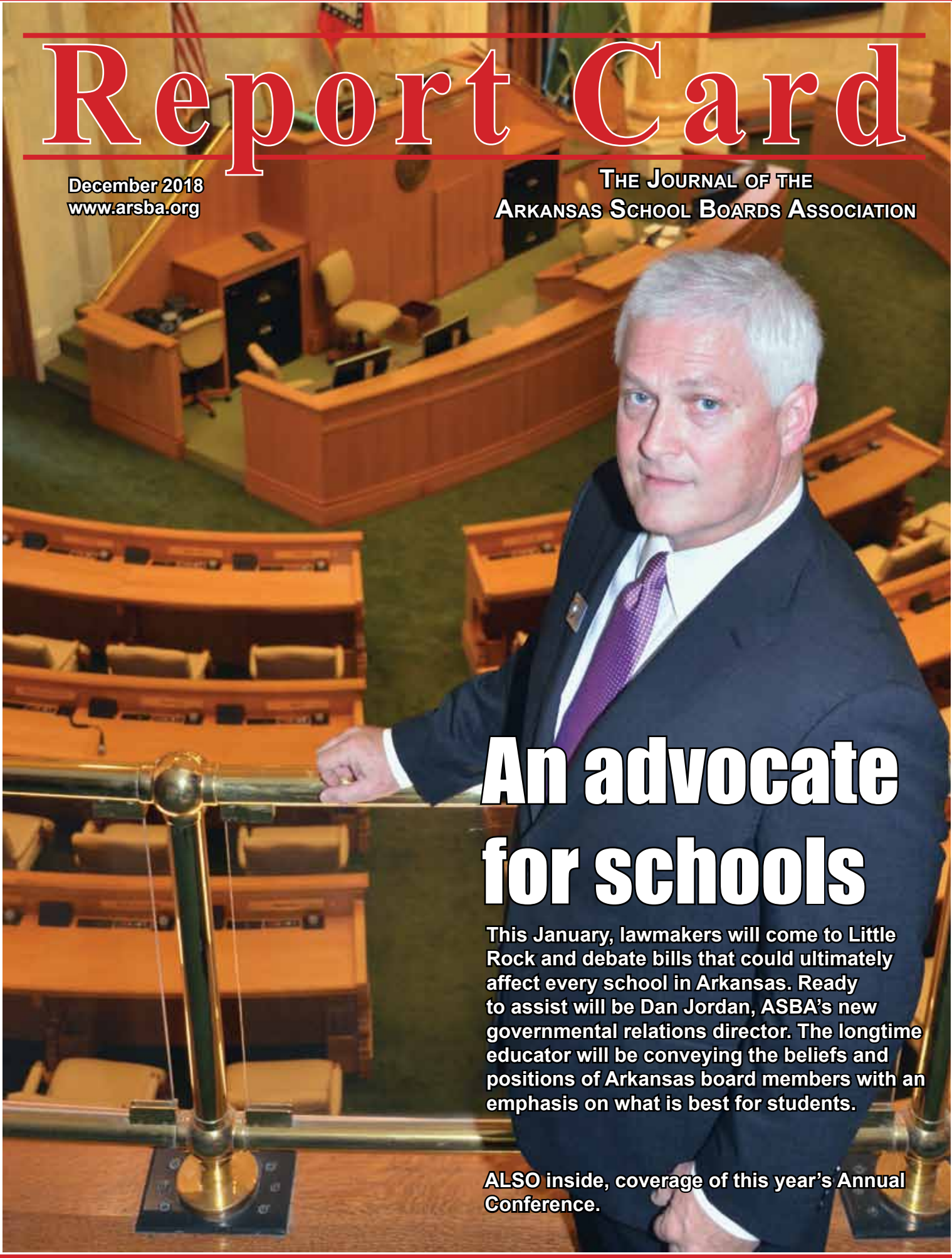


Report Card

December 2018
www.arsba.org

THE JOURNAL OF THE
ARKANSAS SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

A photograph of a man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and purple tie. He is standing in a large, ornate room with wooden desks and chairs, likely a legislative chamber. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The room has a high ceiling and large windows in the background.

An advocate for schools

This January, lawmakers will come to Little Rock and debate bills that could ultimately affect every school in Arkansas. Ready to assist will be Dan Jordan, ASBA's new governmental relations director. The longtime educator will be conveying the beliefs and positions of Arkansas board members with an emphasis on what is best for students.

ALSO inside, coverage of this year's Annual Conference.

Education, the great equalizer

As the 13th of 14 children growing up in Paris, Arkansas, my parents always stressed education to all their children. I can still remember them saying, "Get your education, because that's something no one can take away from you." Trust me, as a child growing up spending summers chopping beans and picking cotton, I was so happy when school started every year.

My dad worked hard as a coal miner, janitor and farmer throughout his life. He completed only the third grade before leaving school to help his parents and siblings. My mother completed the eighth grade; however, after she was 50 years old, she returned to school, earned her GED, and enrolled in a nursing program. She worked as a licensed practical nurse for several years before her health declined. Even though my parents died almost 40 years ago, their legacy of education lives on throughout generations.



by **Debbie Ugbade**
ASBA Past-President

I truly believe that education can and does change children's lives, and I've been fortunate to have witnessed it first-hand time and time again. This is why I am so passionate about providing a quality education to all our children.

I am very fortunate to be surrounded by people who care for children and are focused on helping students dream and

achieve their dreams. I've seen this in my years serving on the Hot Springs School Board and with ASBA.

Being ASBA's president this past year has truly been an honor and privilege, and I sincerely appreciate the opportunity you have given me. Now it's time for Neal Pendergrass to take the reins as president. Neal will do a great job as president of ASBA's board of directors, and will continue carrying the torch for education proudly.

In closing, always remember the decisions we make affect the future for our students. Someday, all of us will not only be past presidents, but past school board members, and when that happens, let's be sure we can look back knowing we kept our focus where it belonged: on the students who have depended on us.

Thank you all for your support. Merry Christmas, and best wishes for the new year!

WE KEEP YOUR SCHOOL ROLLING

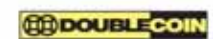


TOLL FREE
877-786-4681

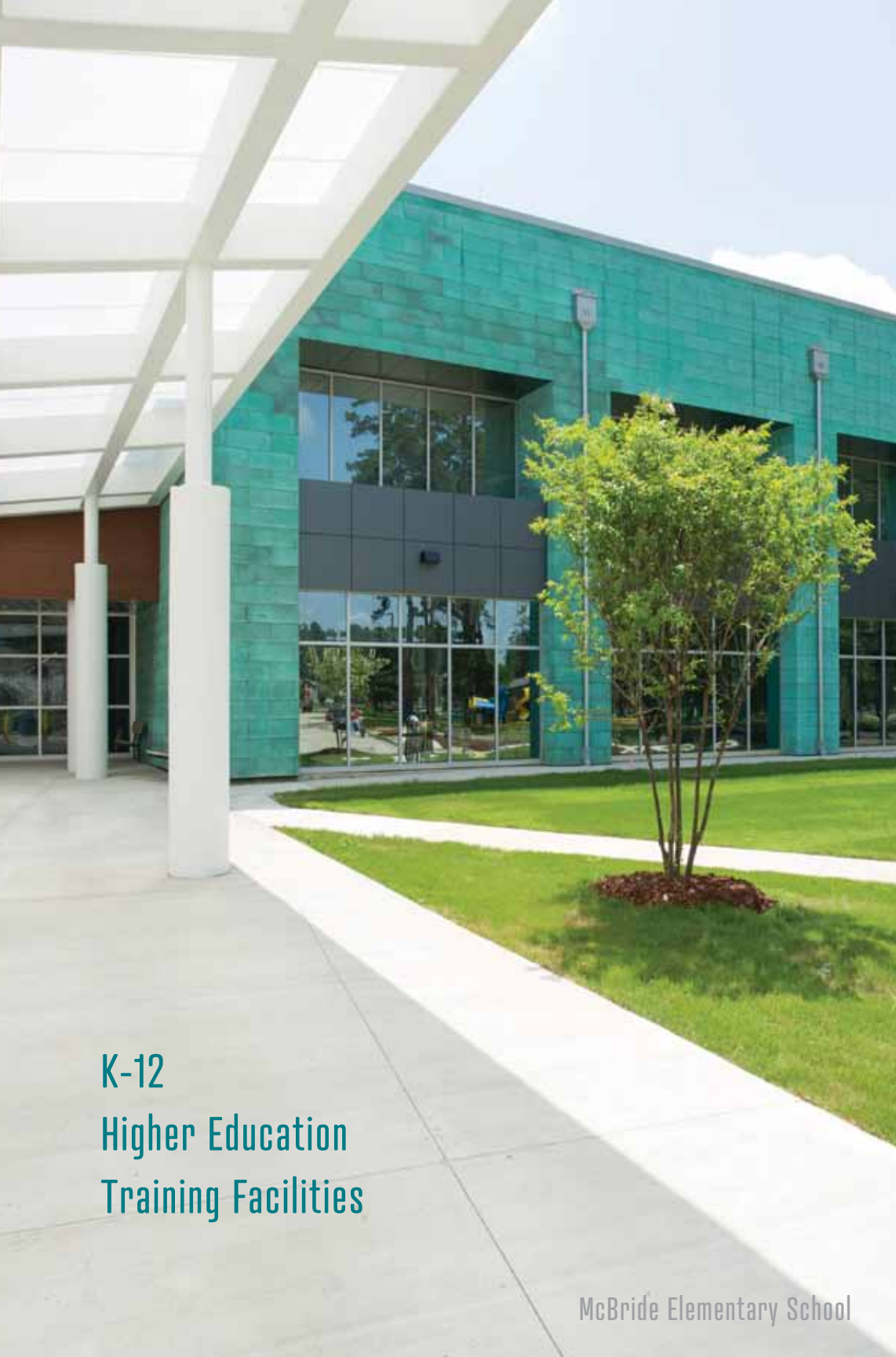


8 LOCATIONS IN ARKANSAS!

Batesville • Fort Smith • Hot Springs
Hope • Little Rock • Memphis • Searcy
Springdale • West Memphis
And Texarkana, TX



TIPS Contract #4032615



BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS



K-12
Higher Education
Training Facilities

McBride Elementary School



Caddell Construction Co. (DE), LLC | 479.319.3387 | caddell.com

CADDELL

Report Card

*THE JOURNAL OF THE
ARKANSAS SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION*



16 Now that the election is over, the real work at the State Capitol begins as the General Assembly prepares to convene in January. For ASBA, a new face with a lot of education experience will be leading the legislative team. Dan Jordan is now serving as governmental relations director, taking the place of the retired Boyce Watkins.

Departments

- 2 President's Column
- 6 Letter from the Executive Director
- 8 ASBA News and Notes
- 10 ASBA Calendar
- 36 Marketplace
- 37 Advertisers Index
- 38 Commercial Affiliates
- 39 Jay Bequette's Column

News and Features

12 ESSA: More flexible and no labels

At ASBA's first Fall Leadership Institute, attendees hear how the new accountability plan differs from NCLB.

14 Boards, patrons in different 'bubbles'

If a school board member happens to make more money or have more education than the patrons they represent, then they must burst through their social "bubble."

16 Cover / Ready for the grind

Dan Jordan is "not a clock puncher," which is a good quality to have as ASBA's governmental relations director. After 37 years in public education, he'll be spending much of the next four months in the State Capitol. And, unfortunately, not enough time with his "grand-buddy."

19 Panel releases final security report

The governor says school districts should make recommendations fit their local situations.

22 ASBA's Annual Conference

22 Governor: Raise teacher salaries

At ASBA's Annual Conference, Gov. Asa Hutchinson pushes a \$4,200 raise and says his budget includes money to pay for it.

24 Student wins ASBA speaking contest

Gabrielle Thurman, a senior at Pottsville High School, won \$1,000 and spoke at the Annual Conference.

25 Expert: School violence nothing new

But right responses are required to make schools safer today, keynote speaker says.

29 Breakout: Schools must adjust to trends

Among them are declining trust and changing family structures, says board member, professor.

32 Executive Session with Jeff Lisenbey

BALDWIN & SHELL
CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
Building Relationships

— BUILDING BETTER —

**SCHOOLS
FOR OVER
70
YEARS**



Letter from the Executive Director

Shannon Moore has 20 years' experience helping schools

by **Dr. Tony Prothro**

Shannon Moore, ASBA's Worker's Compensation and Risk Management Program director, has been dealing with school-based worker's compensation programs since 1998, when she started as an adjuster for a third party administrator that managed ASBA's program. She was hired in 2006 to work for ASBA, which brought all claims handling in-house in 2010.

The ASBA insurance programs are open to school districts, educational cooperatives and charter schools.

Shannon directs the largest self-insured worker's compensation group in Arkansas. It insures 257 members, including all public school districts, and covers more than 80,000 employees. The program averages 2,500 claims and \$7 million in payments yearly.

Every Arkansas school district is taking advantage of this program. And why wouldn't they? It's a good deal. They get a front-end discount of 20 percent off rates set by the Worker's Compensation Commission, and then there's another discount applied to each individual district. This year, the program also reimbursed \$800,000 in dividends to its members. After a 15 percent rate reduction this past year, rates should stay flat this year.

She also manages ASBA's Risk Management Program, including property and auto coverage. The program has 174 members, insures \$11 billion in property and 6,500 vehicles, and averages about 300 claims annually.

Also available is the ASBA School Board Legal Liability Program that includes the option of out-of-state general liability coverage. That option is important because school districts lose their immunity when crossing state lines. The program has 204 members and is administered by BXS Insurance.

One of her challenges is denying claims. At times an administrator will

want us to pay a claim that is not covered by a policy, or they may want higher compensation for a claim. But the worker's compensation and risk management programs work from a pool. If we granted all claims regardless of whether or not they were covered by the policy, the result would be higher premiums for all districts.

Shannon said many school districts ask how to save on worker's comp premiums. One way is to make the workplace a safer environment with proper signage and protocols to prevent accidents.

One of the best things school districts can do is develop a return-to-work program that brings injured employees back as safely and quickly as possible.

Districts should get an employee back in the game so he or she is still earning a paycheck and still has a purpose in life contributing to kids' education. Do this even if you have to modify job duties while paying the same compensation. Whatever it costs you in salary, you'll gain far more in avoiding a costly claim and the resulting higher premiums.

"Studies have shown the quicker you can bring back an employee to work, it's just a positive across the board," she said. "The longer an employee is off, the less likely it will be for them to return back to work."

Asked what she likes most about her job, she said, "I really enjoy working with school districts. We are often able to assist districts during critical times of employee injury or property loss. When we are able to be a positive force, I feel that we are at least indirectly contributing to improving the education of the children in the classroom."

If your district is not part of the program, I encourage you to get involved. Contact Shannon at 501.492.4800, and let her put her 20 years of experience to work for you.

Report Card

THE JOURNAL OF THE
ARKANSAS SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Vol. 11, Number 4 December 2018

P.O. Box 165460 / Little Rock, AR 72216

Telephone: 501-372-1415 / 800-482-1212

Fax: 501-375-2454

E-mail: arsba@arsba.org / www.arsba.org

Board of Directors

President: Neal Pendergrass, Mountain Home

President-elect: Randy Goodnight, Greenbrier

Vice President: Rosa Bowman, Ashdown

Sec.-Treasurer: Dr. Tad Margolis, Valley View

Past President: Debbie Ugbade, Hot Springs

Region 1: Randy Hutchinson, Springdale

Region 2: Randy Rogers, Lead Hill

Region 3: Dr. Tad Margolis, Valley View

Region 4: Kyle Cannon, Mena

Region 5: Clint Hull, Pottsville

Region 6: Keith Baker, Riverview

Region 7: D'James Rogers, West Memphis

Region 8: André Acklin, Conway

Region 9: Joey Astin, Forrest City

Region 10: Mark Curry, Lake Hamilton

Region 11: Jeff Lisenbey, Sheridan

Region 12: Willie Buck, Hope

Region 13: Mike Waters, Magnolia

Region 14: Katie Daniel, McGehee

Staff

Executive Director: Dr. Tony Prothro

Communications Director: Jennifer George

Administrative Assistant: Angela Ellis

Board Development Director: Dr. Anne Butcher

Governmental Relations Director: Dan Jordan

Staff Attorney: Kristen Garner

Policy Director: Lucas Harder

TIPS-TAPS Project Manager: Mickey McFatridge

Finance Director: Deborah Newell

Support Specialist for Board Development: Tina

Cates

Bookkeeper: Kathy Ivy

Risk Management Program &

Workers' Comp. Program:

Shannon Moore, Director

Krista Glover

Amanda Blair

Dwayne McAnally

Ashley Samuels

Jennifer Shook

Misty Thompson

Melody Tipton

Tiffany Malone

LaVerne Witherspoon

General Counsel: Jay Bequette

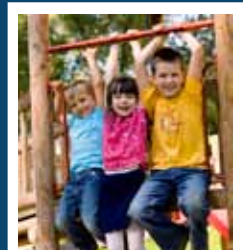
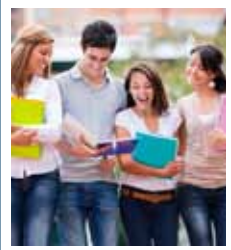
TO CONTACT THE MAGAZINE

Please contact Steve Brawner, Editor

501.794.2012

brawnersteve@mac.com

Report Card is published quarterly by the Arkansas School Boards Association. Copyright 2018 by the Arkansas School Boards Association and Steve Brawner Communications. All rights reserved.



PROTECTING OUR FUTURE

One Classroom At a Time

10% of elementary teachers and 9% of secondary teachers report being threatened by a student from their school.

In recent years, over 22% of students ages 12-18 report being bullied at school.

Harrassment and bullying have been linked to 75% of school shooting incidents.

In recent years, assault by weapon, cases of bullying, and alcohol possession have all more than doubled on school properties.

Since 2013, over 58% of public schools recorded one or more incidents of physical attack by students.

About 88% of public schools report they have a written plan for procedures to be performed in the event of a shooting. Are you in the 12%?

Call today to speak with one of our FEMA certified engineers.

FREE Risk Assessments

888.909.2261



HOMELAND
SAFETY SYSTEMS, INC.

CORPORATE OFFICE: 724 W. 61ST ST. SHREVEPORT, LA 71106
WWW.HOMELANDSAFETYSYSTEMS.COM | INFO@HSSEMS.COM

ASBA News and notes

Hull, Hutchinson join ASBA board as directors

Clint Hull of Pottsville and Randy Hutchinson of Springdale were elected to ASBA's board of directors during this year's regional meetings, while three current board members were re-elected.

Hull, a member of the Pottsville School Board, was elected Region 5 director. Hull has served numerous terms as board president and is a former ASBA president. He is a Pinnacle Board Member with 38 years of experience. At the 2017 Annual Conference, he received ASBA's Dr. Daniel L. Pilkinton Award for outstanding service to education.

Randy Hutchinson, a member of the Springdale School Board, was elected Region 1 director. Hutchinson has more than 11 years of school board service and has served as president of his local board. He is a Pinnacle Board Member with 261.5 hours of training.

Winner of the Architectural League of New York's 2018 Emerging Voices Award



modus
studio

architecture + prototyping

modusstudio.com 479.455.5577

15 N. Church Ave #102 • Fayetteville, Arkansas



Hull



Hutchinson



Rogers



Margolis



Curry

Randy Rogers of Lead Hill, a member of the Lead Hill School Board, was re-elected as Region 2 director. Rogers has served 12 years on the board and is a Master Board Member with 141.75 hours of training.

Dr. Tad Margolis of Jonesboro, a member of the Valley View School Board, was re-elected Region 3 director. Margolis has six years of board service and is a Master Board Member with more than 150 hours of training. She is also ASBA's new secretary-treasurer.

Mark Curry of Hot Springs, a member of the Lake Hamilton School Board, was re-elected Region 10 director. Curry has 17 years of school board service and is a Pinnacle Board Member with 272.75 hours of training.

School Law Seminar Feb. 12

ASBA's School Law Seminar will be Feb. 12 at the Wyndham Riverfront

in North Little Rock. The seminar is an opportunity for board members, superintendents and school attorneys to hear presentations on significant school law issues. Board members will earn six hours of boardsmanship training credit.

To register, go to ASBA's website at arsba.org.



DR. DAN AWARD. Pennington speaks after receiving the award. Photo by Life-touch National School Studios.

Drew Central's Pennington wins Dr. Dan Award

Mike Pennington, a Drew Central School Board member for more than 30 years, received ASBA's highest honor, the Dr. Daniel L. Pilkinton Award, at ASBA's Annual Conference Dec. 6.

Pennington, the president of L.D. Long Logging, has served 30 years on the board. In his nomination form, the late Billy Williams, former Drew Central Superintendent, said Pennington was a strong leader who communicated with patrons when the district spent a year in fiscal distress.

Williams wrote that Pennington "exemplifies a small-town board member." He attends numerous student activities and often cooks for students, faculty and staff members – including flipping burgers at ballgames in 95-degree weather. He drives the Drew County Fair Queen in the local parade and gives senior citizens rides to basketball games. He is

Continued on page 10

TEACHER RAISES NOT UTILITY RAISES



...there's a smart idea!

ABOUT US

Entegrity is a sustainability and energy services company that specializes in **Optimizing Building Performance.**

Our comprehensive service package includes:

- Energy Savings Performance Contracting (ESPC)
- Commissioning
- Energy Modeling
- Building Testing
- Lighting Solutions
- Renewable Energy
- Solar Energy
- Sustainability Consulting
- Water Conservation

CONTACT US

ARKANSAS'S K12 REPRESENTATIVES

Jacob Estes

501.410.0207

jacob.estes@entegritypartners.com

John Coleman

479.595.5759

john.coleman@entegritypartners.com

Rick Vance

501.766.4208

rick.vance@entegritypartners.com

Ryan Boswell

479.200.7225

ryan.boswell@entegritypartners.com

\$1.8M

GUARANTEED
LIFETIME
SAVINGS

\$+

SAVINGS
DIRECTED TO
DISTRICT-WIDE
TEACHER RAISES

100%

FUNDED BY
ENERGY AND
MAINTENANCE
SAVINGS

40%

REDUCTION
IN ANNUAL
ENERGY COSTS

One Arkansas School District achieved these savings through a comprehensive Energy Savings Project Completed in 2018.

"It is without hesitation that I offer the highest recommendation for Entegrity as their performance from start to finish of our project exceeded all expectations. The Entegrity team showed a genuine concern for the quality of work performed in our district and provided a quality of professionalism that added a real WOW factor to their company."

-School District Superintendent

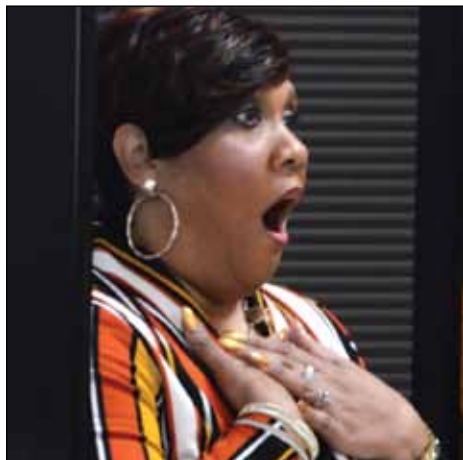
entegrity
energy.integrity.

www.entegritypartners.com

Report Card 2016 800.700.1414

active in the Arkansas Forestry Association's Log A Load For Kids program, which raises money for Arkansas Children's Hospital.

"The recipients of Mr. Mike's generosity have no idea of the identity of the donor," Williams wrote. "He or she may have school supplies, clothes, or food. Mr. Mike's visibility with the students is a major impact. It is a feeling of respect, trust, and that he genuinely cares about their welfare."



TASHA WILSON reacts to her announcement as a Milken Award winner.

Kingsland teacher wins Milken Award, \$25,000

Kingsland Elementary second grade teacher Tasha Wilson thought she was bringing her students to an assembly celebrating the school being named one of 349 National Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education. She didn't know she would walk out \$25,000 richer.

Wilson was informed she is one of 40 Milken Educator Award winners nationwide during a school assembly Nov. 30. Dr. Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Educator Awards, traveled from California to announce the award.

Wilson, 40, was shocked at the announcement. When the assembly was over, her hand shook as she called her husband, Galvin, to deliver the news. Her son, Galvin Jr., is a fifth-grader at Kingsland and was at the assembly.

Wilson, who lives in Warren, told reporters afterwards that what she loves

about teaching is, "The kids. ... I love seeing their faces when they learn new things. I love seeing their light bulbs go off and they say, 'Oh, I got it, Miss Tasha.' And just the appreciation that they have for me when I teach them something new."

Wilson said teaching is her calling and the only job she ever wanted. Her fifth grade teacher in hometown Wilmar, Kimberly Wells, was an inspiration.

"When the teachers asked me a long time ago, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' it was always a teacher, and it's never changed," she said.

Kingsland Elementary Principal Danny Durey, who hired Wilson for her first teaching job as a kindergarten teacher 14 years ago, said, "She gives 100 percent every day. It's all about the kids no matter what. If we have a change in plans in the middle of the day, she rolls with the flow. She's always positive, she's always upbeat. She always smiles. ... She takes her kids, no matter where they are when they come to her, and when they leave her classroom, they're more than ready for third grade."

The Foundation said in a press release that on last year's Renaissance Star 360 assessments, Wilson's students showed growth of 34 percent in math and 37 percent in reading. Students leave her classroom able to write five-paragraph essays. She creates well-rounded learning experiences, including bringing pieces of cactus for students to taste while studying the Southwest.

She also mentors new teachers and handles administrative duties in the mornings, when the principal is not in the building.

The Milken Educator Awards were created by the Milken Family Foundation in 1987. Seventy-four Arkansas educators have received the award. Candidates are selected through a confidential process that includes a review by state departments of education. They do not know they are being considered. Awards go to educators in the early and middle parts of their careers.

Wilson can use the money however she wants. The mother of three said she might take her family on a trip. She also will attend a Milken Educator Forum in New Orleans March 21-24.

Little Rock's McAdoo is state Teacher of the Year

Stacey McAdoo, who teaches communication and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) for grades 9-12 at Little Rock Central High School, is the 2019 Arkansas Teacher of the Year.



McAdoo

McAdoo was notified of her award during a surprise presentation involving Gov. Asa Hutchinson and Education Commissioner Johnny Key Oct. 8.

In addition to a paid, year-long sabbatical that will begin July 1, McAdoo received a \$14,000 award sponsored by the Walton Family Foundation. She will serve as a non-voting member of the Arkansas State Board of Education.

McAdoo has taught speech communication at Central High School since 2002 and has taught AVID since 2007. AVID helps students prepare for college.

McAdoo received the Distinguished High School Mentor Award in 2017 and is the 2018 Little Rock Central High School Teacher of the Year and 2018 Little Rock School District Teacher of the Year.



Feb. 12

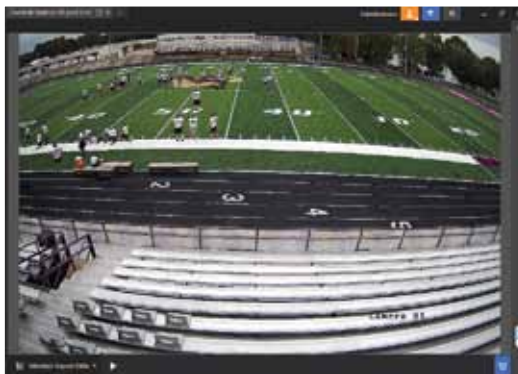
ASBA Law Seminar
Wyndham Hotel - North Little Rock

March 30 - April 1

NSBA Conference
Philadelphia

May 7

Joint Leadership Conference
Wyndham Hotel - North Little Rock



Your *complete* source for:

- Security Cameras
- Access Control
- Intercoms
- Fiber
- Fire Alarms
- Burglar Alarms
- Structured Cabling
- Telephones

**Doing business since 1985 and trusted in more than 60 Arkansas public schools!
7,000 IP Cameras**

"Probably the best company I worked with in my 30+ year career, true professionals!" – Retired Arkansas School Superintendent

"I would highly recommend Progressive to any school or organization looking to implement a video surveillance or security system large or small." – Arkansas School Technology Director

"Progressive took over a previously installed system and got our University out of a major jam." – College IT Director

Progressive Technologies, Inc.
406 Manson Road, Suite 280 / Sherwood, AR 72120
501.833.9000
www.thinkprogressive.com





READING THE SCORES. Springdale School Board member Debbie Creek, right, studies the MySchoolInfo section on the Department of Education website with Kathy McFetridge, a former Springdale board member recently appointed to the State Board of Education.

ESSA: More flexible and no labels

At ASBA's first Fall Leadership Institute, attendees hear how new accountability plan differs from No Child Left Behind

By Steve Brawner
Editor

Arkansas' school accountability system under the Every Student Succeeds Act is less directive and more flexible than the "to some degree heavy handed" policies that existed under No Child Left Behind.

That's according to Arkansas Department of Education Deputy Commissioner Dr. Mike Hernandez, who spoke during ASBA's first Fall Leadership Institute Oct. 26 in Fayetteville.

The Institute brought ASBA staff members and other speakers to the state's northwest corner. As expected, most attendees were from school districts in that area. But school board members from as far away as McGehee in southeast Arkansas and Blytheville

in the state's northeastern corner made the trip, enjoying the fall foliage in the Ozark Mountains along the way.

Hernandez gave a brief overview of the state's ESSA plan, explaining that informed school board members can use their schools' scores to ask critical questions about how to improve.

The plan was developed after the law was passed in late 2015. While No Child Left Behind was a one-size-fits-all approach created by the U.S. Department of Education for all states, ESSA offers individualized plans developed by each state. Arkansas submitted its accountability plan to the federal government that was approved this year, and it's being implemented during this school year.

ESSA was created with significant stakeholder feedback, is more individualized and flexible, has multiple measures of success and doesn't assign labels to schools. In contrast, No Child Left Behind had a "stick instead of that carrot approach," Hernandez said.

"We've moved away from this, 'We're going to tell you how to do everything,' to more about support," he said.

Lenett Thrasher, teacher center coordinator for the Arch Ford Education Service Co-op, walked attendees through MySchoolInfo, a Department of Education website that helps the public better understand each school's ESSA scores, and how the A-F letter grades were derived.

"It's important to create your own story because people will write a story about your school," she said. "A story will be written, and if the board members and the community are educated in what's going on in the school, then you can write a much more valid story."

How ESSA scores schools

Schools under ESSA are measured using five components. The weighted achievement indicator is 35 percent of the overall score. Student growth is 50

percent in grades K-8 and 35 percent in high school. The component considers where students started in literacy and math and projects the trajectory at which they are expected to grow. English language learners' progress toward English proficiency is another indicator. ESSA also includes a four-year and five-year graduation rate indicator, as well as a measurement for school quality and student success that includes chronic absenteeism, reading achievement, science achievement and science growth.

The weighted achievement indicator is based on ACT Aspire exam scores in English language arts and math. Students are placed in four categories, the same number as under No Child Left Behind. Lowest scorers are "in need of support." For them a school receives no points. Other categories are "close" (.5 points), "ready" (1 point), and "exceeds" (1 point if a school has fewer students scoring there than at "in need of support," and 1.25 points if more are).

The incentives, however, have changed. Under ESSA, schools get credit for moving students into any higher level. Under No Child Left Behind, schools only received credit for the number of students who were at level 3, proficient. That provision gave them an incentive to focus on "bubble kids" whose scores were close to that level while providing less attention to those students at the lowest level. Also, schools under No Child Left Behind received no credit for moving a child from proficient to advanced.

The student growth provision was included after discussions with stakeholders indicated that No Child Left Behind didn't give districts enough credit for student improvement. Thrasher said that when she was an elementary principal, some kindergarten students would start class having never held a book and not knowing their letters from their numbers. Getting those students to proficiency by the third grade was very difficult,

but even if the school helped them only to improve, it was still penalized.

"We knew we were helping them to grow, and we were moving toward proficiency every single year, but you got no credit for growth," she said. "You only got credit for proficiency."

Hernandez cautioned schools not to focus on too many initiatives to fix every problem their ESSA scores identified.

"We really encourage to boil down and get to some things that you feel like you can show some momentum on, and you plan those things out, and then after you make your plan, then you start working your plan," he said.

Similar presentations were offered at ASBA's fall regional meetings across the state.

Sexual harassment 101

In another session, Keith Billingsley, general counsel with Bequette, Bill-

Continued on next page

A New Name for a Longtime Protector of Educators' Professional Reputations

- School board legal liability insurance
- Employment practices liability insurance
- Outside of Arkansas General Liability coverage
- Unique policies for each district
- Distinctive and identifiable coverage grants
- Modified "defense outside of the limits" provision
- Separate crisis management fund
- Employment law resources through Enquiron
- Online resource website
- Panel defense counsel
- Dedicated claim representative

For a quote comparison or coverage consultation, contact:

Bill Birch, CSRM Senior Vice President

Toll-Free: 800-358-7741 | Direct: 501-614-1170 | bill.birch@bxsi.com

 **BXS INSURANCE**
A SUBSIDIARY OF BANCORPSOUTH BANK

bxsi.com



1. BXS Insurance is a wholly owned subsidiary of BancorpSouth Bank. 2. Insurance products are • Not a deposit • Not FDIC insured • Not insured by any federal government agency • Not guaranteed by the bank • May go down in value. 3. BXS Insurance is an insurance agent and not an insurance carrier. 4. Always read your policy for coverage terms and conditions.

Boards, patrons in different ‘bubbles’

Incomes, education create different filters, biases

If a school board member happens to make more money or have more education than the patrons they represent, then they must burst through their social “bubble.”

That message by ASBA Staff Attorney Kristen Garner was one of several offered during ASBA’s first Fall Leadership Institute Oct. 26 in Fayetteville.

Garner said people associate with others who have similar incomes and educational levels. They edit out those who don’t fit into their bubbles and then assume everyone is like them. They don’t even realize they’re in a bubble until something happens to jolt them outside it.

“We’re not doing this consciously,” she said. “We’re doing it unconsciously. We’re not doing the math. We’re just moving towards the light like a moth.”

School board members’ social bubbles lead them to make decisions based on hidden biases formed as a result of their backgrounds. They may not relate to the patrons they were elected to serve.

Boards: higher incomes

One filter bubble can result from a person’s income. Garner noted that the



Garner

is the point where half are making more and half are making less. In contrast, in a 2014-15 survey, 41.6 percent of Arkansas school board members had family incomes above \$100,000, while another 15.02 percent had family incomes between \$80,000 and \$99,999.

That means school board members can have vastly different lives than their patrons. A 2016 GOBankingRates survey found that 69 percent of Americans have less than \$1,000 in total savings, and 34 percent have no savings at all. Many don’t have money for an unexpected expense such as a car repair or dental work. Garner asked attendees how many of them regularly socialize with people who earn significantly less income than they do, including single parents, people with disabilities, and retired people living on Social Security checks. She also asked about the diversity of their faith communities.

median family income in prosperous Benton County, home of Walmart’s corporate headquarters, is \$59,016, while in nearby Newton County it’s \$33,176. The

median income

Higher education levels

Likewise, board members often have more education than their patrons. About 21.5 percent of Arkansans have a college degree, while 85.2 percent have a high school diploma. In the school board survey, 33.71 percent said they had a master’s degree, while another 26.04 percent had a bachelor’s.

Garner said being aware of your bubble makes you more compassionate and grateful. She challenged attendees to put themselves in places where they are mildly uncomfortable, such as attending a different church or trying to feed themselves within the same limits of those receiving government benefits. Volunteering can be beneficial, but it also can reinforce a person’s bubble. Try to work with others, not give to them, she said.

Some school board members have the opposite problem. Some, particularly those representing small schools in their hometowns, might be too close to the people they represent. They must erect boundaries for legal and practical reasons, she said. Their patrons know them well but may not understand a school board member’s role as a policymaker, not an operations person. She encouraged attendees to proactively educate patrons about their roles.

ingsley & Kees P.A., ASBA’s law firm, spoke about workplace sexual misconduct and harassment. That issue has gained increased attention through the #MeToo movement, which has resulted in the downfall of powerful men in business, politics and entertainment. The largest verdict so far has been \$168 million awarded to a Sacramento surgeon harassed by her fellow surgeons.

ASBA has a detailed model policy that defines sexual harassment as severe, persistent or pervasive unwelcome sexual conduct that denies students or employees the ability to participate in or benefit from the district’s offerings. Some examples include propositions

or pressure, unwelcome touching, and displaying sexually explicit materials. Billingsley said a single crude joke or incidental touch is not sexual harassment. Instead, it’s part of a pattern.

Employees who believe they are a victim can lodge a complaint with their supervisor, administrator, or the Title IX coordinator. Complaints are to be handled as confidentially as possible, and the accuser can request that the accused not be informed of their identity. Districts must take steps to prevent retaliation. Billingsley said 30 percent of lawsuits follow acts of retaliation.

Employer liability depends on whether the employee suffered a “tangible

employment action” involving a change in employment status or benefits. Based on Supreme Court decisions, an employer can defend itself from liability by showing it took reasonable care to prevent and correct the behavior, or if the employee failed to utilize the employer’s offerings or to otherwise avoid harm.

One way to avoid litigation is to hire an outside investigator, Billingsley said. That’s because internal staff might not be neutral, have the needed experience, have time to conduct the investigation, or be as effective at testifying before the school board or in a court proceeding.

Billingsley said school boards may want to include a morality clause in their



KEVIN BROOKS of the East End School Board and Barbara Wells of Blytheville study MySchoolInfo at the ASBA Fall Leadership Institute in Fayetteville. The site explains schools' ESSA scores.

superintendent's contract saying he or she may not commit acts that might be considered "immoral, deceptive, scandalous or obscene," or that might tarnish the district's and the board's reputation. There's no case law showing such clauses can be included in those contracts, but he believes they can be.

"I'd rather have that language there than not," he said.

The Institute also featured a presentation by Kim Wright, Arkansas Department of Education director for stakeholder communication/family and community engagement, and Freddie Scott, an operations manager in ADE's Public School Accountability Division. Wright said the focus is shifting from "parental involvement," which is educator-driven, to "family and community engagement," a two-way activity.



happy hollow elementary
fayetteville, arkansas

craftontull.com

Ready for the grind

Dan Jordan is “not a clock puncher,” which is a good quality to have as ASBA’s governmental relations director. After 37 years in public education, he’ll be spending much of the next four months in the State Capitol. And, unfortunately, not enough time with his “grand-buddy.”

By Steve Brawner
Editor

Now that the election is over, the real work at the State Capitol begins as the General Assembly prepares to convene in January. For ASBA, a new face with a lot of education experience will be leading the legislative team.

Dan Jordan is now serving as governmental relations director, taking the place of the retired Boyce Watkins.

Jordan has spent 37 years in public education, including the most recent five as superintendent in Elkins. He had planned to stay another year there and oversee the completion of five building projects, but the opportunity with ASBA coincided with his and his wife’s desire to move to central Arkansas to be closer to their “grand-buddy,” three-year-old Wyatt, and his baby sister who is on the way.

“He’s the light of our world right now,” he said. “I’d heard about those grandchildren all these years from others, and have discovered all those things they say about them are true. Might have had him first if I’d have known they were so much fun.”

Jordan will be the point man for ASBA’s efforts, which will focus as always on supporting pro-education legislation, opposing bills that would be bad for schools and students, and pushing its own proposed bills.

Two years ago, ASBA successfully lobbied for its entire legislative package.

This year’s package is composed of five proposals derived from feedback at the 2017 regional meetings and from



surveys of school board members and superintendents. They were presented and discussed at the 2018 regional meetings. They include:

- Reducing from four to two the degrees of consanguinity, or blood-relatedness, for level 3 and level 4 sex offenders to be allowed to attend ticketed campus events. Under current law, level 4 sex offenders, or those considered at risk of sexually violent behaviors, cannot attend those events. Level 3 offenders with a history of offending and predatory characteristics can do so if they give the school district 24-hour notice and if the student is within the

fourth degree of consanguinity, which is a very distant relative. ASBA’s legislation would maintain the 24-hour notice rule while restricting attendance to the second degree: grandsons, nephews and nieces, and first cousins. Children and siblings are within the first degree.

- A bill that would codify that mandated reporters cannot be sued for contacting the state’s child abuse hotline for good faith reports.

- A bill that would allow school districts to create a policy to include a teacher’s years spent teaching out of state in their placement on salary schedules. The law currently is ambiguous.

— A bill moving the deadline for school board members to receive training in reading and interpreting an audit to Dec. 31 of the year following the election. The current timeline is 15 months, which means the deadline will differ depending on whether the district holds its election in May or November.

— A bill that would move the responsibility for investigating ethics complaints against school board members from the local prosecutor's office to the Arkansas Ethics Commission. School board members would take an oath within 10 days of their election pledging to behave ethically. If found guilty of knowingly engaging in unethical conduct, the school board member would be subject to felony prosecution, as is the case now. However the bill also adds the possibility of a lesser penalty in the case of "should have known" where a misdemeanor penalty may be given.

That last bill would address several issues. First, it would replace an enforcement mechanism that is never used by prosecutors. Second, it would add a misdemeanor option to what is currently a blanket felony. And finally, it would address allegations of school board member misbehavior with an alternative to stiffer penalties such as board recall.

This year, a little extra funding

Most of Jordan's time will be spent arguing for major pieces of education legislation and trying to defeat bad bills.

In fact, that process has already started. After starting his job Sept. 1, Jordan became a regular at joint House and Senate Education Committee meetings where legislators discussed the school funding formula. Recent legislative sessions have resulted in 1 percent foundation funding increases that Jordan said haven't covered step salary increases. This year's adequacy process was a little better, resulting in a recommended 1.5 percent increase in per pupil funding from \$6,781 to \$6,883 in fiscal year 2020. In fiscal year 2021, funding would increase 1.48 percent to \$6,985. There were also some increases in categorical funding. Jordan said he is thankful to legislators for increasing the foundation funding by a higher percentage than has been allocated in recent years.

While the additional funding is a welcome sign, ASBA has been keeping its eye on a growing sentiment among some legislators who are seeking more control over how state tax dollars are spent. Some are frustrated that school districts often don't spend the amounts contained in each category of the matrix, instead moving money around to meet district budget needs.

Jordan, the former school superintendent, doesn't see it that way. The funding categories provide for the projected needs for a prototypical school district of 500 students. Thus, districts that are smaller or larger are funded by applying their district numbers to the matrix.

Together, those matrix categories create the pool of money districts can use to fund their needs.

"We had different needs at my district than my neighbors did on either side," he said of his time at Elkins. "One of them, a rural district, transported students every day the equivalent of to Las Vegas and back. Our district covered 100 square miles; their district covered well over 700 square miles. That's just transportation. We can talk about any particular piece that we want to pull out and talk about, but my district's needs are different than your district's needs."

Jordan is hopeful that the majority of legislators do not want to turn the matrix into a specific spending model.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson made raising teacher salaries from \$31,800 to \$36,000 over four years a major part of his re-election campaign. Such a change would affect 173 districts. ASBA supports paying teachers more money, but it wants to ensure the state provides the funds. Jordan is encouraged by the governor's plan to provide additional funding to districts who will have a hard time meeting the salary increases, but he is unsure as to the mechanisms that will be employed to distribute the funds.

Playing defense

ASBA will be playing defense against certain bills that appear in almost every session. Some legislators no doubt will

Continued on next page

DISASTERS HAPPEN
WE TAKE CARE OF THEM ALL

LITTLE ROCK • HOT SPRINGS
ALL-CLEAN USA
RESTORATION SERVICES
FIRE • SMOKE • WATER DAMAGE
CONWAY • JONESBORO

24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICES
866.360.3473

attempt to direct public money to private schools. Another regular issue in recent legislative sessions has been changing the dates of school elections. In 2017, lawmakers ended the traditional September elections and gave districts a choice of holding elections in May or November. Millage elections can be held any time up to the date of the school board election, but not afterwards. Some legislators would have gone farther by requiring all school elections, including millage elections, to be held in November. ASBA helped broker the compromise giving school districts a choice. Jordan said he doesn't expect a change in the current school board election laws, but he will be watching closely for any proposed changes.

ASBA also will be curious to see what bills are filed by the Department of Education. This year, ADE does not have big plans. Education Commissioner Johnny Key said in an interview Nov. 30 that the department had an active 2017 session with major legislation regarding the Every Student Succeeds Act and also teacher licensure. This session, its package will involve mostly tweaks.

"We don't have any what I would consider earth-shattering pieces of legislation that we're going to put out there," Key said. "Obviously, supporting the governor's legislation on teacher salaries is a big focus area, and then whatever comes out of the School Safety Commission. Any recommendations that come from there that require legislation, we'll support the governor on those."

Build trust thanks to experience

Jordan's career began as a graduate assistant at Henderson State University, followed by seven years as a teacher/coach at Benton High School, then serving five years as assistant principal at Hot Springs Lakeside, and then serving five years as Benton High School principal. For 14 years, he was an assistant superintendent in the Benton School District before becoming Elkins superintendent in 2013.

There were times during his years as assistant superintendent and superintendent that he became involved in the legislative process. Like other school administrators, he would contact his leg-



YOUR TURN, DAN. Jordan, right, is taking over the position of governmental relations director from Boyce Watkins, left, who has retired.

islators regarding various issues. Those experiences taught him that legislators are swamped with a massive number of bills during a 60-day session.

Facing such an overwhelming task, he said, "They're going to have to operate from some sort of general knowledge base, and their general knowledge

base basically is from their own filters based on their life experiences. As example, everyone went to school once, so they know a little bit about school."

That's where the education community can play a role – by offering legislators additional information. He looks forward to building relationships with them so he can do that.

"We have many honest people of integrity who serve in the Legislature who want the best for our students," he said. "I want them to know that I'm also sincere and honest. I want to always present the factual information, and let the facts fall wherever they fall, but I want to be considered a trusted person of reason. Whether they agree or disagree, I want that trust to be there. I want the integrity to be there, and the integrity obviously for our organization."

The past few months have been a dizzying time as Jordan adjusts to his new role. Boyce Watkins, whom he is replacing, trained him and remains only a phone call away. Meanwhile, Jordan has been moving back to central Arkansas.

So far the workload has been manageable, but with the bill filing process already begun

and the session soon to start, he'll hardly come up for air until April. He's OK with that.

"I've heard the sessions are a grind," he said. "Of course I'm not a clock puncher anyway. I'm ready to roll my sleeves up and do this and looking forward to the opportunity."

Panel releases final security report

Governor says school districts should make recommendations fit their local situations

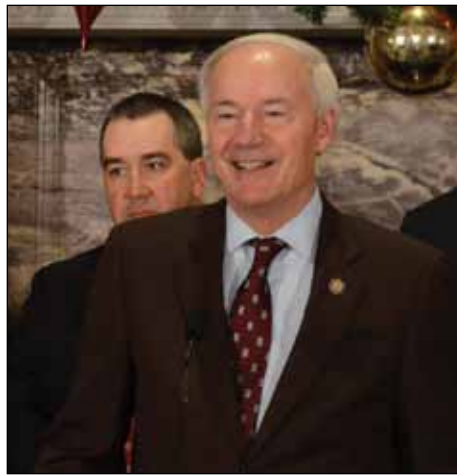
School districts should have the flexibility to apply the recommendations by the Arkansas School Safety Commission to their own local needs, Gov. Asa Hutchinson said in a press conference releasing the panel's final report Dec. 3.

The report contained 30 recommendations. It came five months after a preliminary report school districts have already been using.

Hutchinson signed the proclamation creating the commission March 4 in the wake of the school shooting in Parkland, Florida. He said the report is "extraordinarily comprehensive."

Among the commission's recommendations were the following:

- School districts should conduct school climate surveys and create an action plan in response.
- Youth Mental First Aid training should be provided to all personnel who interact with students.
- All schools should have at least one school resource officer for each campus.
- No campus should be without an armed presence when staff and children are in class or participating in a major extracurricular activity.
- All districts should be required to form safety and security teams.



GOV. ASA HUTCHINSON speaks Dec. 3 during a press conference releasing the Arkansas School Safety Commission's final report. Behind him is Clarksville Superintendent David Hopkins.

– School safety assessments should be conducted every three years that are reviewed by the school board and administration.

– The Academic Facilities Partnership Program should be changed to provide funding for security upgrade projects.

Hutchinson said many of the recommendations will not require legislation.

"I encourage our members of the General Assembly, just because there's a recommendation made, I'm not in favor of putting that into law," he said. "I have enough confidence in our local school districts that they will respond appropriately and adjust it as needed to their

local sensibilities, some of their local uniqueness and will implement it in a more secure way."

Allowing Academic Facilities Partnership funding to be used for security upgrades would require either a change in the law or a change in the rules.

Hutchinson said he supported a change but did not want to increase funding for the program.

The recommendations came after commission members heard 30 presentations and visited 12 school districts as diverse as small, rural Deer-Mt. Judea and booming Bentonville.

Hutchinson said school districts already have been taking actions as a result of the preliminary report. One district he has visited had formed a school safety committee and was reviewing the recommendations. Another district was supplementing school resource officers with commissioned school security officers, or staff members trained to respond to a threat. Another school district he visited was planning on reading the preliminary report over the weekend.

Hutchinson said that 70 percent of districts have at least one school resource officer, and 54 officers have been added this year. Fifteen percent of the districts that answered a commission survey, or 20 schools, said they were using commissioned school security officers.



TLC[®] for LED
Total Light Control[™]

Control
from foundation to poletop...
from the light source to the field,
preserving the night sky...
assuring the results you expect,
day 1... year 1... and for 25 years.

Local area representative:
Jeremy Lemons
800/825-6030 (toll free)
501/249-8056 (mobile)
jeremy.lemons@musco.com

MUSCO
Lighting
We Make It Happen.

Learn more at www.tlc4led.com

©2018 Musco Sports Lighting, LLC · ADAR18-4

WITH UNMATCHED EXPERTISE, STEPHENS WAS A RESOURCE TO LAKE SIDE'S LARGE INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION.

A keen interest in school districts' long-term financial interest and unsurpassed insight into education-related bond financing has helped Stephens Public Finance assist and accurately explain the roadmaps for districts to garner the voting public's support for those plans.

In the public finance world, funding capital projects often hinges on the wishes of voters. That means complex financial maneuvering regularly has to be telegraphed to the voting public in order to earn their buy-in – and their votes on bond issues. Fortunately for clients of Stephens Public Finance, transparency, trust and dissemination of reliable, actionable information from advisor to client are key elements of every transaction.

On May 22, 2018, Lakeside School District voters headed to the polls to decide on a ballot issue that would restructure existing bond issues and add four new debt service mills.

Lakeside School District, primarily in Arkansas' Garland County but also with a small portion in Hot Spring County, is a flourishing district of about 3,500 students and four schools, a primary, intermediate, middle and high school. Lakeside's enrollment has increased more than 8 percent between 2013 and 2017, and total assessed taxable property value increased from \$418 million to \$470 million during the same period.

To address the growing District's needs, the May bond issue asked voters for \$40 million in new money. The bond issue would also restructure two existing issues and extend their debt service mills from 2036 to 2048.

This would fund a new junior high school for seventh and eighth grades and renovation projects and improvements around the District, including a parking lot and road; a high school auditorium; primary school administration and cafeteria; intermediate school administration and cafeteria; an outdoor turf field; middle school playground turf; and

primary/intermediate school parking.

Jack Truemper, Senior Vice President at Stephens Public Finance, worked with the District, primarily superintendent

“Our role was to make sure the superintendent had all the accurate information to be able to answer questions and concerns factually.”

Shawn Cook, on the issue. Stephens is Lakeside's municipal advisor. Truemper explained the benefit of wrapping the new bonds around existing debt. “When the District had drop-offs in debt service, this would increase the amount of principal over the life of the loan,” Truemper said. “That enabled us to level out the debt service from 2021 to 2035, when they had a drop-off in debt service, which would give the District flexibility for the future.” With existing bond issues seeing a drop off in debt service in 2027, 2030 and 2031, the new issue could add debt while keeping the District's payments level.

“This allowed us to spread out payment and reduce the new mills we had to ask for,” Truemper said. “In other words, if we did not do that the District would have had to ask for another tax increase down the road to fund future capital projects.”



Stephens started working on financing options for the District in fall of 2017, and by the following spring the Lakeside school board adopted the resolution for the special election.

In total, the bond issue would raise \$40 million in new money. But in the weeks leading up to the election, the intricacies of the transaction – and its exact cost – had gotten muddled in the conversation: \$48-million, \$54-million and \$72-million price tags circulated on social media and flyers, inflating to voters what exactly they were being asked to agree to.

“While the issue faced no organized opposition, there was some misinformation that the District had to address,” Truemper said. “The biggest challenge was making sure we had all the questions properly answered to the voters. Our role was to make sure the superintendent had all the accurate information to be able to answer questions and concerns factually.”

Stephens worked with the District to ensure voters were notified of the ballot issue, including through local media, a public information meeting and 29 presentations throughout the community.

It was enough for voters to approve the bond issue.

The bonds received an Aa2 rating from Moody’s, and there were four bids for their sale. The winning bid, with a true interest cost of 3.8% was extremely close to two others, indicating a strong demand and good market rate for the bonds, Truemper said.

Stephens’ expertise allowed Lakeside School District to fund vital new capital projects while spreading out their bond payments, lowering their costs and reducing the amount of new mills the District would have to later ask of its patrons. It was a strategy voters agreed was best for the District’s immediate needs and long-term flexibility. Construction on the projects is planned to be completed in 2021.

Helping citizens understand the rationale behind the bond issue, what new money was being raised and how the funds are going to be used allowed voters to make informed decisions to best effect the course of their District. It’s a course Stephens has a vested interest in helping Lakeside successfully navigate. The firm has been serving public finance clients in its home state since 1933. Lakeside has been a client since the 1980s, and there is a good chance the two will still be working together at the time these new bonds mature.

Taking the long-term view of clients’ interest and providing unmatched expertise has allowed Stephens to nurture decades-long relationships with education clients. A history of doing right by those clients and putting their interests first has afforded the firm an unmatched trust in the communities it serves.



Jack Truemper
Senior Vice President
jtruemper@stephens.com
501-377-6315

Stephens
Capitalize on
Independence®



STAR SPEAKERS. Gov. Asa Hutchinson, left, discussed the upcoming legislative session at the ASBA Annual Conference Dec. 7. Michael Dorn, executive director of Safe Havens International, a school safety center, was the keynote speaker Dec. 6. *Story, page 25.*

Governor: Raise teacher salaries

At ASBA's Annual Conference, Gov. Asa Hutchinson pushes \$4,200 raise, says budget includes money to pay for it

Gov. Asa Hutchinson will seek to increase minimum teacher salaries, increase the time counselors spend working directly with students, and reorganize state government so that education-related agencies are housed together in the Department of Education, the governor told ASBA Annual Conference attendees Dec. 7.

Raising minimum teacher salaries was one of Hutchinson's top campaign promises. The governor proposes raising those salaries by \$4,200 over the next four years to \$36,000, a 13 percent increase. He said since he took office in 2015, the minimum salary has increased 5.5 percent. He said the state would provide funding for the increase.

Earlier Dec. 7, Education Commissioner Johnny Key told Annual Conference attendees that the estimated cost for the salary increase is \$60 million over four years. He said the governor presented a letter to the Joint Budget Committee asking that money be set aside to pay

for that minimum increase as well as step increases. Rules will be created on how schools will access those funds.

Key said the gap from the lowest to the highest minimum teacher salaries increased from \$13,333 in 2008-09 to \$17,256 in 2013-14, creating a competitive disadvantage for those lower paying districts. In 2015, the governor and the Legislature began increasing the minimum salary, and the gap decreased to \$15,866 in 2017-18. But it remains too large.

The Legislature's biennial Adequacy Report has recommended a 1.5 percent increase in per pupil foundation funding in fiscal year 2020 and a 1.48 percent increase in fiscal year 2021. Those include a 2 percent increase in teacher salaries and benefits.

Hutchinson said he will ask the Legislature in 2019 to repeal and replace the current student services plan, a yearly report by schools that outlines student programs and supports. He said the plan is outdated and creates too much bureaucracy and paperwork. The new plan will be comprehensive and focused on ensuring school counselors provide direct services to students.

The governor wants to streamline state government to reduce the number of agency leaders who report to him from 42 to 15. The plan would combine the Department of Education with the Departments of Higher Education and Career Education. Also included would be the Arkansas Better Chance Program, the state's preschool program currently housed in the Department of Human Services, as well as the Arkansas School for the Blind and the Arkansas School for the Deaf. The department would be led by a secretary of education.

The governor touted some of his other education-related initiatives. He said when he was elected, 54 high schools did not have access to a career education center. Now the number is 17, and he wants to reduce it to zero. Meanwhile, the number of apprenticeship programs has increased from 88 to 117. His computer science initiative has increased the number of students taking such courses from fewer than 1,000 to more than 8,000, while the number of trained computer science teachers has increased from fewer than 20 to 372.

Hutchinson said he attended two 50th class reunions this year.



ASBA OFFICERS. ASBA's officers for 2019 are, front, Keith Baker, Riverview, Region 6; André Acklin, Conway, Region 8; Sandra Porter, Bryant, 2018 past president; Katie Daniel, McGehee, Region 14; Rosa Bowman, Ashdown, vice president; Willie Buck, Hope, Region 12. Middle, Randy Rogers, Lead Hill, Region 2; Jeff Lisenbey, Sheridan, Region 11; Mark Curry, Lake Hamilton, Region 10; Neal Pendergrass, Mountain Home, president; Clint Hull, Pottsville, Region 5; D'James Rogers, West Memphis, Region 7. Back, Kyle Cannon, Mena, Region 4; Debbie Ugbade, Hot Springs, past president; Randy Hutchinson, Springdale, Region 1; Randy Goodnight, Greenbrier, president-elect. Not pictured are Dr. Tad Margolis, Valley View, Region 3 and secretary-treasurer; and Joey Astin, Forrest City, Region 9.

"What struck me this year is that no one in the class reunion was talking about who was governor 50 years ago," he said, joking, "It offended me greatly."

"But you know what they were talking about? Who was their educator? Who was working with them in the school? Who was their teacher? Who was their favorite teacher or favorite coach? The people that you impact with in your schools today, those students 50 years from now will be talking about your teachers and your school and the mentors that meant a lot to them and helped shape their life."

Legislative panel: No vouchers

Conference attendees also on Dec. 7 heard a discussion by a legislative panel composed of Sen. Linda Chesterfield, D-Little Rock; Rep. Bruce Cozart, R-Hot Springs; Rep. Jana Della Rosa, R-Rogers; and Rep. Les Warren, R-Hot Springs. Cozart has been the chair of the House Education Committee, while Chesterfield and Della Rosa also have served on Education Committees. Cozart, Chesterfield and Warren are former school board members, while Chesterfield is a former classroom teacher.

All four said they oppose using public funds to pay for student private school tuition costs. Della Rosa implored attendees to vote for legislators who agree with them on that issue. After she voted against and spoke against a

voucher bill, a group spent a significant amount against her in the primary election, which she nevertheless won.

"It's all fine and dandy to clap, and I appreciate that, but what you have to do is you have to show up," she said. "If it's a priority for you, then you vote based on it, and you come help us out in the primary. That's what we truly need if you want us to keep (voting) that way, or we'll fall in the primary, and we're going to get replaced by somebody that's not in agreement with you on that particular issue."

Della Rosa said attendees must educate legislators. More than one has mistakenly told her that school vouchers would help charter schools.

Warren and Chesterfield likewise encouraged attendees to get involved in the legislative process.

"You are among the most powerful people in your community. And yet it seems that you're afraid to raise your voices. We need to hear from you," Chesterfield said. "I'm going to say it again: We need to hear from you. You cannot sit idly by and expect us to carry the load."

The four answered questions that had been submitted by school board members during regional meetings and at the conference. Asked about the state's school choice law, Della Rosa said everyone in the Legislature is unhappy

Continued on next page



Maximize Your School District Investments

Every child or student has a right to an environmentally safe and healthy learning environment. School districts should not bear the financial burden of construction defects. Trammell Piazza represents a number of commercial clients and governmental entities regarding construction claims. We will arrange for a free expert evaluation and assessment of your building. We are an experienced contingent fee firm willing to share in the risk with you. There is no financial commitment for the school district unless a recovery is obtained on your behalf.

The Right Team Backing Your School District



M. CHAD TRAMMELL
IN HISTORIC DOWNTOWN TEXARKANA
418 N. STATE LINE AVE., TEXARKANA, AR 71854
OFFICE: 870-779-1860

MELODY H. PIAZZA
IN THE HEIGHTS OF LITTLE ROCK,
THE PROSPECT BUILDING
1501 N. UNIVERSITY, STE. 350, LITTLE ROCK, AR 72207
OFFICE: 501-371-9903

AV Peer Review Rated
5.0 / 5.0 Martindale-Hubbell



TOP ORATORS. First-place winner Gabrielle Thurman of Pottsville speaks at the ASBA Awards Luncheon Dec. 6, left. Second place winner Kobe Johnson of Benton, middle, and third place winner Natalie Kitambi of Little Rock spoke Dec. 7.

Pottsville student wins ASBA speaking contest

Gabrielle Thurman, a senior at Pottsville High School, won ASBA's first personal essay/speaking contest. She received a \$1,000 award and spoke at the Awards Luncheon at the ASBA Annual Conference Dec. 6.

Students were asked to speak on the topic, "Can and Should Freedom of Expression and Civility Co-exist?" Students were asked to consider if it is possible to discuss societal concerns without creating hostility.

More than 30 public school students submitted applications, which included a 600-750 word personal essay and a video that presented the essay as a speech.

In what she jokingly called her "TED Talk," Thurman said communication is a "bridging element" that lets a white male President Trump supporter and a liberal black female Democrat engage in civil discourse. She said that if the Founding Fathers were able to establish a new country, government and banking system, "then MAGA (Make America Great Again) hats and liberals are capable of setting aside their egos for long enough to get stuff done."

"Passion is not the problem," she said. "The problem is that people aren't listening to each other. It's possible that some people never learned how. Learning how to properly and respectfully

debate should be a requirement of oral communication classes. We need to learn from a young age that talking over someone doesn't make what you're saying more important. In fact, instead of talking louder, we can make ourselves heard by listening intently."

The second and third place winners spoke at the Annual Conference Dec. 7. The second place winner, Kobe Johnson, a senior at Benton High School, won \$750. The third place winner, Natalie Kitambi, a junior at Little Rock Central High School, won \$500. The fourth place winner, Rosetta Cato, a junior at Bentonville High School, won \$250.

with the current system for different reasons, but it's "relatively balanced." Without school choice, supporters of vouchers would have a stronger argument, she said. Chesterfield said she grew up in segregated schools in Hope using hand-me-down textbooks. She said she is concerned that schools are resegregating based on race and socio-economic status.

All four legislators said they support maintaining the state's defined benefit teacher retirement system, which guarantees a certain income, rather than changing to a defined contribution system. Warren, who serves on the Joint Public Retirement & Social Security Programs Committee, said there will be no effort to make such a change. Instead,

legislators are considering how to tweak the system to ensure it is solvent.

Asked what consideration should be given to vocational education, Chesterfield said a balance must be maintained. She expressed concern that schools have emphasized science and math classes to the point that students don't know basic civics and grammar. Della Rosa said one students' gifts should not be elevated above another's. An engineering major, she said art is as important as math.

"We have got to stop trying to control what kids want to do because of what we need them to do later," she said. "Because we always swing that pendulum too far. Oh, we need people going to college, so let's swing the pendulum and we're going to focus on that, incentivize

that. ... Well, now nobody can fix the air conditioner. So great, wonderful. You're going to have a whole bunch of well-educated people in here who are going to be sweating."

Regarding transportation funding, Cozart said he is working on legislation that would provide a certain amount of equal funding for school districts within the matrix and then add more for those that need it through categorical funding. Another bill could fund transportation by route miles.

Responding to a question about getting good educators into high-poverty areas, Chesterfield said teachers could be given housing benefits. Cozart stressed developing homegrown teachers.

Expert: School violence nothing new

But right responses required to make schools safer today

School districts must ensure their safety training prepares staff members to react correctly to all threats – not just active shooters.

That advice was offered by Michael Dorn, a keynote speaker at ASBA's Annual Conference. He serves as executive director of Save Havens International, a global non-profit school safety center whose analysts have worked in more than two dozen countries.

Dorn's group performs "fidelity testing," which measures whether practices match policies. It does this by presenting scenarios to staff members to see how they react to potential acts of violence with very little time to respond, because in a real emergency they will not have time to open a phone app or read emergency plans. The "window of life" is 5-45 seconds, he said, and when staff members are trained properly, they can save lives. In one school shooting situation, the hallways were cleared in seven seconds, turning what could have been a massacre into the loss of a single life. That staff had been trained properly, and a custodian quickly ordered a lockdown when he saw a gun.

"Let's see if people know our policies because if you played them a 30-second

scenario of a child reporting a teacher for inappropriate conduct, and that teacher can't come right back to you in 30 seconds, 40 seconds, and tell you, 'I would do this, this and this,' and it match that policy, we have a disconnect," he said. "And that disconnect is how we (end) up in a very bad place."

Preventing attacks is as important as responding to them. Security measures such as metal detectors can't stop every attacker and require costly personnel. He said a school with bright, colorful murals will make children feel safer amidst other security measures and make them more likely to report bullying. Good student supervision is the best single thing schools can do to prevent acts of violence or respond to them, he said.

"If you're putting 80 percent of your time, energy and money for safety into target hardening, and you're not at the same place at that same level of investment with a human piece, emotional security, behavioral training, student threat assessment and management, suicide prevention with research behind it to show it works, pre-attack indicators training, predictive intelligence training, visual weapons screening training – see, those things I just rattled off have stopped hundreds, hundreds of planned school attacks in the United States in the last 30 years," he said.

Dorn said much of the training and national discourse is making schools less safe because personnel are learning the wrong lessons and applying them incorrectly. He said 92 percent of people murdered on campus are not killed by active shooters. Instead, interpersonal disputes, including fights, are involved in 45 percent of all homicides. From 1998 to 2013, 129 staff and students committed suicide on K-12 campuses, compared to 62 people killed by active shooters. Suicide threats are eight times more common than active assailant events. In thousands of cases, he said, the educator has talked the young person who's pulled the gun out of killing themselves.

He said people began performing worse in scenario testing after the Sandy Hook shooting in 2012 and worse still after this year's school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

"Not in my 36 years in this field have I ever seen this country so out of whack when it comes to school safety, security and emergency preparedness. ... What has happened is our approaches to school security have become more emotive than I've seen in my 36 years," he said. "And so what we have to do is get a more accurate picture of the different types of concerns we face."

Continued on next page

**INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS
FOR INNOVATIVE LEARNING**

SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT DON TYSON SCHOOL OF INNOVATION

WITTENBERG DELONY & DAVIDSON ARCHITECTS
wddarchitects.com

LITTLE ROCK
501.376.6681

FAYETTEVILLE
479.442.6681

Dorn said school violence is not new and doesn't just happen in the United States. In fact, he said schools here are safer than those in Canada, France and the United Kingdom. While the number of attempts has increased dramatically,

schools have become better at stopping them. The first mass casualty attack in an American school occurred in 1764 in a one-room schoolhouse in Pennsylvania, where only one occupant survived. The first active shooter case was in 1891

in a Catholic school in New York where a 70-year-old man shot five children on the playground. In 1958, 92 students and three nuns were killed when a fourth-grader set fire to a Chicago school. That school had nine fire drills a year, and



PRESIDENT'S, PLATINUM AWARD WINNERS. Left photo, Jesse Clark with the Malvern School Board received the President's Award for accruing 500 hours of boardsmanship credit. Second photo, Karen Daughterity with West Fork and John Gibson with Mountain Home received the Platinum Award for accruing 400 hours of boardsmanship credit. Right photos, other Platinum Award winners were Debbie Ugbade with Hot Springs, ASBA's past president, and Neal Pendergrass with Mountain Home, ASBA's new president. *Photos by Lifetouch National School Studios.*



30-YEAR, PINNACLE AWARD WINNERS. Left and middle photos, Darrell Gist of the El Dorado School Board and Katie Daniel of McGehee were honored for 30 years of school board service. Right photo, the Pinnacle Award goes to individual board members who accrue 200 hours of boardsmanship credit. Pictured left to right, front row, are Travis Collins, Lakeside-Lake Village; Judy Lattimore, McGehee; Connie Bane, Malvern; and Kevin Carr, Malvern. Back row are Walter Donald, Dermott; Jacqueline Baker, Osceola; Justin Eichmann, Fayetteville; Glen Coston, Magnet Cove; and Tracy Taylor, Pottsville. *Photos by Lifetouch National School Studios.*



MASTER AWARD WINNERS. The Master Award goes to individual board members who accrue 50 hours of boardsmanship credit. Pictured are, front, Evelyn Shackelford, Lee County; LeeAnn Ashford, Berryville; Kevin Moore, Watson Chapel; Linda Remele, Pulaski County; Taniesha Richardson-Wiley, North Little Rock; and Glenda Smedley, Ashdown. Back row, Lonell Lenox, Hot Springs; Earnest Simpson, Helena-West Helena; Justin Hancock, White County Central; Nathan Romine, Hoxie; David Dobbins, Hoxie; Kelli Henning, Greenwood; and Eric White, Bentonville. *Photo by Lifetouch National School Studios.*



MORE MASTER AWARD WINNERS. Left photo, front row, Trip Leach, Conway; Marcia Dornblaster, Jacksonville-North Pulaski; Barbara Horton, Mountain Home; Jaimie Jackson, Mineral Springs-Saratoga; Ashley Beller, Cave City; Jeff Hollingshead, Armorel. Back row, Clayton Miller, Mountain Pine; Thanh Ketchum, Valley Springs; Wendall Jines, Highland; Jason Jones, Yellville-Summit; and Randy Mitchell, Benton. Right photo, front row, Mitch Lockhart, Rogers; Paige Sultemeier, Rogers; and Nathan Gairhan, Rogers. Back row, Jeb Bass, Harrisburg; Casey Motl, Arkadelphia; and Matt Burgess, Bentonville. *Photos by Lifetouch National School Studios.*

even though the school was clearly on fire, the nuns didn't clear the building because no one pulled the alarm for five minutes. Between 1970 and 1990, twice as many people in K-12 schools were murdered than were killed in the last 20 years, and that's despite there being 15 million fewer students in 1970 than today.

"The perception that people have is that we have violence just spiraling out of control, we have types of violence we've never before seen, and there's some truth to that," he said. "We're seeing some changes in attack methods. But none of those attack methods are really dramatically different from things we saw in the 17-, 18- and early 1900s."

As evidence of schools being safer, Dorn shared his own experiences. In 1969, he was raped in the woods by two teenagers but didn't report it. Two years later he was diagnosed with profound dyslexia, and his parents were told he would never learn to read or graduate from high school. In fifth grade, he was beaten up in the bathroom and forced to simulate having oral sex. In the seventh grade, that same bully smashed his head onto the floor, nearly killing him. He was threatened in a private school by a senior and from then on carried a weapon to school every day. In 1979, he fled his school after a riot, was truant the next day and was arrested and entered a juvenile court diversion program. As a senior, he saw a female student nearly killed in a fight with a broken coke bottle. Not long afterwards, he was attacked with a box cutter in the gym. From then on, he carried a more powerful weapon.

"I know that the children you serve are safer than you and I were in school," he said. "I know the data. I know the cases. I know that my child, my 10-year-old is safer in his rural Georgia elementary school by far than I was."

Dorn said he was able to succeed because of caring adults in his life. A teacher noticed he talked too much and had terrible grades but helped him get a scholarship for 10 days in a junior college that led to him being able to read at a college level by fifth grade. He was also helped by police officers, a bus driver, a literature teacher, a social studies teacher, an ROTC instructor, Boys and Girls Club staff members and a Scout leader.

Dorn's keynote address was one of several opportunities for Annual Conference attendees to learn about school security issues; several breakout sessions also dealt with the subject.

One such session was led by Ellen Smith and Khayyam Eddings, partners at Friday, Eldredge & Clark. The two described two ongoing cases involving Arkansas school districts.

In one, a student posted an Instagram photo wearing a trench coat and holding an assault rifle without comment on a

Please see SECURITY on page 37




The best value for Arkansas schools

KLC Video Security provides high-quality products and services to meet your needs in the areas of:



- > Video Surveillance
- > Electronic Access Control
- > School Bus Video/Audio
- > Fire Alarm Systems

1111 Texas Boulevard
Texarkana, Texas 75501
903.792.7262
www.klcvideosecurity.com



Arkansas Security License #E-06-019

Report Card December 2018 27



EXHIBIT HALL. Top left photo, Baldwin & Shell's Tori Bogner, center, visits with Lincoln School District Superintendent Mary Ann Spears, left, and Jana Claybrook, district executive master teacher. Right photo, Rick Vance with Entegrity helps a conference attendee with his golf game. Second row, left photo, All-Clean's Lisa Graham visits with Tommy Hancock with Homeland Safety Systems. Right photo, Crow Construction's Morgan Zimmerman visits with Carrie McHenry with the Strong-Huttig School Board and her husband, John. Bottom left, Paula Henderson with KLC Video Security visits with Curley Jackson with the Drew Central School Board. Bottom right, Hallie Bussman with Caddell Construction visits with Michael Springer with the Magazine School Board.



MASTER BOARDS. The Rogers, Strong-Huttig and Ouachita School Boards were recognized as Master Boards after all of their board members earned the Master Award for accruing 50 hours of boardsmanship credit. Pictured left photo are Rogers School Board members, from left, newly appointed member Rob Phillips, Amy Horn, Mitch Lockhart, Paige Sultemeier, Nathan Gairhan, Curtis Clements, and Kristen Cobbs. Pictured in the middle photo are Strong-Huttig School Board members Terri Dollar, Carrie McHenry, LaKenya Riley, and Cindy Smith. The Ouachita School Board is not pictured. *Photos by Lifetouch National School Studios.*

SCHOOL BOARD OF EXCELLENCE. The Cabot School Board was recognized by ASBA as a School Board of Excellence in Leadership. The award recognizes school boards for dedication and ethical service. Pictured are Cabot Superintendent Dr. Tony Thurman, ASBA President Neal Pendergrass, and Cabot School Board member Joe Trusty. *Photo by Lifetouch National School Studios.*

Breakout: Schools must adjust to trends

Among them are declining trust and changing family structures, says board member, professor

Americans have less trust in “public schools” than in the past, but they still trust their local schools, so the key to maintaining support is to get patrons inside the school.



Maranto

In a breakout session Dec. 6, Fayetteville School Board member and University of Arkansas education professor Dr. Bob Maranto said the percentage of Americans with a great deal of trust in public schools has fallen from 58 percent in 1975 to 29 percent today. Other institutions have also seen a dip in public trust. Those numbers come from the Gallup organization.

However, Maranto said Americans still trust their local schools, so he encouraged attendees to invite patrons to see what happens there. The more they see, the more they will trust. These exposures should happen in informal settings, not dog-and-pony shows.

Declining trust in public institutions was one of five societal trends Maranto described. Another was increasing politics, as a loss of trust results in more rules. The other three were declining educator human capital where the best and brightest women and minorities now have other choices besides teaching, family structure changes, and school choice.

He said a disconnect exists between the nation’s elites and school board members. Five of six presidents between Harry Truman and Ronald Reagan graduated from public schools, but four of the last five graduated from private schools, and that’s where most of them are sending their children.

In recent years, elites have stressed achievement and equity – in other words, change. School board members tend to want to keep things the same. A 2007 National School Boards Association poll found school board members judged superintendents first on their relationships with the board, followed by staff morale, management, and student safety. Standardized tests, a measurement of student achievement and the one concerning elites, was fifth. A study by Maranto of North

Carolina superintendent contracts along with model contracts in 20 states found they seldom mentioned academic duties and almost never mentioned academic goals.

“School boards, we’re not as into achievement and equity as elites are,” he said.

Family structure changes are also affecting schools. Family sizes are shrinking, so parents give more attention to children and expect schools to do so as well. Also, since 1960, the percentage of children in single-parent homes has risen from 10 to 30 percent, the highest in the developed world. Only half of today’s young people will grow up with the same parents ages 1-17. Schools must respond to that change.

Maranto said public education is personal for people who are involved in it. Talking about the need for change is akin to someone saying your baby is ugly.

Please see TRENDS on page 37



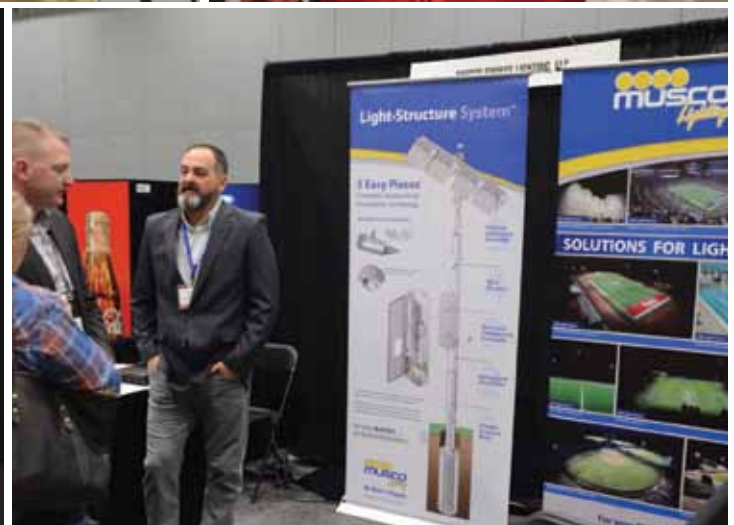
**CREATED BY EDUCATORS
FOR EDUCATORS**

MORE FROM EXHIBIT HALL. Top photo, Jason Holsclaw, a senior vice president with Stephens Inc., visits with Jerry Daniels with the Warren School Board. Second row, left photo, Brad Chilcote with Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson Architects visits with Dr. Brian Duffie, Jacksonville North Pulaski School District superintendent. Right photo, Mike Elliott with Homeland Safety Systems talks with Fonda Eaton with the Harrisburg School Board. Third row, left photo, Connie Straw with Trammell Piazza Law Firm visits with a conference attendee. Right photo, Larry Perkin with Hight Jackson Associates visits with Jeannie Cole with the Fort Smith School Board.





MORE FROM EXHIBIT HALL. Top left photo, Sandra Cook, Joel Blansett and Paul Hively with Nabholz visit with Blytheville School Board member Billy Fair. Top right, Brittany Hardage and Dale Filson with Chartwells visit with Glen McJoy with the Lakeside School Board in Lake Village. Middle left, Gene Hawk with TIPS visits with Tanya Foster with Watkins Acoustical. Middle right, Jeremy Lemons with Musco Lighting visits with conference attendees.



MORE FROM EXHIBIT HALL. Bottom left, Josh Siebert with Modus Studio visits with Alan Yarbrough, Searcy County superintendent. Bottom right, Brad Varner with Panasonic, left, and Rodney Jackson with Progressive Technologies talk in Exhibit Hall.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

with Jeff Lisenbey

By Steve Brawner
Editor

Jeff Lisenbey started his career in education and never really left it.

After reluctantly leaving a teaching job in Poyen, he ran for a seat on the school board months later in Sheridan, his hometown. There, he's been a part of a board that has raised teacher salaries nine straight years and, thanks to dedicated community members, passed a millage increase on the third try.

The district is one of the state's largest geographically and is composed of two population centers: Sheridan in Grant County, and East End, an unincorporated community in the corner of Saline County. East End students attend school in their hometown through the eighth grade before traveling 20 miles to Sheridan for high school classes.

Turning two communities in two counties into one district isn't easy, but the home of the Yellowjackets has succeeded. One way was through a branding campaign, YJ Nation, that has been embraced by both communities.

Report Card discussed those topics with Lisenbey, ASBA's Region 11 director, in the district's administration building Nov. 26.

Tell me about your teaching career.

"I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and I also finished my Master's in Secondary Education before I started teaching. And I got a job at Poyen. I sent all the resumes out and got a call the next day.



It was close to home. I didn't have to move, and it was a great experience. A small district, but it was a great place to learn, and I really enjoyed that. I taught five years. I taught mostly upper level science courses – biology, chemistry and physics. I also taught some of the junior high courses as well. I also helped a little with coaching, coached softball and helped assist with baseball. It was very rewarding because there was such a diverse group of kids. I would have some of the kids who came from backgrounds that probably needed more attention than others, and that to me was one of the most rewarding things because I treated everyone the same. I wanted everyone to achieve at the highest level, and being able to get there

and really work with each kid is what really made it very difficult to leave education because I wanted that for each kid. I wanted each kid to have that chance to succeed."

What was the path of going from a teacher to a school board member?

"Well, after I had gotten the opportunity with my current company to go into sales, someone said, 'It's hard to believe that you got out of education as much as you love it.' I said, 'I do, but my family comes first, and I had that opportunity to better my family financially. So then someone asked, 'Well, why don't you run for the school board here in Sheridan? You'll have a unique perspective for teachers.'

“So I did, and so that transitioned right in. Fortunately when I got here, the first superintendent was also a former teacher and coach and had been here in Sheridan, so it was great to learn from him. His name’s David Robinson. It was such a good atmosphere for him to bring me in and start talking to me about how a school board works, how you’re here not to grind an axe. You’re here to create policy, and then those policies can be created that trickle down to the classroom or other parts of the district.”

Were you really glad you were able to get back into education?

“I was. I was extremely excited to still be a part of education. Sheridan’s my home. My kids were already in school here. Well, actually my daughter, it was her first year of kindergarten when I ran for the board, and I had a son who was three at the time. So I knew this was where my kids were going to complete the next 13 years of their life

in education, and so I was excited about being able to still have an influence and be able to be that advocate for teachers and what happens in the classroom and have that understanding.”

Are there any downsides of being a former teacher on a school board?

“Yes, and it’s really not a downside because I’m really a people person. I consider myself a pretty good listener. But when everyone knows that you’re a former teacher and you have that experience, you probably get more phone calls than anybody else. I like to listen to problems, but the biggest problem for me was explaining to them that I can’t fix every problem. Because any time someone has an issue, they want it fixed. And I’m naturally, the way I’m wired, I like to be a fixer, and I’d have to tell them, ‘I can’t overstep my authority as a school board member. There’s only certain things that a school board member does.’”

How did the district increase teacher salaries?

“A lot of it is making sure that we’re running efficiently. You know, it’s great to say that you want small class sizes. But if you have small class sizes, then you still have a lot of students. That means you have a lot more staff, and staff is your biggest expense for the district. So we looked at it, and our core classes, we made sure that those teachers were staying within standards as far as how many kids they could serve, and we had to fill up their classes. We didn’t do any reduction in force or anything. But through attrition, as some would leave, if we could still perform at the level the state wants us to perform in the classroom with fewer staff, we did, and as we did that, we started seeing there’s a large savings. So then we started passing that back to the teachers who were already there. That was probably the biggest thing. Then we just started

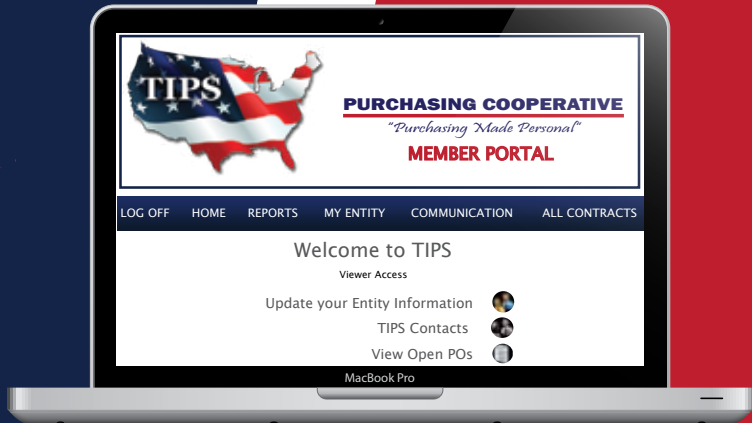
Continued on next page



EXCLUSIVE MEMBER PORTAL

NOW LIVE!

- ✓ View/Print Archived PO's
- ✓ Send Request For Quote To Multiple Vendors At Once
- ✓ Update Entity Information
- ✓ Submit Purchase Orders



Mickey McFatridge
Arkansas Program Manager
870-926-9250
mickey.mcfatridge@tips-usa.com

Gene Hawk
TIPS Representative
479-234-7639
gene.hawk@tips-usa.com

www.tips-usa.com | 866-839-8477 | tips@tips-usa.com

“I wanted everyone to achieve at the highest level, and being able to get there and really work with each kid is what really made it very difficult to leave education because I wanted that for each kid. I wanted each kid to have that chance to succeed.”

tightening the budget on other things and trying to be as efficient as we possibly could.”

So you went with the theory that a good teacher teaching a few more students is better than trying to shrink class size as much as possible.

“Yes. In any business, you want to run as lean as possible. We’re the largest business entity as far as number of employees in our county. So you have to run it like a business. It’s still a budget. So when you look at that, you have to run as lean as possible to make sure. You can’t sacrifice test scores for that. And we have a great curriculum director who monitors all that. We have a curriculum team. We have coaches, math coaches, literacy coaches that are monitoring all those to make sure we’re performing, and so as we started on that path, we saw test scores continuing to rise. We saw our teacher salaries increasing, so everything has just moved forward. But it takes a lot of coordinated support to make sure that happens.”

How much have you raised teacher salaries?

“Whenever I first got on the board, I think our starting teacher salary was around \$34,000, so we’ve been able to increase over \$6,000, and we’ve been increasing the base as well each time.”

And you’ve raised teacher salaries how many years in a row?

“Nine. That was in our local paper this past week.”

Was there a strategy of making sure that you raise it every year?

“No, there really wasn’t. We just tried to make the commitment to our teachers that they knew that this was our goal, and any time that we felt like we had



that opportunity to raise it, we were going to. It just happened that we were running efficiently. We had made the decision to hire a CFO for our district because we were running it like a business, so when we hired a chief financial officer to really monitor those things, we were extremely fortunate to get Rita Guess, who had been in school business and education for a number of years. She came to us with all the knowledge and was able to get with our accounting department and budgeting and coding things, and it was really what turned us around.”

Did you tell the staff \$40,000 was the goal?

“We didn’t tell them that was the goal. The goal was to be competitive (with nearby districts), so I guess it was kind of implied. Teachers really know what other teachers are making, so it was one of those things, they knew that we were trying to move forward. The good thing about it too is most of our teachers on our salary schedule fall in that bachelor’s degree plus 15. I think probably 60 to 70 percent of our teachers kind of fall in that column, and as we’ve increased these, that takes that column over \$50,000. If you compare that to the other schools in the state, that puts us in the top 10 in the state in that column. So our teachers have really noticed the effort that we’ve made, and they’re very appreciative of us driving that salary up.”

It took three tries to pass a millage. What happened the first two?

“Probably the first two times, with any millage, the bottom line is, it is a tax. And it’s hard to make people want to vote a tax on themselves. There was a significant group in the community that is very vocal to fight taxes.

“Probably the biggest thing was we are a divided community. We have East End, which is in Saline County, and we have the Grant County portion. There’s also a big misconception that the Saline County patrons pay their taxes, and their money’s going to Saline County and doesn’t come to the district. Well, that’s not true. It’s based on district. They do pay their tax in Saline County, but the check comes back to our district. So there was a big group that was very vocal against it because they didn’t want things to be built in Saline County.

“There were others that were just against it because it was a tax. Whenever I would talk to people, I would say, if you’re voting against the millage because it is a tax, I’m OK with that because that is true. ... Any time something (was said) that was not true, perception becomes reality to a lot of people. So our biggest issue was changing the perception of the community so that they would see the need, and once we finally (did that), then we could move forward, and it became a lot easier to pass.”

What were you trying to address?

“Actually the high school was very limited in space. It’s an older building. We have all of our other schools feeding back to the high school, so every bit of our space there was filled up. The other thing was ... we had aging buildings that did not have the modern technology and didn’t have the infrastructure. For instance, the electrical grid in some of these buildings, we couldn’t put the new technology into the buildings because the electrical system couldn’t manage, so we were having to do huge electrical upgrades to make sure that we could even put in new technology.”

How did you pass it?

“After our previous failure, we had a very good plan, and we were getting

partnership money from the state, and our wealth index allows for the state to pay for approximately 50 percent of our building projects, so it was a very good deal. The school district was going to be out a minimal amount of money. When you can put in \$20 million and receive that large of a building project to better educate the kids, you want to take advantage of it. We had our plan where we were building a big addition to the high school, a new arena, a new middle school at East End, a middle school in Sheridan, and then had several remodel upgrades, security upgrades, things like that for our district. So the plan was great, but the previous time, it did not pass, mainly because we had the group that was fighting against the tax and really fighting against projects being built in East End.

“So as we got ready to try again because the money was still there – we were still approved partnership funding – we were trying to figure out if we needed to revise the plan. We’re having community meetings, and there were a few members of the community that stepped up and said, ‘Listen, you had the very best plan possible. I mean, it’s a wonderful plan.’ They understood the plan, and they said, ‘Don’t change anything.’ And in my mind, I was very skeptical because I thought if we don’t change anything, if you do the same things, in my mind we’re destined for failure. And they said, ‘No, let us take a different approach.’ And those community members said, ‘Let us take this to the community. Let us change the perception. Let us as community members show the need that you have, and let us sell it to everyone else. As parents, let us sell it.’”

“So we did that, and that was kind of hard for some of us to sit on the sidelines and just be support. But that group, I mean, it was probably a core group of about five community members that would work on these. They would hold community meetings themselves. They had emails set up so people could send in their complaints. Any time they would see something on social media that they knew was not true, they immediately responded back to it themselves to stop something that was

untrue and address those issues one on one with whoever was making the complaint. And it just really came to the point where people started seeing the need.”

It must be challenging having a district that’s basically two population centers 20 miles apart. How do you handle it?

“Well, part of it is we’ve done really well as far as staffing at the principal level. (Superintendent Jerrod Williams) has done a good job to make sure we have the right leaders. A lot of it is we’ve promoted from within, and what he’s done is he’s built an institute where we basically train our own leaders. As there’s attrition, we have the next person ready to step into the job that’s been trained here. They know our district well, and so they’re already a vested stakeholder and are in the building, so they want that to succeed. Jerrod also sends every one of those (principals) to the Arkansas Leadership Academy. All of our principals go through the highest level of training, and when they come back, they’re excited. And so ... we’ve been able to have those campuses managed by extremely qualified people that are stakeholders in the district too.”

And you also did a branding campaign.

“Yes, that branding campaign has probably been the thing that has turned it around the most to bring it in to one school district where it didn’t seem like there was a divide. There was always that perception from people down here that the people in Saline County, they’re not coming and spending their tax dollars in Sheridan, so they would rather do something different. So to remove all that perception, we started the campaign YJ Nation. Hiring Lauren Goins as our communications director, she did a fabulous job getting those people there to buy in and to promote it. Everything you see here is #YJNation. You see billboards. ... It just kind of snowballed. Everybody is really excited. And any time you go to anything here in the district that’s related to the school, it’s always packed because we’ve developed that now to where it’s really become a very positive thing, very proud to be a Yellowjacket instead of proud to be from East End or proud to be from Sheridan. It’s kind of molded into one.”

Note: Executive Session is edited for length and clarity.



**Client-focused,
community oriented
construction services.**

Call us today to
discuss your project
(501) 354-6511

www.crowconst.com





NABHOLZ can help schools with the special designs associated with tech classes like here at the University of Arkansas at Morrilton.

Nabholz helps schools meet tech class needs, budget

School design and construction must keep pace with technology and workforce needs. An experienced contractor like Nabholz will help schools make these necessary changes while staying on budget, often through advising owners on material choices and energy efficiency features throughout the design and construction phases.

One trend that requires careful planning is the reemergence of technical and trade education in schools. These areas need durable flooring, multiple workstations, task lighting, various power hookups, and – depending on the trade – installation of special lifting and maintenance equipment.

These areas can prove to be expensive if the school's builder is not experienced in value engineering. In the value engineering process, Nabholz will examine the plans and specifications to look for ways to save money – swapping materials to something less expensive but of no less quality, or changing power hookup locations to use fewer electrical materials – helping schools get the most spax for their dollar.

For more information about Nabholz's offerings, go to www.nabholz.com or call 877.NABHOLZ.

Homeland Safety advises schools on law banning products

Homeland Safety Systems, Inc. recently released a response to Public Law 115-232 signed into law Aug. 13

by President Donald Trump. Under that law, public agencies dependent on federal funding are banned from procuring "covered telecommunications equipment" including Hikvision, Dahua, Honeywell, Sentry Security Systems, Bosch, and Hytera. Schools are overseen by the Department of Education on the federal level and could be made to conform to this policy through federal funding. The law takes effect Jan. 1. Schools that intend to use federal grant or loan monies to accomplish their projects will have to purchase other products or find another funding source. Keep in mind that this includes service or replacement work!

For more information about Homeland Safety Systems' offerings, call 888.909.2261 or go to www.homeland-safety.com.

Musco lights sports at schools in Magnolia, Little Rock

Thinking about LED sports lighting? Then it's important to understand that all LED lighting does not deliver the same results.

Musco has applied more than 40 years of research and experience to take advantage of LED's unique characteristics. At Little Rock's Pinnacle View Middle School and at Magnolia, Musco's TLC for LED™ technology achieves the best field lighting, eliminates glare, and preserves darkness around the field.

To see TLC for LED in action, contact Jeremy Lemons at 501.249.8056 or jeremy.lemons@musco.com.

Modus Studio wins three AIA design awards

Modus Studio took home Merit Awards for three architectural projects at the 2018 AIA Arkansas Design Awards Banquet. The recently completed Uptown Apartments + Shops, MAIN x MDRN, and Church + Center buildings were selected by an independent panel of judges to be recognized for design ex-



MODUS STUDIO designed the recently completed Uptown Apartments + Shops.

cellence. The AIA's architectural design award program showcases the outstanding design talent and diligent work ethic that exemplifies the architecture community here in Arkansas.

For more information about Modus Studio, go to modusstudio.com or call 479.455.5577.



HIGHT JACKSON designed the performing arts center at Ozark Junior High.

Hight Jackson designs centers for performing arts

Performing arts programs in both Farmington and Ozark school districts have enjoyed a dramatic boost with the completion of performing arts centers (PACs) designed by Hight Jackson Associates in Rogers. A 600-seat PAC facility was completed in Phase I of Farmington High School in 2015, and Phase II completed the campus in 2017. The Ozark Junior High PAC seats 530 and was completed in 2017. These districts are great examples of how performing arts programs are thriving in smaller school districts in our state.

For more information about Hight Jackson, call 479.464.4965 or go to www.hjarch.com.

Free workshops by Stephens' municipal advisors

Stephens reminds board members it can assist with obtaining their required professional development hours. As school board members know, Arkansas law generally requires them to obtain up to six hours of certified professional development on school operations topics.

ASBA has deemed Stephens' municipal advisors as certified ASBA trainers who can provide up to three hours of school finance training annually toward ASBA's Boardmanship Awards Program. Normally held in the evening or on a weekend, this free training workshop will address topics ranging from state and local funding revenue sources to debt financing of capital projects.

Stephens believes this type of workshop can be particularly useful for

administrators and board members considering how to finance future capital projects.

To learn more about how Stephens can assist your district, please contact Melissa Walsh of Stephens Public Finance at 501.377.2428.

WD&D Architects designs high school for Pulaski County

WD&D Architects designed the Pulaski County Special School District's new state-of-the-art Mills University Studies High School.

The school is a LEED-certified facility that emphasizes academic rigor and the performing arts.

The school's academic amenities include a 150-seat presentation room, a 1,100-seat competition gymnasium, a 100-seat auxiliary gymnasium, a



WD&D designed the Mills University Studies High School.

700-seat auditorium and an associated black box theater. A large, hardened storm shelter is also incorporated into the design.

The site master plan includes the new high school, a new multi-purpose fieldhouse, new baseball and softball complex, upgrades to the existing football/track complex, and renovation of the old high school to serve as the new middle school.

For more information about WD&D Architects, go to www.wddarchitects.com or call 501.376.6681.

Security

Continued from page 27

Saturday night, 10 days after the school shooting in Parkland. After some commented on the post, he removed it the next morning and replaced it with one with the trench coat but no rifle, explaining that he had not meant the original post as a threat. But students, parents and teachers saw the post and called the principal, who called the police, who called the FBI. Police concluded he was not a threat and did not charge him, but the district still suspended and then expelled him. The school board upheld the expulsion based on handbook policies that allowed for discipline for off-campus conduct and for threats that intentionally disrupt school functions.

He was enrolled in an alternative setting. His parents sued for an injunction.

The court ruled in favor of the district, based in part because it had acted consistently with its handbook. The student's post was not protected speech because it created substantial disorder. The school treated it like a threat. Students and teachers expressed fear about coming to school. A disruption occurred when police and the FBI held schoolwide assemblies pertaining to social media. Ultimately, the court said the school's responsibility to protect the school and the students trumped any harm that could come to the student. The case is on appeal to the Eighth Circuit.

"I think in today's climate, the courts are going to support what the school board does," Smith said.

In another case involving a student with an Individuals with Disabilities Education Act plan, however, a court has ruled in favor of the student based on the public's interest in making sure such students get an education.

Eddings said he believes the courts will eventually rule on the school district's side.

Trends

Continued from page 29

Schools were designed in the late 1800s and early 1900s, with big bureaucracies and before these trends emerged. But in an era when parents have more choices, schools must adjust. Maranto said attendees should survey teachers and parents and solve parents' problems. He asked attendees if their districts

honor academics like they honor athletics, if they poach good teachers from other districts the way they poach coaches, if they partner with universities, and if they hire demographically and intellectually diverse teachers. Do they have options for students without dads, especially in the summer? Do they hold teachers accountable, do they have them on improvement plans, and do they fire teachers for poor performance?

Advertisers Index

Nabholz.....	Back Cover
Southern Tire Mart.....	2
Caddell Construction Company	3
Baldwin & Shell.....	5
HomelandSafetySystems.....	7
Modus Studio.	8
Integrity.....	9
Progressive Technologies.....	11
BXS Insurance..	13
Crafton Tull	15
All-Clean	17
Musco Lighting.	19
Stephens Inc.	20-21
Trammell Piazza.....	23
Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson.....	25
KLC Video Security.....	27
Educational Benefits, Inc.....	29
TIPS.....	33
Crow Construction and Paving.....	35
Hight Jackson Associates	39

Commercial Affiliates

ASBA thanks its premier partners and other commercial affiliates for their support.

Premier Partners	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
AETN - Arkansas Ideas	Bryan Fields	800.488.6689	bfields@aetn.org	www.aetn.org
BXS Insurance	Bill Birch	501.614.1170	bill.birch@bxsi.com	bxsi.com
Curtis Stout Energy Solutions	Chad Thornton	501.372.2555	cthorton@chstout.com	www.chstout.com
First Security Beardsley Public Finance	Scott Beardsley	501.978.6392	scott@fsbeardsley.com	fsbeardsley.com
Homeland Safety Systems, Inc.	Mike Elliott	318.221.8062	mike@hssems.com	homelandsafetysystems.com
Pro Benefits Group, Inc.	James Kandlbinder	501.321.0457	pbfsi@sbcglobal.net	pbfsi.com
Stephens Inc.	Jason Holsclaw	501.377.2474	jason.holsclaw@stephens.com	www.stephens.com
The Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS)	Mickey McFatridge	870.926.9250	mickey.mcfatridge@tips-usa.com	www.tips-usa.com

Exhibiting Partners	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
A.D.E.M. Federal Surplus Property	Brian Jones	501.835.3111	brian.jones@adem.arkansas.gov	www.adem.arkansas.gov
ACE Sports	Mark Bridges	501.909.9173	Mark.Bridges@AceSports.com	www.acesports.com
All-Clean USA	Lisa Graham	870.972.7729	lgraham@allcleanusa.com	www.allcleanusa.com
ArCom Systems, Inc.	David Watson	501.225.4910	dwatson@arcomsys.com	www.arcomsys.com
Baldwin & Shell Construction Company	Jeff Marcussen	501.374.8677	Jmarcussen@baldwinshell.com	www.baldwinshell.com
BOK Financial	Cody Kielmeyer	918.588.6337	ckielmeyer@bokf.com	www.bokfinancial.com
Brock USA	Amy Champion	303.544.5800	achampion@brockusa.com	www.BrockUSA.com
C.R. Crawford Construction, LLC	Phil Jones	479.251.1161	pjones@crcrawford.com	www.crcrawford.com
Caddell Construction Co. (DE), LLC	Ricky Byrd	479.319.3383	Ricky.Byrd@caddell.com	www.caddell.com
Capital Business Machines, Inc.	Ben Higgs	501.375.1111	bhiggs@capbiz.com	www.capbiz.com
Chartwells	Joan Y. Thorne	214.471.0206	joanthorne@compass-usa.com	chartwellsk12.com
Colonial Life	Mika McFadden	501.246.8978	mika.mcfadden@mycoloniallifeagent.com	coloniallife.com
Crow Construction and Paving	Morgan Zimmerman	479.264.4332	mzimmerman@crowconst.com	www.crowconst.com
David H. Frieze and Associates, Inc.	Paul Frieze	501.922.9704	paulfrieze7@gmail.com	
Digital Effects	Price Lavender	903.255.0707	Price@DEWraps.com	DEWraps.com
Entegrity	Courtney Argo	800.700.1414	info@entegritypartners.com	www.entegritypartners.com
ESS	Julie Crum	870.239.6608	Julie@subteachusa.com	www.subteachusa.com
EZ-ACCESS	Paul Dyer	800.258.8503	pdyer@ezaccess.com	ezaccess.com
Grasshopper Company	Ted Brown	620.345.8621	cestep@grasshoppermower.com	grasshoppermower.com
Hight Jackson Associates	Liz Cox	479.464.4965	lcox@hjarch.com	www.hjarch.com
JBP Architects	Randall Palculict	501.664.8700	randy@jbparchitects.com	www.jbparchitects.com
Kelly Educational Staffing	Brandy Meisenheimer	816.517.5339	meisebr@kellyservices.com	www.kellyeducationalstaffing.us
Kinco Constructors	Clay Gordon	501.225.7606	cgordon@kinco.net	kincoconstructors.com
KLC Video Security	Bill King	903.792.7262	Billking.klc@gmail.com	www.klcvideosecurity.net
Lakeshore Learning Materials	Blake Stansbery	310.537.8600	bstansbery@lakeshorelearning.com	www.lakeshorelearning.com
Lexia Learning	Karen Love	978.402.3503	klove@lexialearning.com	www.lexialearning.com
McPherson & Jacobson, LLC	Thomas Jacobson	888.375.4814	mail@macnjake.com	www.macnjake.com
Mid-America Sports Construction	Brock Wilson	816.524.0010	bwilson@mid-america-golf.com	www.mid-america-sportsconstruction.com
Midwest Bus Sales, Inc.	Paula Davis	479.474.2433	pcdavis@midwestbussales.com	www.midwestbussales.com
Modus Studio	Chris Lankford	479.455.5577	ino@modusstudio.com	www.modusstudio.com
Musco Sports Lighting, LLC	Jeremy Lemons	641.673.0411	jeremy.lemons@musco.com	www.musco.com
Nabholz Construction Company	Jake Nabholz	501.217.5536	jake.nabholz@nabholz.com	www.nabholz.com
National Safety Shelters	Sarah-Jane Corrado	866.372.1530	sarah@nationalsafetysshelters.com	www.nationalsafetysshelters.com
NE-ARK Adjustment Co.	Mike Brigrance	870.838.0097	neark@swbell.com	
Pop Pop Shoppe	Cassidy Lavender	903.276.5580	cassidy@poppopshoppe.com	www.poppopfundraising.com
Powers of Arkansas	Ron McCarty	501.350.5420	rmccarty@powersar.com	www.powersar.com
Progressive Technologies	Rodney Jackson	501.833.9000	Rjackson@thinkprogressive.com	www.thinkprogressive.com
Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Pulaski County	Lori Lynch	501.301.7773	lorilynn.spsf@gmail.com	www.spsfpulaski.org
SFE - Southwest Foodservice Excellence	Vanessa Pressley	480.551.6550	vanessa.pressley@sfallc.org	www.sfallc.org
Social Sentinel	Heather Harer	860.335.7246	hharer@socialsentinel.com	socialsentinel.com
Southern Bleacher Company	Carla Herndon	940.549.0733	herndon@southernbleacher.com	www.southernbleacher.com
Trammell Piazza Law Firm, PLLC	Connie Straw	501.371.9903	connie@trammellpiazza.com	trammellpiazza.com
Tri-State Floors, Inc.	Dean Smith	918.343.2553	dean@tri-statefloors.com	www.tri-statefloors.com
Van Horn Construction, Inc.	Judy Scott	479.968.2514	jscott@vanhornconstruction.com	www.vanhornconstruction.com
Virco, Inc.	Bruce Joyner	501.908.9461	Brucejoyner@virco.com	www.virco.com
Witsell Evans Rasco Architects/Planners	Eldon Bock	501.374.5300	ebock@werarch.com	www.werarch.com
Wittenberg, Delony & Davidson Architects	Glen Woodruff	501.376.6681	gwoodruff@wddarchitects.com	www.wddarchitects.com

Supporting Partners	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
Freedom Roofing Solutions, Inc.	Brian Kirk	501.796.2061	Brian@FreedomRoofingSolutions.com	www.freedomroofingsolutions.com
Raymond James	Katie Devine	501.671.1334	Katie.Devine@RaymondJames.com	www.raymondjames.com

FOIA: Fear it, but be glad it's there

The law can be a major nuisance for innocent school districts and public agencies, but it also shines a light on those that are not so innocent.

If you've ever heard me speak about the Freedom of Information Act, then you've heard me say something like this: Any time you post on social media or send an email, text or letter, make sure you wouldn't mind seeing it above the fold on the front page of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

These days, it's more important than ever to follow that rule of thumb – especially for school board members. I've been involved in this area of the law for 30 years and never saw a single FOIA lawsuit until three or four years ago. Since then, I've seen five or six, typically filed by bloggers and activists.

Arkansas has one of the most far-reaching freedom of information laws in America. Any non-exempt documentation of a school function is subject to the law, and there is no time limit for how far back in history a request can be made, as long as the record exists in storage or on electronic devices. If it has to do with school business, then it's FOI-able. And that includes whatever you send using that little computer you carry around in your pocket.



by **Jay Bequette**
ASBA General Counsel

FOIA makes it possible for people with bad intentions to really mess with a school. They can flood the district with requests that tie up staff members for days. School districts have three days to produce any document that doesn't have an exemption, and there aren't many of those. The one thing that makes it easier is that you don't have to create a document that doesn't exist or compile information. Just give them what they ask for, but you've got to give them all of it.

Here's how crazy things have gotten. Under the law, districts can charge for the cost of producing a document, but not for the labor. One district was charging 15 cents per page, which seems reasonable. But a serial FOIA requester didn't think so. He used the law to request the district's printer records, determined that it only cost 6 cents per

copy to produce them, and then sued over that.

Given all of these potential legal headaches, school board members might be tempted to wish Arkansas' Freedom of Information Act never existed. But keep in mind its purpose. FOIA enables members of the media and average citizens to shine a light on all levels of Arkansas government. It makes it harder for elected officials to hide their activities and steal our tax dollars. Without it, policymakers could perform the public's business behind closed doors knowing the citizens wouldn't have access to the records they produced. Yes, innocent school officials can be caught up in the law. But sometimes school officials are guilty, and they can be caught up in it, too. It's no surprise, then, that Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller, who signed FOIA into law, called it one of his greatest achievements as he left office in 1971.

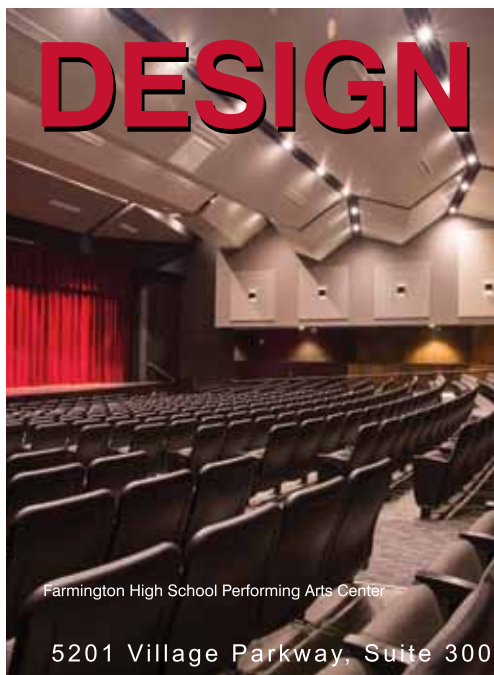
So I encourage you as school board members to treat FOIA with the respect and the admiration it deserves. Fear it, but be glad it's there.

And the rule of thumb remains: Any time you post on social media or send an email, text or letter, make sure you wouldn't mind seeing it above the fold on the front page of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

Because that's where it could end up.

DESIGN

that inspires community



Farmington High School Performing Arts Center

5201 Village Parkway, Suite 300



Ozark Junior High Performing Arts Center

Hight Jackson
ASSOCIATES

| Rogers, Arkansas 72758 | (479) 464-4965 | www.hjarch.com



MANILA HIGH SCHOOL
Manila School District

CONSTRUCTION | INDUSTRIAL | CIVIL | ENVIRONMENTAL | SPECIALTY

WE BUILD PLACES TO TEACH AND LEARN

When it came time to construct the new Manila High School, the district contracted Nabholz to keep the millage-funded project on budget and on schedule. Now Manila High School is a point of pride for students and community members alike.

At Nabholz, the places that matter to you matter to us.

1.877.NABHOLZ | www.nabholz.com

