

Nevada Association of School Boards News Update-July 2009



Post Office Box 14855
Reno, NV 89507
Phone: 775/443-5988 Fax: 775/324-5579

Supporting Success for All Students through Local School Board Leadership



A Message from NASB's President



I want to take this opportunity to thank each school board member who took the time to communicate with legislators during the 2009 Legislative Session. The telephone calls you made and the e-mails you sent to legislators had an impact on the process and the decisions made. Several members of the Executive Committee deserve our special thanks. Carolyn Edwards [NASB Legislative Chair, Clark] spent hours reading bills, talking with the Executive Director about policy considerations and strategies, and testifying on behalf of the Association. Sharla Hales [NASB Immediate Past President, Douglas] also spent hours reviewing legislative proposals, meeting with the Executive Director to lobby legislators about various issues, and testifying on behalf of NASB. Their contributions will impact school boards across the State in the present and into the future by improving legislation before it was enacted and keeping some proposals from moving forward. [It is my understanding that this means either working with a committee chair to keep a bill "in the drawer" or "killing" a bill by some other means.] A number of school board members attended legislative hearings throughout the Session. My appreciation also goes to each of you—you know who you are.

Your board should have received the document prepared by our Executive Director about legislation enacted during the Session that impacts K-12 public education in one way or another. If you did not receive this summary document, it is available on the Association website www.nvasb.org in the Advocacy section. I know that we are all grateful to Dotty for her work throughout the Session and especially for the time spent to develop this document for our use. Her understanding of the legislative process and personal

contacts with legislators greatly benefited NASB. She kept us informed through **Legislative Links** and other messages, helping us remain aware and involved throughout the Session.

Moving on to an issue of importance for all school board members, one of the first things that I learned as a new school board member is that curriculum is at the heart of education. It is comprised of the substance of daily classroom lessons, the skills that students master, and the integration of planned academics that, taken together, make up the instructional program. Curriculum is directly linked to student achievement. Therefore, an effective school board contributes toward student achievement by ensuring that curriculum is developed and reviewed regularly.

Several Nevada school districts pride themselves on a rigorous, relevant curriculum and are committed to continuous improvement in this area. Here are some of the key ingredients for effective curriculum planning school boards in these districts share:

Adopt a board policy on curriculum development and review.

Part of effective governance is ensuring that key policies are in place to direct the actions of school administration and staff. Policy should be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary. Adopted board policy serves as the foundation for building additional curriculum guidelines.

Develop a policy to set up a team.

Some school boards have established policies to direct the development of a Curriculum Leadership Team, including administrators and staff from various subject areas and grade levels. Policies that establish subcommittees may also be in place to assist with specific curricular tasks. A well-established team is committed to curriculum development and review on a regular basis, particular when new, daunting curriculum projects are initiated, such as restructuring for a new intermediate school or implementation of full-day kindergarten. This team assists with planning, development, and review in all curriculum areas.

Develop a policy for a comprehensive curriculum plan and review cycle.

Establishing a curriculum review cycle ensures equal treatment of all subjects and grade levels. It is also important that the policy maintain flexibility about the cycle to accommodate for trends in a particular field or changes in regulations. A policy that promotes a well-designed curriculum plan is, however, more than just a review cycle. The policy may include guidelines or frameworks for general curriculum review and enhancement, staff development and curriculum writing activities, technology integration, and

Nevada Association of School Boards News Update-July 2009

infusion of other areas important to the board and community. Finally, a policy that promotes a well-developed curriculum plan ensures consideration of financial resource allocation along with a timeline.

Establish a policy about measuring the impact.

Curriculum drives and is driven by student achievement. Student assessment data should be gathered for the school board and reviewed in order for the board to effectively evaluate and consider additional policy about other curriculum initiatives. Data reviewed by the board may include results from state and locally developed assessments as well as other measures available. The district's accountability report is a good place for the board to begin to measure the impact of curriculum policies already in place.

Notify constituents.

Disseminating information to the entire school community about policies that are related to curriculum development, assessment, and review promotes the exchange of knowledge and ideas. This may, in turn, lead to discussion at the board level about other policy initiatives and greater support for existing programs.

Our role as school board members must include policy development for effective curriculum and instruction so that together we promote overall student achievement. Particularly during these difficult and challenging economic times, we must move out of budget crisis mode and into consideration of effective policies that will ensure that each of our schools provides maximum opportunities for student learning.

Irene Chachas

NASB President 775/293-1622



News from the Elko County School District: "Shape Up the Nation" Program

In February 2009, the Elko County School District Board of Trustees approved a proposal by the District Wellness Committee to participate in the "Shape Up the Nation" program.

"Shape Up the Nation" uses teamwork and accountability to help employees succeed. Healthier employees mean (1) fewer medical claims; (2) reduced absenteeism; (3) higher productivity; (4) increased retention; (5) fewer worker compensation claims; and (6) less long-term disability.

The program is a 12-week team competition designed to create a culture change through teamwork, competition, inclusion, healthy lifestyle, and education. It is an inclusive program in that every employee may participate, regardless of their current level of fitness.

Competition categories include exercise hours, weight loss, and pedometer steps. Participants report their progress and view team standings online bi-weekly. No one but the employee has access to his/her statistics.

Each school site was eligible to form a team. All auxiliary services (Central Office, Special Services, Transportation, Operations, Technicians, etc.) formed one team. The cost to participate was \$30. All employees who successfully complete the 12 week program received a \$15 refund. Members on the winning team received a full refund of their \$30 entry fee. The District's Third-Party Administrator, Wells Fargo Financial Services, offered to pay for the winning team's reimbursements.

The program attracted 413 participants, who are currently in their fifth of six rounds. After eight weeks of competition participants have made significant healthy choices. The average participant has lost 5.7 pounds, exercised for 1,716 minutes (27 per day), and walked 457,213 steps (7,257 per day). Together, participants have lost 1,385.5 pounds, exercised for 521,581 minutes, and walked 147,679,831 steps.

The Shape Up the Nation program has not only resulted in tangible results, but has improved the attitude of participants. When a break is needed, it is not uncommon to see colleagues walking around the track for 10 or 15 minutes. A friendly competition between schools is in existence, and employees who have had little in common are discussing their participation in the healthy initiative.

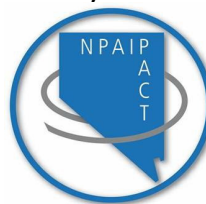
Time will tell if the Elko County School District experiences a return on its investment in terms of reduced health costs. In the meantime, the initiative has been a positive, morale boosting initiative in an otherwise difficult economic climate. [Special appreciation to Beth Kern, Grant Writer/Manager/Public Information Officer, Elko County School District, for providing this information]

Special Thanks to NASB's Corporate Friends, including

Connect-ED®



The Grow Network



Office DEPOT

Taking Care of Business

Nevada Association of School Boards News Update-July 2009



School Security Breaches on the Rise: Evidence of More Physical and Network Security Breaches Challenge District Leaders

Increases in physical and network security breaches among K-12 school districts are hampering schools' efforts to improve their overall security, according to the third annual School Safety Index, a survey of more than 400 K-12 district IT and security directors conducted by CDW-G. The survey measures 10 indicators and four "contra-indicators" and sets a national benchmark that gauges the current state of school security.

It found that in the last 12 months, 55 percent of districts reported experiencing an IT breach, including unauthorized user access, hacking, or a virus. Sixty-seven percent experienced a physical breach, such as an unauthorized person in the school building or vandalism.

Despite increases in the number of reported security breaches, three-quarters of survey respondents rated their cyber and physical security measures as adequate.

Most IT breaches reported in the survey originated internally--41 percent from students and 22 percent from staff or employees. Districts reported that physical security breaches are caused by unidentified persons 42 percent of the time and by students 37 percent of the time.

And remaining unchanged for the third year in a row are districts' top IT and physical security barriers: lack of funding, too few staff resources, and the need for more security tools.

CDW-G conducted this year's survey with the goal of understanding not only what tools schools are using, but how they are implementing those tools and how school leaders view the state of school security today, said Bob Kirby, vice president of K-12 education for CDW-G.

"Districts reported gains in important areas such as securing buildings and networks, but many are missing the opportunity to counter increased breaches by sharing best practices with other districts and engaging district administrators regularly on security priorities and investments," Kirby said.

The 2009 School Safety Index found that, on a scale of zero to 100 (where zero indicates the lowest security level and 100 indicates the highest), the national cyber security average is 22.2. That's down from 38.6 in last year's survey. Eighty-eight percent of responding districts are using wireless networks, and 92 percent are using some type of encryption to protect data.

Sixty-five percent of schools that do not currently have wireless networks are considering or will implement one within the next year. Nearly all districts have acceptable use policies (AUP), which govern how school networks are used, but only 40 percent of districts actively enforce those policies. Forty percent said they spend only four hours or less per month reviewing questionable internet activity.

Measured on the same zero to 100 scale, the physical security average on this year's security index is 32.2. That's down from 44.7 in last year's survey. Security-camera use increased from 70 percent in 2008 to 79 percent in 2009. But half of districts surveyed reported using cameras to monitor only outside areas.

Thirty-six percent of districts let local emergency response personnel view camera footage in real time, and 24 percent are planning or implementing this capability in the next 12 months.

Emergency communications methods are on the rise, with 70 percent of districts reporting that they use a mass notification system for real-time safety communications, up from 45 percent in 2008. Almost half--46 percent--of districts that do not currently have a mass notification system are considering implementing one in the next year.

"School safety is top of mind for school board members, administrators, teachers, and parents--as well as students," Kirby said. While schools are taking more steps to secure their campuses and their computer networks, threats are increasing at the same time, and school leaders must be aware of that, Kirby added.

And one district can be another district's biggest help: Sharing advice and successful security best practices can help districts prioritize their needs and make the most of stretched budgets, he said. [From an article in *eSchool News*, June 2009]

Nevada Association of School Boards News Update-July 2009

Develop New Skills and Strategies for Focusing on Student Achievement with Professional Development at the NASB Conference—Network with Other School Board Members—Learn to Work Together More Effectively



Reno—
Airport Plaza Hotel & Conference Center
November 19-22, 2009

Room Rates for Reservations Made
before October 15:
November 19 (\$69)
November 20-22 (\$74)

Make your reservations now by calling
(775) 348-6370 or (800) 648-3525

Bullying: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is school bullying?

A. Bullying occurs when a person is subjected to abusive actions repeatedly over time. Bullying may be direct or indirect. Direct bullying can include hitting, tripping, verbal threats, name calling, racial slurs, insults, demanding money or property, stabbing, choking, burning and shooting. Indirect bullying may be less obvious, but it can include rejecting, isolating or excluding someone, humiliating someone or manipulating relationships, sending hurtful or threatening e-mail or notes, blackmailing or posing dangerous dares, and taunting, degrading or otherwise humiliating a target on a Web site.

Q. Do both boys and girls bully?

A. Yes. But both boys and girls are capable of using both direct and indirect methods.

Q. What are the consequences of bullying?

A. A target of bullying can feel persecuted and fearful. Feelings of anger, anxiety and frustration can lead to mood swings, withdrawal from family and friends, an inability to concentrate, even depression. Students who fear bullying

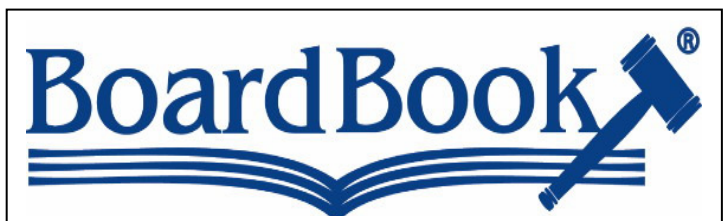
can develop poor school attendance or discipline problems or even become bullies themselves. In more severe situations, targets may become violent or suicidal.

Bullies who do not experience intervention or appropriate support are likely to engage in other antisocial or even criminal behavior. Research from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, a program of the U.S. Department of Justice, shows that 60 percent of males who bully in grades 6-9 are convicted of at least one crime as adults, compared with 23 percent of males who do not bully.

Bystanders to bullying events may come to believe that bullying is inevitable and acceptable—a rite of passage—and that adults are powerless to prevent it. Some bystanders may join in with the bully; others fear becoming a target themselves.

Q. What can schools do about bullying?

A. There are many programs that aim to stop bullying; however, philosophical and practical differences exist among them as to how best to approach this all-too-common problem. One major dispute concerns whether to empower students to interact with bullies on behalf of a student who is being victimized: Some plans agree with this approach and laud it as critical, while others disagree and think adults (teachers, administrators, and others) are the appropriate responders. Administrators and school board members should oversee careful research and take into account their particular set of circumstances before deciding what methodology is likely to work best for their schools. [From an article appearing in *California Schools*, Spring 2009, a periodic publication of the California School Boards Association]



Quick, Easy Board Meeting Packet Preparation

Preparing for board meetings is labor-intensive, time-consuming work: compiling and distributing meeting notices, gathering support materials and publishing agenda packets. BoardBook®, a proven online application, makes the job easier.

Save time while increasing productivity

Compile and distribute meeting notices electronically

Gather support materials more efficiently

Publish agenda packets and minutes online

Create a searchable Web-based archive

Find out what BoardBook® can do for you at

www.boardbook.org