

Now is the Time for “Leading Education in Times of Change”

The ASBA annual conference is coming up quickly. Held at the Statehouse Convention Center and Peabody Hotel in Little Rock on Dec. 6-8, the conference will offer board members and school administrators

an extravaganza of speakers and meaningful breakout sessions supporting the conference theme, “Leading Education in Times of Change.”

Register now at lower rates by completing a regis-

tration form at www.arsba.org, by calling ASBA staff at (800)482-1212.

Consult the conference-related articles on pages 4-6 of this issue of the Reporter for more details.

Regional Meetings Well-Attended

Executive Director Dan Farley and ASBA staff have traveled to every corner of the state to conduct regional meetings. In addition to being served lots of good food, board members got a heaping dish of candid talk about new ethics rules for board members, the possible push for more school consolidation in the next regular legislative session, and the political football that is school funding.

Says Farley, “I want to express my appreciation for all those board members who came out to discuss issues of paramount importance to our schools. We have challenges ahead of us, but will rise to meet them together.”

Attendance at this year’s meetings was up over last year, with



Dan Farley answers board members’ questions.

more than 800 members in attendance statewide. In addition to the regular agenda, Regions 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12 and 14 elected or re-elected regional Directors. (See related articles, pages 16-17)

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New Board Members Off to a Good Start

ASBA continued its annual introduction for newly-elected board members with a well-attended 2005 New Board Member Workshop held Oct. 18 in Little Rock.



ASBA President Jack Gardner welcomes new board members

More than 350 board members and school administrators attended the six-hour workshop, where they learned about board responsibilities, legal aspects of board service, school finance, and how to develop good board-superintendent relationships, among other topics.



Attorney Paul Blume explains legal pitfalls that boards may face

ASBA thanks all who participated, especially Dr. Richard Abernathy, superintendent of Bryant schools for his presentation on the “ABC’s of School Finance,” and Superintendent Doug Adams of South Conway County and the South Conway County Board for their presentation on “Building School Board–Superintendent Relationships.”

The workshop handouts and materials are available for a limited time on the ASBA website at www.arsba.org.



Bryant Superintendent Dr. Richard Abernathy explains “The ABCs of School Finance”

At the September board meeting, the ASBA Board of Directors approved the ASBA’s operating budget for the 2006 Fiscal year.

Revenues		Expenditures	
Member dues	\$ 338,690	Personnel	\$ 529,704
Member services	231,340	Operations	109,386
Workshops & training	133,500	Conferences & travel	89,912
Corporate memberships	39,850	Training program	30,200
Interest income	22,000	Dues	30,175
From reserves	63,747	Publications	27,750
Total revenues	\$ 829,127	Legislative expenses	12,000
		Total expenditures	\$ 829,127

School Board Conferences are Adjusting to Hurricane Katrina

Due to the effects of Hurricane Katrina, both the NSBA Conference and the NSBA Southern Region Conference have been moved. Details are available at www.arsba.org.

NSBA Conference
April 8-11, 2006
Chicago, IL

NSBA Southern Region Conf.
July 23-26, 2006
San Destin, FL

New Board Training Requirements: The Bottom Line

The 2005 legislative session ushered in a host of new laws for schools, including a new school board member training law. The new law, Act 1775 of 2005, is codified in Arkansas Code Annotated 6-13-629. It's time to start preparing for the new requirements now. Maybe you, or a board member you know, have questions about the new law...

What's the new law all about?

The law is intended to keep board members abreast of changes in public education that affect their governance of schools. In a nutshell, the new law requires board members to receive a minimum amount of training each year. The training must meet certain standards set forth in the law and in Department of Education (ADE)

regulations. Each board member's compliance with the law will be reported to the public through their district's annual School Performance Report.

When does the law go into effect?

The new law becomes effective on Jan. 1, 2006. Any training received before Jan. 1 does not count toward meeting the new requirements. For the purposes of this law, every board member starts with a "clean slate" on Jan. 1.

Will I lose my ASBA boardmanship credit on Jan. 1?

All boardmanship credit received before Jan. 1 will continue to count toward ASBA boardmanship awards and recognition. The new law does not affect ASBA's Boardmanship Awards Program.

How much training is required?

Beginning Jan. 1, serving board members are required to receive six (6) hours of training during each calendar year of their continuing service.

When board members are newly-elected, or go back on the board after a break in service, they must receive nine (9) hours of training by December 31 of the year following their election. They are required to receive six (6) hours each calendar year thereafter.

What Training "Counts?"

Only training "relevant to school laws, school operations, and the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the members of the board..." will count toward meeting the new training mandate.

See Training... page 14

The Nation's Report Card – Be Proud, Arkansas!

Once again, the National Center for Education Statistics has released its annual report card for the nation's schools. The report is commonly referred to as "The Nation's Report Card." Not surprisingly, the report shines a light on the achievements of Arkansas schools.

Since 1969, the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), the nation's only long term study of educational achievement, has reported student achievement results for states and the nation.

In the last decade the NAEP has focused on mathematics and reading proficiency of 4th and 8th graders. The NAEP exams are not designed to evaluate the performance

of individual schools or districts. Since the NAEP exams are not correlated to specific states' curricula, the data can not be used to accurately compare schools from state-to-state. It is a helpful measure of long term trends in the nation and states, since the NAEP is generally accepted as a reasonable estimation of students' achievement — as long as the data is "consumed" with a grain of salt.

So, what can one conclude from the "Nation's Report Card?" In each measure, Arkansas is improving its proficiency rates significantly faster than the nation as a whole. If these trends continue, Arkansas will soon surpass national averages in three of the four measures.

See Be Proud... page 18

School Board BRIEFCASE

- ▲ Update your e-mail address with ASBA
- ▲ Register for the ASBA Conference
- ▲ Reserve Conference Hotel Rooms
- ▲ NSBA Conference: April 8-11, 2005 Chicago, IL
- ▲ Southern Region Conf. July 23-26, 2005 San Destin, FL
- ▲ Benchmark Scores are Released

Leading Education in Times of Change - ASBA's Timely Annual Conference

The speed at which things change in Arkansas education seems to be faster and faster. Now, more than ever, board members and education leaders must stay abreast of the latest trends and requirements in public education. ASBA's annual conference, to be held Dec. 6-8, 2005, is the best, most timely chance learn what's happening and to lead education in times of change. Register by completing the attached form, going to www.arsba.org, or calling (800) 482-1212.

Preconference Workshops

Dec. 6 Enhance your knowledge and skills by attending in-depth, useful training for board members.

School Board Meetings, from A-Z

This basic primer on how to hold successful meetings, taught by ASBA Staff Attorney **Kristen Gould**, will help you understand your board obligations and legal responsibilities. You'll learn what you need to know about the Freedom of Information Act, how to manage effective meetings, and much more.

Parliamentary Procedure for Effective Meetings

The foundation for well-run, effective meetings is your knowledge of parliamentary procedure. Nationally known professional parliamentarian and attorney **Jim Slaughter** will join us again this year to help you develop your knowledge and skills of the right way to conduct meetings. Well-run meetings send a strong message of credibility to everyone in the community.

Outstanding Speakers

The annual ASBA Conference is known for its dynamic and engaging speakers. ASBA staff and directors search nationwide for outstanding speakers to inspire, entertain, and challenge us all during the conference's three general sessions. The 52nd annual conference will be no exception, as we've lined up some very distinguished speakers for the occasion.

One of the nation's most in-demand education speakers and researchers, Dr. Pedro Noguera, will open the conference with the first general session. A pro-



Dr. Pedro Noguera

See Outstanding... page 5

Book Your Hotel Rooms Now!

The Peabody Hotel, which adjoins the Statehouse Convention Center, is offering a limited number of rooms to ASBA Conference attendees at a special discounted rate of \$99 per night. You may reserve rooms by calling 1-800-PEABODY. Mention the ASBA Conference to get the special rate *before Nov. 20*.

Enjoy the Capital City

Centrally located in downtown Little Rock, the convention area is convenient to many local activities and sites. You can watch the famous Peabody ducks make their daily pilgrimage to the fountain; visit the Clinton Presidential Library; explore the Museum of Discovery, the Arkansas Historic Museum, or the Arkansas Arts Center; shop in the new, vibrant River Market; enjoy the entertainment and nightlife of downtown; tour the area on the Downtown Trolley; walk along Riverfront Park; eat in fine local restaurants; or just people watch in the state's busiest city.

ASBA Breakouts – Learning for Leaders

ASBA will offer about a dozen different breakout topics, scheduled during four breakout sessions throughout the day on Dec. 7. Plan your conference around the breakouts that interest you most. The following list is a tentative list at press time. Consult www.arsba.org for the final listing of breakouts.

Financial Communications

Learn how one school district has helped the public better understand the financial realities of their schools. Get a primer on how to structure your district's communications on this important topic.

Reading Recovery for 5th Graders

Learn from first-hand practitioners how a very special Arkansas school is helping 5th graders catch up on their reading skills. This is an issue every district faces.

ASBA On-line Policy Service

Learn what's available to the board, school administrators, and the public through ASBA's new internet-based, on-line policy service.

Human Resources for Boards

What can schools learn from business about employment and employee management? Lots, according to experienced business managers and board members.

High School Reform

It's the talk of the nation, but what can we expect here in Arkansas? Find out from Department of Education staff involved in reforming Arkansas high schools.

Ethics for School Board Members

Elected officials, including school board members, are subject to more and more ethics rules. Learn the latest to stay in compliance with the law.

Addressing Drug Use in Schools

The first step to combating drugs in schools is to know where the problems are. Learn how your district can survey your schools at no cost to the district.

School Report Cards are Coming Soon

The state of Arkansas is developing a new system to "grade" schools for the general public. What will your grade be? Find out what's in store for your schools' future.

Implementing a Reduction in Force

With school consolidation and mergers becoming more common, every school district needs to have a defensible reduction in force (RIF) policy in place. Learn more now.

Master Principals for Master Schools

Learn about the Arkansas Leadership Academy's efforts to improve education by improving school principals. Bring information back to your school principals.

After School Programs for Kids

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law will require more schools to offer more after school programs over the next few years. Is your district ready?

Hiring a Superintendent

Learn about proven methods of attracting, selecting, and hiring a superintendent from one of the nation's foremost executive recruiters specializing in superintendent searches.

Outstanding Speakers, continued...

Continued from page 4

Professor in the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University, Noguera is one of America's leading urban sociologists, whose scholarship and research focus on the ways in which schools are influenced by social and economic conditions. He is an expert on urban school reform, conditions that promote student achievement, and race and ethnic relations in American society.

Noguera combines his personal perspective as a minority student learning in public schools all the way to serving on the Berkley (CA) School Board, with his research on the issues of racial inequality

and diversity in our schools. He challenges schools to create safe, secure, and academically rewarding environments for poor and minority students. He will demonstrate the problems America faces in providing equal opportunity in education, and offer some of the solutions that are working across America.

Noted as a "charismatic speaker of great oratorical gifts," Professor Noguera is sure to have an academic and emotional impact on the conference. His most recent book is *City Schools and the American Dream: Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education*.

See *Conference Speakers...* page 6

Conference Speakers

Continued from page 5



Dr. Ann White

as a teacher, librarian, director of community relations, and assistant superintendent.

Since leaving her formal position in education, White has developed her own engaging brand of inspiring others, *Laugh and Learn with Ann White*, in which she weaves together insights about growing up in the South, with her practical knowledge gained from schools and her formal knowledge gained while earning three degrees in education. Be prepared for a humorous, albeit informative, afternoon with one of the funniest and smartest ladies around. She has penned a serious, yet lighthearted, book that sums up her philosophy about the importance of teamwork in the workplace, *Twelve Commandments for People Who Work with People*.

Ann White, whose first audience were the seventh and eighth graders in her middle school classroom, will engage us with her southern, folksy humor and practical ideas for education that she has developed throughout her career

Wrapping up the conference at the final general session and breakfast will be Brady Anderson. A native of Helena, Anderson has gone on to lead a globetrotting life of public service in the U.S. Navy, as a sociolinguist studying local languages and dialects in Africa, as Arkansas Assistant Attorney General, as the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as the U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania, as Chairman of the Board of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and most recently as a business investor and consultant on international affairs.

Anderson has a strong education ethic that was molded by his education-oriented family. While growing up in Helena, his mother was the high school librarian and his father was the junior high principal. His sister, Jon Purifoy of Texarkana, went on to become a statewide leader in gifted and talented education. Anderson will share his insights about growing up in Helena and becoming a successful public servant and businessman, and he'll discuss his perspective on how education can impact many of the political and social issues facing the world in the 21st century.



Brady Anderson

Conference Schedule at a Glance

Tuesday, Dec. 6

- 8 am Registration opens
- 9 am **Workshop Session I:**
"Board Meetings A-Z"
- 1:30 pm **Workshop Session II:**
"Parliamentary Procedure"

Wednesday, Dec. 7

- 7:30 am Registration opens
- 7:30 am Exhibit Hall opens
- 8 am **Delegate Assembly convenes**

8:10 am Breakout Session A

- 9 am Exhibit Hall Break
- 9:30 am **First General Session**
- 11 am **Breakout Session B**
- 12 noon **ASBA Luncheon & Awards**
- 2 pm Exhibit Hall Break & Drawings for Prizes
- 2:50 pm **Breakout Session C**
- 3:50 pm **Breakout Session D**
- 4:40 pm Adjourn

Thursday, Dec. 8

- 8 am **Breakfast & Speakers**
Dr. Kellar Noggle,
retiring AAEA Director
Dr. Ken James,
AR Commissioner of Educ.
- 9:15 am Break
- 9:45 am **Final General Session**
- 11 am Adjourn

An ASBA Tradition (of sorts) Continues....

For the sixth time in seven years the ASBA Workers' Compensation Trust won the "Outstanding Performance Award" for Public Group Self-insurer in Arkansas.

Awarded by the Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission in October, the award recognizes ASBA's prudent management and high level of service to schools and their injured employees.

The trust is a self-insured workers' compensation insurance program for 253 of the state's 254 school districts. Since the ASBA Workers Compensation Trust was established in 1994, the Trust has saved school districts and the state millions of dollars in insurance premiums over their old fees. The Trust is on firm financial footing,



ASBA Executive Director Dan Farley accepts the "Outstanding Performance Award" from members of the Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission (l-r, Olan Reeves, Chair; Karen McKinney, Commissioner; Farley; Terry Turner, Commissioner).



with excess premiums now being re-distributed to districts each year.

The award specifically cites excellent claims handling, including the number of cases handled, timeliness in reporting injuries and paying injured employees. "It's really a partnership of ASBA, school districts, schools, and our third party administrator, Risk Management Resources (a division of Ramsey, Krug, Farrell & Lensing)

that has been a major factor in winning this award once again," says ASBA Program Manager Rhoda Parsons.

"We work hard to keep costs down and service up," adds Parsons. "Risk Management Resources shares ASBA's commitment to contain costs so that schools can keep their resources focused on educating kids."

BOARD MEMBERS! Get the Latest News via E-mail

ASBA staff are utilizing e-mail more and more to send timely updates, reminders, and the monthly ASBA Notepad newsletter to members. Currently only 475 of 1550 board members have e-mail addresses on file with ASBA.

Go to the ASBA website, www.arsba.org, to see if your e-mail address is on file. If not, follow the website links to submit your e-mail address, so you won't be left out of these important, timely notices.

Please make certain that ASBA has *your* e-mail address on file.

The Ever Increasing Burden on America's Public Schools

America's public schools can be traced back to the year 1647. The Massachusetts Puritans established schools to:

- 1) Teach basic reading, some writing and arithmetic skills, and
- 2) Cultivate values that serve a democratic society (some history and civics implied).

Gradually, science and geography were added, but the curriculum was limited and remained focused for 260 years. The founders of these schools assumed that families and churches bore the major responsibility for raising a child.

At the beginning of the 20th century, society began to assign additional responsibilities to the schools. Politicians and business leaders saw the schools as a logical site for both the assimilation of immigrants and the social engineering of citizens of the "Industrial Age." The trend of increasing the responsibilities of the public schools has accelerated ever since.

From 1900 to 1910, we added

- * nutrition
- * immunization, and
- * health to the list of school responsibilities.

From 1910 to 1930, we added

- * physical education, and athletics
- * the practical arts
- * vocational education, including home economics and agriculture, &
- * school transportation began to be mandated.

In the 1940s, we added

- * business education
- * art and music
- * speech and drama
- * half day kindergarten, and
- * school lunch programs appeared.

In the 1950s, we added

- * expanded science and math education
- * safety education
- * driver's education
- * expanded music and art education
- * new foreign language requirements, &
- * sex education was introduced

In the 1960s, we added

- * Advanced Placement programs
- * Head Start
- * Title I (schooling for the disadvantaged)
- * adult education
- * consumer education
- * career education
- * peace, leisure, and recreation education

In the 1970s, we added

- * special education (federal mandate)
- * Title IX programs (athletics for girls)
- * drug and alcohol abuse education
- * parent education
- * behavior adjustment classes
- * character education
- * environmental education
- * women's studies
- * African-American heritage education
- * school breakfast programs appeared.

In the 1980s, the flood gates opened, and we added

- * keyboarding and computer education
- * global education
- * ethnic education
- * multicultural/non-sexist education
- * ESL, and bilingual education

- * teen pregnancy awareness
- * Hispanic heritage education
- * early childhood education
- * Jump Start, Early Start, Even Start, and Prime Start
- * full day kindergarten
- * pre-school programs for at-risk kids
- * after school programs for children of working parents
- * alternative education in all its forms
- * stranger/danger education
- * anti-smoking education
- * sexual abuse prevention education
- * health and psychological services
- * child abuse monitoring by teachers

In the 1990s, we added

- * conflict resolution and peer mediation
- * HIV/AIDS education
- * CPR training
- * death education
- * expanded computer and Internet education
- * inclusion
- * Tech Prep and School to Work programs
- * gang education (in urban centers)
- * bus safety, bicycle safety, gun safety, and water safety education

In the first years of the 21st Century, we have superimposed upon everything else a layer of high-stakes, politically charged, standardized tests.

And in most states we have not added a single minute to the school calendar in five decades!

All of these added items have merit, and all have their ardent supporters, but they all cannot be assigned to the schools. No generation of board members in the history of the world has been asked to meet this goal.

America's school board members must facilitate a conversation in every community that answers two essential questions: What do we want our children to know and be able to do when they graduate, and how can our schools and our entire community be organized to ensure that all children reach the stated goals.

The bottom line: Schools cannot do it alone. Schools cannot raise America's children.

The Camel's Back

By Ron Harder

The Lake View case has become such a sore point that the resulting frustrations are in danger of causing more focus on finding a scapegoat for inadequate funding than finding a solution. It is helpful to step back and look at the issue of public education from a different angle to get a new perspective on the nature of at least part of the problem.

There is much talk about the decades-long increase of funding to public schools. The discussion is usually followed by a statement that positive results in the form of student achievement have not kept pace with the increase in funding. While, on the surface, it is possible to view both points as generally true, they do not take into account the **incredible** increase in what public schools are being required to do and held strictly accountable for doing. The connection between funding and student achievement is extremely complex.

Please take a few minutes to read the accompanying, dizzying list of what schools are expected to do (opposite page). It was compiled by Jamie Vollmer, a former businessman and attorney who had been very critical of how public schools are run. Several years ago at a meeting with school personnel where he was advocating his position that schools should be run like a business, he was confronted by a teacher who helped him to understand the differences between schools and businesses. It was an epiphany for Vollmer, who now lectures on the need for increased community support for public schools and who spoke at last year's annual ASBA conference.

Most of the items on the list are worthwhile and address problems that arguably need attention. His

sentence in bold is especially worth noting. "**And in most states we have not added a single minute to the school calendar in five decades!**" The legislature did add five days to the teacher's calendar for increased professional development, but that is a different issue than increasing student contact time to adequately deal with the items on Vollmer's list and others that Arkansas has added. Expanding the calendar has very large financial consequences that go along with it. But the ever increasing burden being placed on public schools is more than the system is designed to handle. The camel's back is overloaded and the load it is being asked to carry needs to be re-examined.

There is much fanfare about the KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) Academies open enrollment charter schools, and they do appear to be successful in increasing academic achievement. However, trying to make them a pattern for all schools in Arkansas to follow doesn't work under the present system. Some of the reasons for this are:

- The KIPP school day and the school year are significantly longer than traditional schools—
- each school day is about two hours longer;
- school is held half days on Saturdays;
- school is held for three to four weeks in the summer;
- KIPP teachers make substantially higher salaries than traditional public school teachers to compensate for their longer work day and school year;
- Students and parents have to sign **and abide by** a *code of conduct* contract to remain enrolled in the school and are subject to disci-

pline, including possible dismissal, for violations of the contract.

KIPP's significant increase in student contact time is one way to increase academic achievement, but can only be a viable solution if new demands are not placed on teachers within the longer school day. It would defeat the purpose of the longer school day to subsequently fill it with additional requirements for teachers and schools. Schools' mandates must be allocated the time and funding necessary to successfully achieve meeting the demands being placed on them, including those identified in Vollmer's list.

KIPP Academies differ from traditional public schools in many ways, but the importance of the increased student contact time cannot be overstated. It is huge. It allows teachers to take advantage of "teachable moments" when they occur. These are the opportunities to take a student's question, inappropriate behavior, or an upcoming event and use them to connect with the students. Taking such situations and tying them to the curriculum and to life in the "real world" can reap huge rewards both inside and outside the classroom. They are, however, not in the curriculum frameworks, don't get tested, and consequently get lost in the push for "student achievement." Although Vollmer's list addresses the "whole child," No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the push to attain adequate yearly progress (AYP) severely limits the opportunities to teach to the "whole child."

In addition to the ever-increasing requirements Vollmer listed, the last 50 years have seen a major change in the population schools are responsible for educating. In the past, many students with disabilities were excluded from public education, and other students were

JACK GARDNER, ASBA PRESIDENT

A Fond Farewell is Really not a Farewell

Come Dec. 7, at our annual delegate assembly, I'll end my tenure as ASBA president. As I approach this transition and look back on my service I'm struck by how much I've really enjoyed my experience. And although I'll no longer serve as president, I will still serve on my local board, and I'll still be active in ASBA. So, my farewell as president is really not "farewell" as much as it is "things are changing for me."

I've been enriched by having gotten to know and work with some of the most dedicated public servants in the state in my position. I've been inspired by the efforts of Arkansas board members, ASBA staff, and national leaders alike.

The whole experience leaves me optimistic about ASBA and about Arkansas education. Over the last few years especially, support for schools has been increasing, student performance is on the rise, and

our education leaders are promising to do even more.

As I reflect on the last two years as president I'm reminded of how much ASBA has made a difference in Arkansas education. In addition to providing school boards more services than ever, the association is exerting itself into statewide issues more effectively than ever.

See A Fond Farewell... page 12

DAN FARLEY, ASBA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Moving Schools Forward takes Leadership, and Dialogue, and Working Together...

Thanks to all of you who came out to the regional meetings this fall. Each region was well represented; some had record attendance. It always energizes me to have the opportunity to visit with all of you around the state and it serves as a measure of where we are and what the Board and the staff need to be focusing on.

During the meetings, we talked about school board standards, about legislation enacted earlier this year and its impact on local school boards and, of course, we talked about the ongoing Lake View

developments. With the Supreme Court due to opine soon on whether or not schools were adequately funded for the current year, we also talked about the importance of your advocacy efforts.

Arkansas has made some important steps forward in improving and reforming our public schools. It took a long time to get to this point and its importance should be neither overlooked nor minimized. Because of the 2003-2004 special legislative session, schools received much needed attention and a badly needed infusion of money

necessary to move public education forward throughout our state.

The goal in this effort for all of us—policymakers at every level—is to elevate the academic achievement of our students. There is some evidence of improvement. It's not where we want to be, but at least we're moving in the right direction.

It takes all of us to be successful. It takes leadership and a willingness to see it through. We cannot fall into old patterns and start a task we never see finished. It's a

See Moving... page 12

REPORTER

Vol. 24, Number 2

Late Fall 2005

ISSN 0141-6757

Published quarterly by the Arkansas School Boards Association

Championing excellence in public education through training, advocacy, and service for local school boards.

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Employee References, Coming and Going

When hiring a new employee and when giving references on a new employee, the things that you should (and should not) do are not that difficult. Regardless, if you do the wrong thing, it can lead to heartbreak and agony. And lawsuits.

Well, okay, from a lawyer's standpoint (a trial lawyer's, at least) the lawsuit thing sounds pretty good. But we still have some pesky obligation to try to keep you out of court. So, we'll try.

The biggest mistake a potential employer can make is to neglect to check the references of the applicant. In many cases, there is a good reason that the person filling out the application is an applicant rather than an employee.

Of course, that's not true of most applicants, but occasionally you'll come across a doozy. Those are the ones who make you look like an idiot if you didn't check references: Incompetence, lousy attitude, forgetting to show up for work, generally nuts. These are the people who, if hired, make you look as though you were asleep at the switch, and employees are a WHOLE LOT harder to get rid of than they are to hire.

Make a phone call or two. Usually the responsible administrator is the one to do this, but, prior to hiring a person, someone needs to do this, so I'm not going to tell a Board member not to do that if the responsible administrator hasn't done it. But let's be careful.

Don't give your own opinion about anyone. Just ask questions. When you call for a reference, speak with the applicant's supervisor at his previous job, if possible. Ask about the quality of the person's work, his attitude, his promptness and attendance. Ask if there's any reason that the former employee would not hire this person back. Don't ask about age, race, religion, things like that. But call and ask the other stuff.

Of course, there's sometimes the problem that the former employer won't tell you much, if anything (and that's often the smart thing, as I'll explain below). When that happens, red flags go up, and you should pursue the issue further, with other people on the reference list provided by the employee and

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Fax: (501) 375-2454
E-mail: arsba@arsba.org
www.arsba.org

See Employee References... page 18

A Fond Farewell...

Continued from page 10

I'm proud to have been a part of this progress.

Our association didn't get where it is overnight, however. Our success is built on a long line of service by dedicated people, including 43 ASBA presidents before me. So it is that I proudly hand off the title of president to a most-

capable, smart, enthusiastic, and dedicated friend and fellow board member. Our 45th president will be President-elect Kathy McFetridge of Springdale. She is an outstanding ASBA board member who will serve our association well. Please welcome her, support her, and befriend her as you have welcomed, supported, and befriended me.

I am grateful for everyone's support and encouragement over the last two years as president. And I especially want to thank my lovely wife Linda for her patience, support, and understanding as I've served the association.

So, I say to you all a fond "farewell."

Well, sort of...

Moving Schools...

Continued from page 10

determined and thoughtful course that will get us there. That requires us to be always focused on our mission to educate all Arkansas schoolchildren.

The last legislative session was fraught with rancor. I'm not going to point fingers because I believe the blame should be borne by all of us. We're adults and we're making decisions for children, about children and their future. I think it's the best economic development we can make as a state. If we—and I mean all of us—make education in Arkansas the priority it should be, our schools will rise in the ranks over time to occupy a position of pride, not embarrassment.

As most of you know, we believe in dialogue around ASBA. We think people talking together to solve problems is the best approach to make things happen. We aren't big on public hearings, but we're really big on dialogue: when people actually talk—and listen—to each other to try and find common ground and ways to move beyond the status quo. It's actually not a new idea. Some folks call it deliberative democracy, where folks express their own and listen

to others' points of view. Often in the process folks find many commonalities. From that, new ideas sometimes emerge and possible solutions to problems are forged. As we often say around here, people tend to support what they help to create.

With public opinion being what it is, it's very important that leaders are seen working constructively and collaboratively to find solutions to very real problems. John Q.'s tolerance is pretty low right now for anything less than that. A recent poll says Arkansas residents aren't overly confident of government at any level, but local level folks have the highest marks.

So, school board members, it's very important for you to be dialoguing and advocating with your parents, your community members, other local officials, your legislators, your Congressmen and your Senators. Decisions are made every day that have an impact on the decisions you make on your local school board.

Just as it's important for community members to communicate with you, it is equally important that you communicate with them and with

members of the General Assembly and the Congress. Express your concerns, but also be thoughtful enough to express appreciation when it's due. It's all about dialogue—talking and listening.

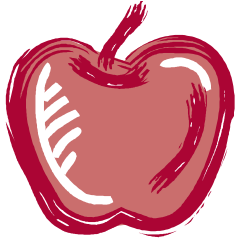
Our annual conference is drawing near. It's a great opportunity to hear some great speakers and partake of a variety of breakout sessions. It's time to renew acquaintances and make new ones. We have our resident

...it's very important that leaders are seen working constructively and collaboratively to find solutions to very real problems.

parliamentarian, Jim Slaughter, coming back to do another pre-conference session and Kristen Gould, our staff attorney, will do an abbreviated "A to Z" that would be good for any newly elected board members who couldn't attend the annual New Board Member Workshop in October. Both of those half-day sessions are set for Dec. 6.

Also of special note, both the NSBA Conference and the NSBA Southern Region Conference have been relocated because of extensive hurricane damage. The NSBA Conference has moved to Chicago from New Orleans and Southern Region has moved to San Destin, Florida, or as the Alabama hosts like to say, "lower Alabama."

Congratulations to Golden Apple Winners



On Nov. 1 at the governor's mansion, Governor Huckabee announced the 10 school districts that achieved the highest rates of student proficiency on the recent benchmark exam scores and end-of-course exams.

The second annual "Golden Apple" awards, sponsored by Little Rock television station KTHV, recognizes what they consider the "top ten" school districts in Arkansas. The districts are selected for having the highest benchmark scores in the state.

These districts have done an exemplary job of focusing their resources and their community on student achievement. The combina-

tion of good education leadership, good staff, effective programs, and community support are evident in all these districts.

KTHV has kindly posted the live television broadcast of the awards ceremony and the vignettes of the winners that were shown on statewide television during October. You may access the engaging videos at www.todaysthv.com (follow the "Special Sections" link).

ASBA commends and congratulates the 10 Golden Apple Award winners, and thanks KTHV and Governor Huckabee for recognizing the state's highest scoring districts.

It's no surprise that each of the 10 winning districts cited public support as a primary reason for their success. It is the foundation of our entire public school system, after all.

2005 Golden Apple Winners

Valley View School District
 Bentonville School District
 Salem School District
 Greenwood School District
 Parker's Chapel School District
 Fayetteville School District
 Melbourne School District
 Valley Springs School District
 Searcy School District
 Bergman School District

A Reflection on the Golden Apple

By James Gilson

When I first heard about the Golden Apple Award, I was so excited that a major television station was willing to publicly acknowledge the accomplishments of Arkansas schools. I was glued to the television screen every night that KTHV broadcast each school's video vignette. I felt proud every time that a board member, superintendent, or teacher explained their success. I wanted to visit every school to bask in their presence. I'm proud of the work those districts do. I'm proud of their success. I was disappointed that only ten get to be recognized.

I was struck, however, by the video images I saw on my television. The faces of the teachers, administrators and students didn't look like those in my son's school,

or other schools I've recently visited. I began to wonder if these districts were different from the typical Arkansas school.

After a quick glance at what I believe are pertinent statistics, I began to believe that these districts do differ from the average Arkansas school by more than just their test scores. On the whole, the winning districts and communities appear to be better educated, wealthier, and more racially homogeneous than the average Arkansas district.

Maybe that gives these districts an advantage; maybe it does not. If it does give them an advantage, then that means schools on the other end of the spectrum may have equivalent *disadvantages*.

It's a reminder to me that lack of education, lack of community

ASBA Reporter - Tell us what you need!

We at ASBA want to serve the needs of school boards and school board members. We want to provide you with information and ideas that you can use to improve education in your community. So, what do you need? Please contact James Gilson with your ideas and requests at (800)482-1212, or e-mail jgilson@arsba.org.

support, lack of wealth, and higher disadvantaged populations are factors to remember when evaluating schools' successes and their failures.

Training...

Continued from page 3

Training consistent with the content above and provided by Arkansas institutions of higher learning, ADE, or ASBA automatically counts toward meeting the law's requirements. Training from other sources must be approved by the Department of Education before it can be counted.

Who is responsible for record-keeping?

Ultimately each board member should take responsibility for their training records to ensure that their training is accurately recorded. The law does, however, assign school districts the responsibility of keeping training records of board members.

ASBA keeps records of training provided by ASBA, and will send a printed report to each district identifying ASBA training received by each board member before Jan. 1.

Are there consequences for failing to get training?

The new law requires that school districts report to the public whether board members have met their training requirements. Each year it must be reported in every district's annual performance report. If board members should fail to receive their training, it will be duly noted in the report.

The public reporting of board training is a positive development

for school boards. It demonstrates board members' commitment to serving schools, and it shows that board members receive relevant training above and beyond what is required of other elected officials – something that we are all proud of.

Will training hours carry forward?

If a board member should receive more than the mandated six (6) hours of annual training in a calendar year, the "extra" hours can be carried forward to meet the requirements in the next calendar year.

Until the ADE regulations are

ASBA training, some local board training approved by ASBA for boardmanship credit, and service to ASBA and the cause of public education (which would not automatically count toward the state mandated training).

Beginning in 2006, ASBA boardmanship reports will identify ASBA training that counts toward the state-mandated requirements, as well as other ASBA Boardmanship credit that is not eligible to meet the state requirement.

Is there reciprocity between the two systems?

We anticipate that all ADE-approved board training will be eligible for ASBA boardmanship credit, and all formal ASBA-sponsored board training will count toward the state training requirements.

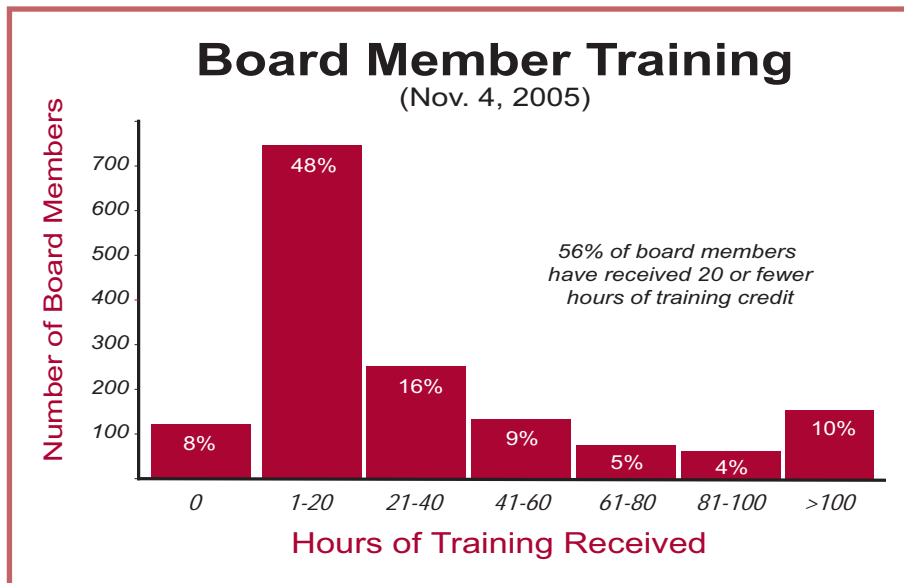
Training delivered by other providers must be approved by ADE to count toward the state training requirements. ASBA will continue to offer boardmanship credit on a case-by-case

basis for other training and service to public education.

ASBA will establish and publish a training reciprocity policy after ADE's board training regulations are finalized.

Where can I get a copy of the new law?

The text of the new training law is available at www.arsba.org. If you have more questions, contact James at (800)482-1272 or jgilson@arsba.org.



finalized, it is uncertain whether "extra" board training hours may be carried forward for more than one year into the future.

Is the state-mandated training the same as ASBA Boardmanship Credit?

The long-standing ASBA Boardmanship Awards Program, in which board members are recognized by ASBA for their training and service, is not the same as the state mandated training.

The ASBA Boardmanship Program credits board members with

Job Bulletin

A service of ASBA

Superintendent, North Little Rock School District

Qualifications: Certification & Previous Superintendency
Appl. Deadline: Until Filled
Commences: July 1, 2006 or sooner
 North Little Rock School District
 P.O. Box 687 • North Little Rock, AR 72115

Superintendent, Mountain Pine School District

Qualifications: Certification & Previous Superintendency
Appl. Deadline: Feb. 1, 2006
Commences: July 1, 2006
 Resume' to Board President
 P.O. Box 1 • Mountain Pine, AR 71956

Superintendent, Benton School District

Qualifications: Certification & Strong Leadership Skills
Appl. Deadline: Jan. 13, 2006
Commences: July 1, 2006 or sooner
Contact: McPherson & Jacobson

Superintendent, Pulaski County School District

Qualifications: Certification & Strong Management Skills
Appl. Deadline: Dec. 30, 2005
Commences: July 1, 2006
Contact: McPherson & Jacobson

McPherson & Jacobson L.L.C.

P.O. Box 7346 • Omaha, NE 68107
 Phone (402) 991-7031 • Fax (402)991-7031 • www.macnjake.com • mail@macnjake.com

Send Job Bulletin information to jgilson@arsba.org, or (800)482-1212

Camel...

Continued from page 9

allowed (or even encouraged) to drop out and go to work. Providing a rigorous education for America's children so that they and the nation can meet future challenges is **both necessary and the right thing to do**, but it is very costly. Seldom is the price for educating **all** students considered when discussing the increased funding for public education.

Another major effect of the expanded student population shows up in the calculations of student achievement. The fact that student achievement scores are improving should be cause for celebration, especially given the challenges schools are facing. But all too often, schools are derided and penalized when their scores don't rise high enough or fast enough. This is particularly true of NCLB. To its credit, NCLB has placed a much needed spotlight on the achievement gap and the necessity to close it. Beyond that, however, NCLB's over-emphasis on test scores as the sole measure of progress work against the goal of educating the whole child. The pressure to meet AYP has turned classrooms into pressure cookers instead of healthy learning environments.

Having schools meet the level of expectations that have been placed on them is a problem. The legislature is not *the* problem, but it is part of the problem. Superintendents are not *the* problem, but they are part of the problem. Board members are not *the* problem, but they are part of the problem. This is true for teachers, parents, and students as well. Simply playing the blame game is counterproductive because students will be the ultimate losers.

If the thrust of the Special Masters' report is accepted by the Supreme Court in the latest Lake

View appeal, it is likely that the Court will require increased funding to public education. So how does the state get more blood from the turnip? Perhaps part of the solution isn't about *more* funding, but rather *where* to get the funding. The last legislative session passed many acts to address school facilities. Two such acts dealt with public/private and public/public partnerships for construction of facilities for schools to use. Public/public partnerships (a school district along with another public institution, *e.g.* college, library, health department, police, etc.) are a potentially creative way to associate public schools with agencies that are designed to address many of the issues on Vollmer's list. The partnership would use funding and staff from the associated agency to work with many of the non-curriculum issues that schools have been *assigned*, but for which they were not *designed* to be responsible. The term for this is "community schools" and such an arrangement could significantly improve the connection between schools and the rest of the community. It can be a win-win for both schools and the agency involved, and for the state as a whole.

The length of the school calendar still needs to be addressed, but looking for viable alternatives for funding could make the solution more manageable. It is time to stop adding more straws to the camel's back regardless of how well intentioned the straws are. We need to carefully examine Vollmer's list along with the daily curriculum requirements that have been created by statute and regulation. What our teachers are expected to accomplish is unrealistic and demonstrates a need to re-examine our priorities. It may have taken the last century to create the present problems, but we must look for 21st century solutions.

ASBA's New Regional Directors

ASBA Regional Directors, representing their region on the ASBA Board of Directors, changed in Regions 3, 12, and 14 as a result of elections held during recent regional meetings.



Sandy Anders, Corning School Board

Sandy Anders begins her twelfth year of school board service. After a one-year break in service in 2003, friends and neighbors encouraged her to serve again. Now, in addition to being re-elected to her local board, she extends her service to the ASBA Board of Directors. After years in the corporate world, Anders has focused her skills on her family's construction business in Corning and her service on the school board. She and her husband have two sons who recently graduated from Corning High School. She looks forward to serving the school boards of Arkansas.



Jim Kuykendall, Mineral Springs School Board

Jim Kuykendall grew up and attended school in the Little Rock area, but has settled down with his family in quieter, smaller Mineral Springs. Kuykendall and his wife have had children in school continuously for the last 28 years. His youngest son is in high school now. Kuykendall, who has served on his board for nearly a decade, was re-elected to his local board this year.



Jim Kuykendall



William Campbell, McGehee School Board

William Campbell was born in Dermott, attended Tillar schools, and now serves on the McGehee School Board. He has served since 1993. Campbell manages the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services office in Pine Bluff. He demonstrates his commitment to education on a very personal level – he will be receiving his Master's Degree from the University of Arkansas in December, after which he will pursue his PhD.



William Campbell



Ozark Mountain School District Superintendent James Trammell shares his ideas with Rick Sattler and Marilyn Emmett of the Jasper School Board over dinner at the ASBA Region 2 Meeting.

Outstanding Board Members Recognized

97 Arkansas school board members were recognized during regional meetings for achieving Outstanding Board Member status, having received at least 25 hours of boardsmanship credit by attending ASBA-sanctioned programs. Congratulations and good luck to all as you move toward the next level, Master Board Member.

Ashton Adcock, Dumas
 Anthony Arnold, Westside
 Consolidated
 Tim Bates, England
 Cleve Batte, Fouke
 John Broadaway, Westside
 Consolidated
 Laura Brown, Pine Bluff
 Debbie Buehrer, Hackett
 Horace Carter, Harmony Grove
 - Camden
 Gary Churchill, Dover
 Velma Cobb, Elaine
 Tony Cole, Strong - Huttig
 Brian Cooper, Paris
 Tom Cornelius, Prescott
 Jim Coy, Cabot
 Randy Crisler, Westside
 Consolidated
 Harold Davis, Beebe
 Jim Davis, Bryant
 Judy Dillow, England
 Citronella Dixon, Delight
 Johnny Doyal, Van Cove
 Paul Duvall, Atkins
 Bob Freeman, Hot Springs
 Jon Fuhrman, Dewitt
 Doylene Fuqua, Bentonville
 Raymond Furlow, Harmony Grove
 - Camden
 Jim Gardner, Jessieville
 Mark Gayfield, Eudora
 Kevin Gillmore, Greene County
 Technical
 Rick Glover, Clarendon
 Greg Graham, Paragould
 Sarah Green, Stephens
 Bill Groom, Greenland
 Gordon Hale, Berryville
 Tammi Hamby, Van Buren
 Sharon Hamilton, Two Rivers

Paul Hance, Batesville
 Lena Hancock, Conway
 Donnie Hartsfield, Watson Chapel
 Dean Hastings, Cave City
 Terry Hayden, Drew Central
 Jerry Hegwood, Smackover
 Caroline Hibbs, Waldron
 Ann Hill, Hot Springs
 Chip Holifield, Harmony Grove
 - Camden
 Tim Hudson, Fayetteville
 Robert Huff, Mountain Pine
 Danny Hughes, Clarksville
 Earnestine Jackson, Hughes
 Yvonne Keaton-Martin, Fort Smith
 Wanda Keener, Paris
 Lloyd Lane, East End
 Ron Leavell, Dover
 Gus Lorenz, Greenbrier
 Jeanette McBride, Hackett
 Robert McCormick, Eureka Springs
 Edward McLelland, Lafayette
 County
 Steve Montgomery, McGehee
 Cheryl Norman, Eudora
 Tommy Norrell, Smackover
 Regina Oliver, Waldron
 Cora Dell Parks, Strong - Huttig
 Macon Patton, Camden Fairview
 Randall Payne, Greenland
 Ronald Richardson, Fouke
 Tracy Richey, Paris
 Michael Riggs, Westside
 Consolidated
 John Riley, North Little Rock
 Jesse Rose, Ozark Mountain
 Jack Rynders, Magnet Cove
 Myra Schwarz, Weiner
 Monica Scott, Murfreesboro
 Jeff Shaneyfelt, Pulaski County
 Dalmer Simmons, Maynard

Bud Sims, Waldron
 Don Slaton, Lakeside - Hot Springs
 Dale Smith, Marked Tree
 Deborah Smith, Eureka Springs
 Harold Smith, Mena
 Relda Steelman, Harmony Grove
 - Camden
 Rodney Stroud, Batesville
 Sam Stueart, Benton
 Don Summers, Lamar
 Andrew Swayne, Lincoln
 Consolidated
 Billy Swink, Hackett
 Keith Turner, Corning

Suzanne Villines, Green Forest
 Les Warren, Lakeside - Hot Springs
 Jerry Watkins, Wickes
 Richard Watson, Lincoln
 Consolidated
 Carroll West, England
 Dennis Whitener, Bradford
 Suzanne Whitener, East End
 Michael Williams, Marvell
 Steve Williams, Paris
 Rusty Windle, Eureka Springs
 Russell Wright, Lafayette County
 Sally Zelenka, Farmington



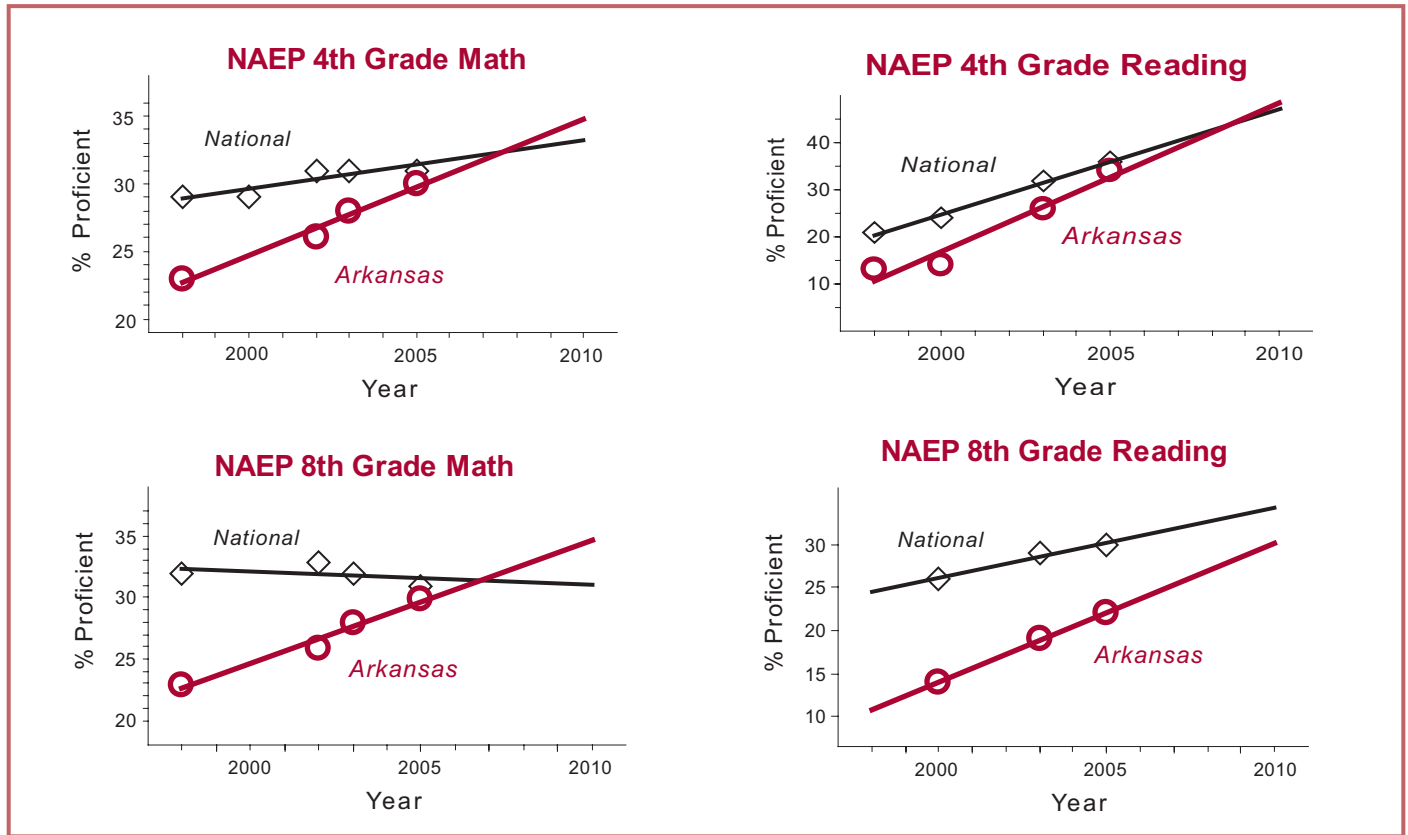
Jesse Rose of the Ozark Mountain School Board receives his Outstanding Board Member pin from Region 2 Director Ron McNair

Board Members (l-r)
 Gwen Hoffman and
 Katie Hold of Harrison
 share materials at
 their regional meeting,
 as they listen to ASBA
 Executive Director
 Dan Farley discuss
 school funding issues.



Be Proud...

Continued from page 3



The graphs below illustrate recent trends in the four major evaluations conducted by the NAEP: 4th grade reading, 4th grade math, 8th grade reading, and 8th grade math.

Arkansas schools are finally overcoming the burden of generations of under-funding, under-support, and under-appreciation. It's important to continue supporting Arkansas schools as they push our state forward on the NAEP, the state benchmark exams, and other measures of student achievement and student growth.

- AAMSCO, Inc.**
9811 Interstate 30
Little Rock, AR 72209
(501) 562-3737
- ABC Companies**
1702 S. Great Southwest Pkwy.
Grand Prairie, TX 75051
(972)206-1110
- A.C.C., Inc.**
97 Gunn Place
Russellville, AR 72802
(479) 890-3884
- All-Clean, Inc.**
P.O. Box 496
Jonesboro, AR 72403
(870) 972-1922
- All Storage Products, Inc.**
P.O. Box 22266
Little Rock, AR 72221
(501) 666-8600
- American Fidelity**
3805 McCain Park Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72116
(800) 688-4421
- Arkansas Electric Cooperatives**
P.O. Box 194208
Little Rock, AR 72219
(501) 570-2271

Employee References

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others those people might suggest. You might not get straight answers, but you probably will get, um, emanations from penumbras.

Regardless of whether you get any good, direct information, always, always check references. And don't depend on the required criminal background checks. That's only (eventually) going to tell you whether that

applicant/employee has been convicted of a crime worse than overtime parking, not whether he's a good employee.

As for what we do when some potential employer calls us about an applicant who is or was our employee, we must be careful. I strongly recommend that you refer, to the

See References... page 20

ASBA Corporate Members 2005-2006

ASBA corporate members provide services and materials to schools and school boards throughout Arkansas.

Robert J. Bailey, Architect
P.O. Box 251756
Little Rock, AR 72225
(501) 224-7406

Beardsley Public Finance
521 President Clinton Ave.,
Ste 707
Little Rock, AR 72201
1-800-965-4644

Paul Blume, Attorney at Law
808 Dr. MLK Drive
Little Rock, AR 72202
(501)375-7922

Brazil, Adlong, Aydelott, & Winningham
1315 Main Street
Conway, AR 72032
(501) 327-4457

Capital Business Machines
924 Main Street
Little Rock, AR 72203
(501) 375-1111

Central States Bus Sales, Inc.
420 Lake Lane
N. Little Rock, AR 72117
(501) 955-2577

Cobb and Suskie, Ltd.
One Financial Center, Ste. 400
Little Rock, AR 72221
(501) 225-2133

Commerce Bank
811 Main Street
Kansas City, MO 64105
(816) 760-8130

Compass Learning
7878 North 16th St., Ste.100
Phoenix, AZ 85020
(800) 422-4339

Crafton, Tull & Associates
901 N. 47th Street, Ste. 200
Rogers, AR 72756
(479) 636-4838

Crow Burlingame Co.
P.O. Box 111
Little Rock, AR 72203
(501) 375-1215

DLR Group
7290 West 129th Street
Overland Park, KS 66213
(913) 897-7811

Educational Benefits, Inc.
320 W. Capitol, # 700
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 378-3337

David H. Frieze Associates, Inc.
P.O. Box 8398
Hot Springs, AR 71910
(501)624-8398

Front Row, Inc.
18415 Steamboat Springs Dr.
Humble, TX 77346
(281) 852-2999

Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.
#1 Riverfront Place, Ste. 707
North Little Rock, AR 72114
(501) 375-1000

Gym Masters Basketball Courts
Longleaf Drive
Searcy, AR 72143
(501) 279-3799

Hagerman New Urbanism
122 West Park Central Square
Springfield, MO 65806
(417) 869-6888

JBHM Education Group, LLC
2525 Lakeward Dr.
Jackson, MS 39216
(601) 987-9187

Jackson Brown King, Architects
2228 Cottondale Ln., Ste. 320
Little Rock, AR 72202
(501) 664-8700

Laidlaw Education Services
55 Shuman Blvd., #400
Naperville, IL 60563
(630)848-3000

LifeTrack Services, Inc.
845 Port Way
Clarkston, WA 99403
1-800-738-6466

RJ Love Enterprises, Inc.
P.O. Box 2939
Little Rock, AR 72203
(501) 988-5474

Merl's Bus Sales Inc.
P.O. Box 531
Van Buren, AR 72957
(479) 474-2433

Metro Builders & Restoration Specialists, Inc.
3500 Bay Oaks Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72118
(501) 758-2845

Micro System Enterprises, Inc.
4474 Sigma Road
Dallas, TX 75244
(972) 239-2174

Midwest Dairy Council
P.O. Box 3007
Broken Arrow, OK 74013
(918) 251-8616

Midwest Risk Management Services, Inc.
5506 Walsh Lane, Ste. 202
Rogers, AR 72758
(479) 271-7475

Missco Contract Sales
2510 Lakeland Terrace Dr.
Jackson, MS 39216
(601) 987-8600

Musco Sports Lighting, LLC
201 Lake Ridge Blvd.
Norman, OK 73071
(866)786-1841

National Bus Sales
8649 South Regency Drive
Tulsa, OK 74131
(918) 224-1049

NEARK Adjustment Company
P.O. Box 223
Blytheville, AR 72316
(870) 838-0097

Pacheco Outdoor Equipment
11324 Arcade Dr., Ste. 3
Little Rock, AR 72212
(501) 225-1218

Performance Surfaces, LLC.
200 Richwoods Drive
Bryant, AR 72022
(501) 681-9438

Post, Buckley, Schuh & Jernigan
11221 Otter Creek East Blvd.
Mabelvale, AR72103
(501) 455-9909

Precision Retirement Group, Inc.
7065 Brookview Drive
Urbandale, IA 50322
(800) 369-9461

Professional Audio of Arkansas
2007 Mount Vernon
Jonesboro, AR 72401
(870) 933-0149

Risk Management Resources. Div. of Ramsey, King, Ferrell & Lensing
P.O. Box 251510
Little Rock, AR 72225
(501) 614-1142

Service Plus Telecommunications, Inc.
820 East 4th Street
Russellville, AR 72811
(479) 967-8888

Sign Systems, Inc.
301 Burke Avenue
Jonesboro, AR 72401
(870) 931-1761

Southern Bleacher Company
P.O. Box 1
Graham, TX 76450
(940)549-0733

Sport Court
700 Minton Road
Benton, AR 72015
(501) 316-2255

Stephens Inc.
111 Center Street, # 2300
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 377-2000

Stevens-Dell & Associates
5312 West Markham
Little Rock, AR 72205
(501)664-6587

TAPS School Purchasing
P.O. Box 1894
Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456
(866) 839-8477

TKI Computer Center
103 North East Street
Benton, AR 72015
(501) 778-4869

Trane Arkansas
1501 Westpark Drive, Ste. 9
Little Rock, AR 72204
(501) 661-0621

Tri-State Track, Inc.
4975 Malvern Avenue
Hot Springs, AR 71901
(501) 844-0245

USAbLe Life
320 W. Capitol Ave, Ste. 1100
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 378-3354

Virco, Inc.
P.O. Box 5000
Conway, AR 72032
(501) 920-9348

Ward Transportation Services Inc.
450 South Amity
Conway, AR 72033
(501)329-9874

Wittenburg, Delony & Davidson Inc. Architects
400 West Capital, Ste. 1800
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 376-6681

References

Continued from page 18

extent possible, all such inquiries to one person, whether it be the superintendent, personnel director or principal. That way, an inquiring potential employer won't get possibly conflicting responses. More important, when you control responses to inquiries about one of your present or former employees, your chances of getting sued by the applicant is considerably diminished.

Sued? Yep. Although it is fairly rare, it is not unheard of that someone who gives an unflattering reference to a potential employer is sued for saying bad things about the applicant, even if those things are true. The old admonition that, "if you don't have anything nice to say about someone, don't say anything at all" is excellent advice. Few em-

ployers have been sued for saying nice things about an employee to a potential employer.

So, what do you say? Well, First of all, don't lie. If you have an employee you really want to get rid of, don't dump him off on some unsuspecting school down the road. Best way in the world to make a lifelong enemy. Remember the Golden Rule on that one.

Next, if you can't think of anything nice to say, simply tell the inquiring potential employer that the applicant worked at your school from [beginning date] to [ending date]. It ain't bad. And it's true. If he asks for more, refuse. You may repeat the information; or, if true, say that it is your district's policy (or practice) to give out only that information to potential employers.

Now, if the employee was terminated or nonrenewed, that is a matter of public record, since it

requires a vote of the Board. You may either give that information and/or send a copy of the Board minutes of the dismissal. That's a Freedom of Information Act public record. But do not go into the reasons.

If the applicant/your former employee had a hearing, and the hearing was open, the reasons for the dismissal are part of the public record, also. I don't care. Don't discuss that with the potential employer. Of course, if the employee was dismissed in a closed hearing, or if there was no hearing at all, then the reasons are still confidential. So, keep it to yourself.

So, yeah, I'm telling you to ask for a lot of information that you won't give to anyone else. See how smart it makes you to read this stuff?



Arkansas School Boards Association
R E P O R T E R
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