isn't working, a change might need to be made, and it might be a really bad idea to wait until the annual review. If the student isn't meeting expectations, mom and dad can get very upset, and, bingo! You're in a hearing. That means: dealing with parents who are hostile (even though they might have been very pleasant to this point); even more nasty lawyers representing the parents, demanding that this or that be done, all of which costs lots of time and lots of money; getting together mass quantities of documents, and trying to figure out (and explain to the hearing officer) what this all means; dealing with your own lawyer, both to prepare for the hearing and during the hearing (and your own lawyer will

be very expensive. All of us do our best to be expensive, and we usually succeed); and, if the hearing officer finds in the parents' favor, even in some relatively small way, you have the pleasure and honor of paying the parents' lawyer, who usually is even more expensive than your own lawyer.

Much of this can be avoided if your administrators, teachers and special ed supervisor keep an eye on things. They must ensure that IEPs are being followed; that, if the IEPs are being followed, and the student is not performing or still is having behavior problems, there is a review of the IEP more often than just every year. If a special ed student has behavior problems, and he doesn't have a behavior improvement plan, get one (there are specialists out there who deal with this very thing, and your co-op probably has one).

There's a lot to deal with in special ed, and it can be very time-consuming and expensive to do it right; but it's a LOT more time-consuming and expensive to go through a due process hearing, not to mention more stressful. Magnitudes more stressful. Now, if you're a stress junkie, just sit there and do nothing. The stress, the lawyers and the attendant expense will find you. Boy, will they ever. So, plan.

Of course, as I write this, Mary Margaret is mumbling, under her doggie breath, that I should have done something so she wouldn't have to deal with the calls from Jackson. Well, now that he's made it into print, maybe the calls will slow down or stop. If not, I've reminded Mary Margaret that that's why God gave us caller ID.

Okay. Just kidding about the doggie breath. Really. Good girl! Is that the phone?



Pinnacle Award winner Mary Jane Cooper of Arkadelphia receives her plaque.

Ten power-packed phrases for parents

Choosing the right word at the right time cements a strong parent-child relationship. The National PTA has compiled a top-10 of words and phrases list as a handy guide for parents to use in encouraging and supporting their child's efforts.

Here are their picks:

Thank you. Acknowledge your child's efforts to help.

Tell me more. Words like these show your children that you are listening and that you would like to hear more about what's on their minds.

You can do it. Your expression of confidence in your child's ability to do things without your help is important.

How can I help? As your child takes on projects in school, encourage him/her to think of specific steps necessary to complete it. You both can decide which tasks your child can handle and which ones he or she will need help with.

Let's all pitch in. A child is never too young to learn that cooperation and team effort make many jobs easier.

How about a hug? Research indicates that young children de-

prived of hugs and displays of affection often fail to thrive.

Please and Thank you. When you ask a favor of anyone — including children — these “magic words” acknowledge that you are asking for a behavior that will help make you happy.

Good job. Self-respect and self-confidence grow when your child's efforts and performance are rewarded. Praise should be honest and specific. Focus on efforts and progress, and help your children identify their strengths.

It's time to ... Children need structure in their lives to provide a measure of security in an often insecure world. Parents should establish and maintain a workable schedule of activities, always remembering that children benefit from regular mealtimes and bedtimes.

I love you. Everyone needs love and affection and a feeling of acceptance and belonging. We can't assume that children know and understand our love for them unless we tell them.

Source: *Our Children*, the official magazine of the National PTA; www.pta.org

Statewide tax discussion dates set for November

The Arkansas Study Circles Project is preparing for a very exciting event.

It is our belief, and that of many others, that long-term investment in public education will require a look at Arkansas' entire tax system. In order to do that, however, we must first start by educating our citizens about taxes and tax options. This subject can be overwhelming even for our most educated citizens. The Arkansas Study Circles Project is planning a collaborative statewide event in November to bring this information into communities across the state.

On November 4, from 8:00 - 10:00 p.m., the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) will broadcast an informational program that will give Arkansans a look at how our tax dollars are spent. The program will walk through a “day in the life” of an Arkansas citizen to see where our tax dollars go and what we derive from them.

On November 11 and 18, Arkansans can participate in study circles about taxes in our state and delve deeper into those issues with members of their communities.

We want to provide citizens the opportunity to talk about how services and taxes affect them and how they, as ordinary citizens, can be part of building a successful tax system in Arkansas.

Look for more information about this initiative in the near future. For more information, contact Heather Gage Detherow at heather@arsba.org.

Thank you and good-bye

How does one say good-bye and thank you all at once?

It hardly seems possible that I have been at ASBA for 3 years. I have enjoyed my time here and I have learned a great deal.

Thank you for all that you do every day for the children of Arkansas. I know that being a board member is often hard and is often thankless ... and that you hear more complaints than compliments. We should all take the time to tell one

another thank you.

I will still be working for the children of Arkansas as I have for the past 30 years. I will be leading the Master Principal Program for the Arkansas Leadership Academy. I look forward to seeing and working with many of you in the future. I will always carry with me the number one fulter of ASBA: Is it good for the kids? ASBA certainly IS good for the kids.

Kathy Morledge

Purchasing through TAPS could net big savings

Recently, ASBA sent a memo to members about a new cooperative purchasing program that could help school districts realize substantial savings on goods and equipment you buy for your districts. The Texas Arkansas Purchasing System (TAPS) can provide almost everything from paper to HVAC systems at very competitive prices and at no cost or obligation to its members.

It almost sounds too good to be true, but the fact is TAPS can be a win/win for your school district.

Several months ago, ASBA was approached by the Texas Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS) to investigate the possibility of expanding the cooperative purchasing program Texas schools have enjoyed for a number of years.

After an initial visit with representatives of the Texas program, ASBA convened a group of people to discuss the feasibility of Arkansas joining the program. That group included our attorneys, a couple of legislators, representatives from two co-ops, ADE Legal Counsel Scott Smith and ADE Assistant Director Bobbie Davis, as well as attorneys and staff representing the existing Texas (or TIPS) program. At that meeting the group discussed the benefits Arkansas could enjoy by joining forces with the enormous purchasing power of Texas and the legalities involved in such an undertaking. The meeting concluded very positively and attorneys then engaged in the necessary research to make certain Arkansas school districts could legally participate in such a cooperative purchasing program.

After that determination was made, it became apparent that ASBA could not sponsor the pro-

gram because of the organization's non-profit status. The law requires that the sponsoring entity be a quasi-governmental agency.

Discussions continued between TIPS and two of our co-ops. In March, the Board of Directors of the Dawson Co-op in Arkadelphia unanimously voted to sponsor the cooperative purchasing program in Arkansas. Known as TAPS, the program then was unanimously endorsed by the ASBA Board of Directors at its March 11 meeting. ASBA has agreed to work collaboratively with the Dawson Co-op in marketing the program for Arkansas school districts.

There is no membership fee to participate in TAPS. The total cost of the TAPS program is funded through a fee based on actual sales, which is paid by the participating vendors. There are no tax dollars expended to support the TAPS program.

To become a member of the program, your board must approve a resolution to join and execute an Interlocal Agreement and forward it to the Dawson Co-op. A complete packet of information about the program—including the resolution and an Interlocal Agreement—was mailed in May to all superintendents and co-op directors. Once these documents have been completed and returned to the Dawson Co-op, your district is automatically a member of the TAPS program and will have immediate access to pricing by toll-free phone and fax numbers and a web site with links to all manufacturers that hold TAPS contracts.

ASBA believes TAPS provides an extraordinary opportunity for everyone involved. Collectively, school districts in Arkansas potentially can save millions of dollars—

dollars that can be redirected to meet the increasing financial demands facing our schools. There is no cost to Arkansas districts to participate in the program, nor is there a requirement that districts must purchase through TAPS. It is completely voluntary.

The purpose of TAPS is to:

- Provide school districts opportunities for greater efficiency and economy in acquiring goods and services.
- Take advantage of state-of-the-art purchasing procedures to ensure the most competitive contracts.
- Provide competitive price solicitations and bulk purchasing for multiple districts that yield economic benefits unobtainable by individual districts.
- Provide quick and efficient delivery of goods and services by contracting with "high performance" vendors.
- Equalize the purchasing power for smaller districts that are not able to obtain the best contracts for themselves because of size and quantities.
- Maintain credibility and confidence in business procedures by maintaining open competition for purchases and by complying with purchasing laws and ethical business practices.
- Assist districts in maintaining the essential controls for budget and accounting purposes.

Some frequently asked questions about the program accompany this article on the next page.

If you have additional questions, contact Mickey McFatridge at mickey@arsba.org.

Frequently asked questions about TAPS

- What is the Texas Arkansas Purchasing System (TAPS)?

The Region VIII Education Service Center in Texas and the Dawson Education Cooperative (TAPS) have executed a contract to provide cooperative purchasing opportunities to school districts and public entities in Texas and Arkansas. As a result of this contract, TAPS became the authorized agent to administer this purchasing program throughout the State of Texas and Arkansas on their behalf.

- Why should I join and use the program?

The law encourages participation in cooperatives to eliminate duplication of efforts, thereby saving taxpayer dollars.

The Region VIII ESC and the Dawson Cooperative are authorized under the laws of Texas and Arkansas to administer a purchasing cooperative for the benefit of its members. This allows school districts and public entities to execute an Interlocal Agreement with the Region VIII ESC and/or the Dawson Education Cooperative to participate in the program.

TAPS contracts are in complete compliance with all Texas and Arkansas statutes, thereby eliminating the need for participating entities to do formal bidding or quoting. These contracts not only save taxpayer dollars but they also will save member agencies time and re-

sources expended in the procurement process.

- What are some of the advantages?

a. All contracts are awarded on an annual basis. For the term of the contract, districts may purchase goods and services from awarded vendors whenever the need arises.

b. All contracts are annually renewable for up to a three-year period.

c. Any disputes between vendor and an entity are resolved by TAPS. TAPS is always the advocate for its members.

- Do all goods available through these contracts include freight charges?

Yes, all contracts are awarded FOB delivered unless otherwise noted.

- Who is eligible to join the program?

Any public school or education agency mandated to follow Texas or Arkansas law.

- What do I have to do to become a member?

The governing body of the agency, subdivision, or taxing entity must approve a resolution to join and execute an Interlocal Agreement. This resolution and agreement are then forwarded to the Region VIII ESC in Texas or to the Dawson Education Cooperative in Arkansas.

- Is there any cost involved in becoming a member?

No. All participation fees are paid by the vendors, which are based on invoiced sales.

- How do I get pricing?

Call or fax the TAPS office toll-free at (866) 839-8477, or fax toll-free at (866) 839-8472.

Visit the TAPS Web site at www.TAPS-arkansas.com where you will find links to all manufacturers that hold TAPS contracts.

- Do vendors increase their prices to customers in order to pay the fee to TAPS?

No. The fee paid by vendors is minimal when compared to the cost of responding to hundreds of bids from various entities. In almost all cases, prices are better than individual entities would be quoted on their own.

- Are any tax dollars involved in funding this program?

No. This program is totally self sustaining.

- Are TAPS technology vendors CISV certified?

Most of the technology vendors are CISV certified.

Continued on next page

TAPS can save money for school districts

Continued from page 15

- Will TAPS eliminate purchasing departments or purchasing personnel?

No. There will always be a need for a strong local purchasing effort. TAPS should be used as a resource in conjunction with the local purchasing effort, thereby allowing the local purchasing department the time to work with pressing local issues and provide better service to the member agency.

- Is this program trying to replace local regional cooperatives?

No. The program is configured to enhance and support each

region's individual purchasing effort to the benefit of participating entities.

- How do vendors find out about TAPS Request for Proposal (RFP's)?

Vendors may request, fill out, and return a Prospective Vendor Application, indicating the commodity category for which the vendor would like to compete. TAPS advertises all RFP opening in accordance with State of Texas and Arkansas bid laws. All RFP openings are held at the TAPS office and are open to the public.

- What process does TAPS use to establish contracts? All contracts are awarded based on competitive, sealed proposals in response to written RFPs. Responses are opened publicly and evaluated by TAPS Evaluation Groups. Proposals are evaluated by the following criteria:

- Quality of product line
- Quality of line items available that are used by participating entities
- Customer support
- Suppliers' demonstrated ability to perform
- Pricing

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