



Finding Answers

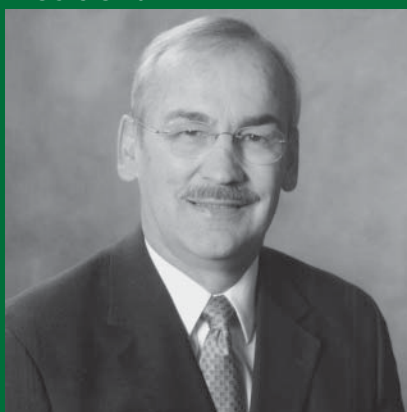
ANNUAL REPORT
2005

Executive Message

Focused on Continuous Improvement



Don Young
President



Wayne Lueders
Executive Director

The Associated School Boards of South Dakota is moving forward. For the past year and a half, ASBSD has been asking, and finding answers to, questions that enable your association to reposition itself to better serve our members.

In 2005, your ASBSD Board of Directors revisited ASBSD's mission, vision and belief statements. By injecting words like advocacy, student achievement, leadership and unity into your association's guiding statements, the ASBSD Board has charted a new and exciting course for your school board association.

With the arrival of the adequacy study, the education community now has a powerful tool to guide a review of South Dakota's school finance system. With more than two-thirds of South Dakota's school districts financially contributing to the cause, ASBSD is proud to share such a significant milestone with our membership.

Answers found within the adequacy study also worked to fortify the South Dakota Alliance for Education. As an Alliance, education advocacy groups moved the debate on adequate education funding. The Alliance's influence was a driving force behind the Legislature approving the single largest increase in education funding since 1995. Your school board association continues to play a key role in strengthening the Alliance and communicating the Alliance's messages to the education community, the media and the public.

At the 2005 ASBSD and SASD Annual Joint Convention, school board members and administrators caught their first glimpse of the Lighthouse Study. The landmark research effort carries an empowering message that illuminates the school board's leadership role in raising student achievement.

ASBSD has also engaged the membership in a dialogue about ASBSD's governance structure. Last October, ASBSD started a new series of regional meetings to allow the ASBSD membership a forum to provide feedback on how your association can better align itself to meet future challenges facing South Dakota school boards.

As you make your way through ASBSD's first published annual report, you will read more about the answers we have found over the past year and a half. This report expands on some of the major developments that have taken place over the past year rather than simply listing all the services our members are used to receiving. You'll also read some news stories that catch ASBSD in action.

It's important to acknowledge, though, that Finding Answers is as much a commentary on the past as it is on the future. Finding Answers isn't just about celebrating accomplishments – it's about a pledge to continually improve in order to best fulfill our mission and move towards our vision.

To find answers, you have to ask the right questions. As your association moves into long-range strategic planning, we want to make sure our members help us ask the right questions and continue to provide feedback. Together, we can build ASBSD into a stronger, more responsive organization focused on raising student achievement.

In 2005, your school board association answered the **big** questions. What do we believe? Why do we exist? Where do we want to go? The process started with a member-audience driven assessment of the status-quo and the potential of your school board association. With that in hand, the ASBSD Board of Directors set out to define a shared purpose between your association and local school boards. As ASBSD Past President Joanne Groves said in the 2005 State of the Association Address, "To continually move forward, some organizations may have to reinvent themselves. This year, ASBSD has been doing just that. "

vision

Associated School Boards of South Dakota is the unifying voice for school boards and public education, creating a vision of excellence and equity for every child while leading the state in advocating for raising student achievement.

mission

The mission of Associated School Boards of South Dakota is to provide leadership in promoting excellence in school board governance and to advocate for public education.

beliefs

- All children can learn.
- Every student has a right to a holistic high-quality public education.
- Public education is essential for a free, self-governing society.
- Local control is vital for effective and efficient school board governance.
- The responsibility of providing adequate and equitable funding for public school students rests with the state of South Dakota.

ASBSD Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Don Young, President
 LeRoy Hellwig, 1st Vice-President
 Duane Alm, 2nd Vice-President
 Joanne Groves, Past President
 Wayne Lueders, Executive Director

CENTRAL REGION

Orland Geigle, Pollock
 Theresa Hoarty,
 Wessington Springs
 Susan Knippling, Chamberlain
 Joanne Groves, Huron

NORTHEAST REGION

Krysti Mikkonen, Frederick Area
 Dawn Baird, Redfield
 LeRoy Hellwig, Sisseton
 Duane Alm, Aberdeen

SOUTHEAST REGION

Peter Preheim, Marion
 Tom Tyrrell, Garretson
 Sue Christensen, Beresford
 Patricia Simmons,
 Brandon Valley
 Sheri Meister, Sioux Falls

WESTERN REGION

Susan Humiston, Edgemont
 Kim Richards, Newell
 Don Young, Custer
 Troy Heinert, Todd County
 Dave Janak, Rapid City

GOAL ONE

Inspire and equip school board members and superintendents to become leaders of public education to improve student achievement.

Board members walked out of the 2005 convention inspired by the Lighthouse Study. A passion for and understanding of the school board's role in raising student achievement is echoed by a new board development policy, which lays the framework for future board training and certification programs. ASBSD continues to provide the services the membership has come to expect, including seminars, workshops and board training sessions. Responding to your feedback, ASBSD is working to provide a comprehensive line of Policy Services. The first offering, the Policy Matters newsletter, is already making an impact on how local boards develop and adopt district policy.

GOAL TWO

Build the capacity of the staff to deliver services necessary to meet the goals of the association (enhance current tools available - i.e. e-mail, web site, Bulletin.).

We've adopted a modern logo, infusing elements of our mission and vision into a new identity. We've made changes to the Bulletin, making our flagship publication more timely and approachable. We've also launched a new ASBSD.org. By developing a framework that allows us to easily update ASBSD.org's content, your association now has a powerful, flexible communications tool. Faulkton Area Superintendent Joel Price says "the web page is much more user friendly and I can honestly say that during the past [legislative] session, I checked it morning and afternoon for the latest hot scoop from the Hill."

GOAL THREE

Implement a broad-based advocacy program to provide a unifying voice for public education.

By facilitating meetings and strategic sessions, your association was a leader in establishing and maintaining the South Dakota Alliance for Education. ASBSD created the Alliance web site, authored news releases and worked with the media to publicize adequacy study results. ASBSD also established the Legislative Action Network to empower board members to advocate at the local level. Madison Central School Board President Kelly Johnson said LAN Dispatch was "helpful in sifting through what needs to be addressed and what doesn't, thereby allowing me to be in touch with my legislators in a timely and more effective manner."

GOAL FOUR

Align the ASBSD governance structure to best serve the needs of its members while fulfilling the association's mission and vision.

ASBSD examined your association's regional structure, delegate assembly and election and resolution processes. The most important step was opening the discussion to the membership by gathering information at the 2005 Delegate Assembly and the brand new ASBSD Region Meetings. The membership expressed a need for increased contact with their region directors and a more representative structure that enables regions to gather, discuss issues and develop as board members. The ASBSD Board of Directors and ASBSD staff are drafting a proposal to be presented at the summer Delegate Assembly.

Adequacy study provides long-awaited answer

Each discussion on increased school funding started, and in many respects ended, with one question – how much do you need? In 2005, the South Dakota education community took a step forward in finding a solution to South Dakota's school funding challenges.

With the adequacy study, we have an answer. And we found it together.

From design to the details, your school board association was a driving force behind the adequacy study.

The ASBSD Board of Directors made a commitment to fund the study, ultimately contributing \$27,500 to the project.

During the 2005 Spring Legislative Area Meetings, we toured the state to educate South Dakota school districts about adequacy studies – their purpose, concepts and methodologies. When ASBSD asked for your financial support, 125 South Dakota school districts pledged funds. Your ASBSD Board of Directors, responding to the overwhelming support, made a commitment to fund the remaining \$27,500 of the \$155,000 project.

But your association's commitment to the adequacy study didn't end with a financial contribution.

With the preliminary results in hand, ASBSD simultaneously launched sdallianceforeducation.org and began working with the media to produce positive, accurate coverage of the adequacy study. At the fall legislative area meetings, we carried the news around the state.

While your school board association was instrumental in providing the media with information, the concept of adequate education funding soon took a life of its own. Before long, adequacy was the subject of editorials, letters to the editor and in-depth news packages.

ASBSD also worked alongside members of the Alliance to create a bill for legislators to act on during the 2006 session. We brought John Myers in again in January, this time to address nearly half of the South Dakota Legislature. By scheduling the event to coincide with ASBSD Legislative Day, school board members and superintendents were able to get one final question-and-answer period before interacting with their legislators.

Your school board association continues to show leadership in supporting the adequacy study. The Alliance has renewed its commitment to using the adequacy study to bring about positive change. In April, your association arranged for John Myers to deliver yet another presentation on the adequacy study, this time to the Department of Education's State Aid Study Task Force.

ASBSD recognizes that budget constraints remain a chief concern for South Dakota school districts. Approaching the problem together, with a research-based study defining our needs, will continue to be one of ASBSD's goals.

District seeks powerful vision

The Aberdeen school board and school administrators continued to work Wednesday night on fashioning new vision and mission statements with some power and punch.

Such statements for school districts must be felt in the mind and the heart if they are to make a difference, said Wayne Lueders, executive director of the Associated School Boards of South Dakota. He is leading the Aberdeen group through the process of redefining vision and mission.

And heartfelt vision statements must concentrate on students, Lueders said. "Focus is critical," he said.

He pointed to some relatively disadvantaged districts in the nation with high student achievement, even though their students come from lower socio-economic levels.

"Districts that beat the odds do so because they focus on student achievement," he said.

Many school boards think their main role is to set policy, Lueders said. That's short-sighted because boards can and should play a role in establishing an infectious, passionate attitude toward education, he said.

Districts have the best student achievement when boards and administrators focus on students, not policies, he said.

About 20 participated in the exercise in Aberdeen on Wednesday night, including most principals and board members. The ongoing process is expected to result in revised vision/mission statements for the Aberdeen district.

Reprinted from the April 27, 2006, Aberdeen American News article by Russ Keen.

Parker, Marion districts may join

Argus Leader reporter Monica LeBelle chronicles another way ASBSD helps districts face emerging issues.

Reprinted from the April 20, 2006, Argus Leader.

The Parker and Marion school boards met for the first time Wednesday night to discuss the possibility of consolidating districts.

But the one who did most of the talking wasn't from either of the school boards.

Hank Kusters, assistant executive director of Associated School Boards of South Dakota, stood before crowded bleachers in Parker School's gymnasium. He outlined

to Parker and Marion residents what could happen if the districts merged.

"The kids will do fine. It's us," Kusters said, pointing to himself as he talked about the memories adults in the towns have for each school.

Kusters has been behind other consolidations in South Dakota. And more could come, he said. As expenses rise and enrollments decline in small towns, schools must raise taxes, slash budgets or consolidate.

"We have to keep an open eye to everything," said Joel Bialas, Marion School Board president. The district has 228 students and 42 employees.

Parker board member Jim VanDeRostyne had similar thoughts. His district has 409 students and 64 employees.

"We're just trying to get together and work things out," he said. "Maybe provide better programs for

the kids."

The way Kusters explained it to the Parker gym crowd, both school boards have their ears to the train tracks and they know a locomotive is coming - so they're warning the community.

"They're smart. They're doing work for your kids," Kusters told them. "They are looking at options. So don't be hard on them."

Kusters said how many and which teachers could be cut in a consolidation would be up to the school board.

"That new board (formed by Marion and Parker) will have tough decisions to make. No doubt about it," Kusters said.

"Is everybody going to be happy? I can guarantee you no."

ASBSD has omitted portions of this article to allow for the space provided in this annual report.

Meeting needs while staying competitive.

ASBSD Protective Trust Management Service takes a proactive approach to reducing insurance costs.

ASBSD Assistant Executive Director Malcolm McKillop continues to focus on building insurance programs that minimize cost.

McKillop believes, though, that some creative decisions in other areas will make a significant impact on pool members.

Together with Avera Research Institute, McKillop arranged for a pilot program to explore non-evasive weight management procedures.

"The goal is to provide a solution that will help people manage their weight without having to resort to surgery," McKillop said. "Initial results have been very positive."

While the final report isn't ready yet, McKillop believes the success of the pilot project will translate to a program that will benefit individuals that struggle with their weight.

The program builds on continuing initiatives aimed at prevention, including the health screenings that are established for pool members.

McKillop also believes an arrangement to streamline flu shot availability will calm frustrations. "We're working with the health industry to work out a cost-sharing approach," McKillop said. "Instead of waiting for vaccine to come through, pool members will be able to go anywhere the shots are available."

McKillop has also taken a proactive approach in the property/liability area by exploring the relationship be-

tween sound district policy and the costs of property/liability coverage.

"We've found that a current, comprehensive policy manual leads to savings for most school districts," McKillop said.

To help districts take advantage of the savings, McKillop has worked with ASBSD Director of Legal Services Bill Engberg to arrange for members of the property/liability pools to have a review of their policy manuals conducted.

"This is a two-tiered benefit," McKillop says. "It will help keep insurance costs down, and move policy and governance discussions forward."

McKillop feels the creative, proactive approach will lead increased value for pool members. "When insurance is concerned, it's much more efficient to be proactive, rather than reactive," he said.

Audits, annual reports provide answers

While the reasoning behind doing each differs, ASBSD Executive Director Wayne Lueders said timing the release of audit information and the annual report is a good fit.

"From a member standpoint, the two concepts are linked," Lueders said. "Providing a financial report is one thing, but we also need to share how ASBSD's resources are being used to address member priorities."

ASBSD Chief Financial Officer William Lynch said conducting audits was mostly about having a constructive management tool, but the in-depth analysis of association finances by a third party produces information stamped with a higher level of reliability – something that members expect.

"This is something I would have liked to receive when I was a member of ASBSD," Lynch said, thinking back to his time as a business manager for the Hot Springs School District. "Making this document available to the entire membership is a positive step."

From an audit standpoint, Lynch said that members should feel good about ASBSD's financial position. According to the auditor's opinion letter, ASBSD's financial statements "present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Associated School Boards of South Dakota, Inc. as of June 30, 2005, and the changes in net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended."

A change our auditor's corporate structure prevented ASBSD from printing the full auditor's opinion. Contact ASBSD to review the full audit.

ASBSD SERVICES AT A GLANCE

ADVOCACY

ASBSD advocates for public education at the state level. We represent your beliefs and priorities and ensure lawmakers have the information they need to make decisions.

COMMUNICATIONS

ASBSD provides news, information and analysis of both the state and national education environment through the Bulletin, ASBSD.org and other targeted communications. Your association also works as a source of information for the media.

CONSULTING

ASBSD staff provides advice and information over the phone and via e-mail on a daily basis. By request, ASBSD meets with districts on a variety of issues. ASBSD's

experience in school board leadership, effective board relationships, school finance, school law, insurance and communications is at your disposal.

CONVENTIONS, MEETINGS and SEMINARS

ASBSD travels around the state offering board member orientation programs, legislative meetings, school law seminars, negotiations workshops, election workshops, region meetings and the annual joint convention.

LEGAL SERVICES

ASBSD's general counsel is available in an advisory capacity. From negotiations and labor issues to inquiries about policy, ASBSD has the expertise on hand.

PROTECTIVE TRUST MANAGEMENT

ASBSD administers three insurance pools that help districts keep insurance costs low while providing the best possible coverage for their district and staff.

PUBLICATIONS

Our publications provide detail on: the board's role, school elections, the role of the board president, reorganization planning, and school facilities planning. ASBSD members also receive a calendar with important dates and the Education Directory.

RECOGNITION

Yearly awards recognize student achievements, community involvement and school board leadership.

SOUTH DAKOTA TEACHER PLACEMENT CENTER

ASBSD runs the South Dakota Teacher Placement Center, a web-based system that makes filling staff positions easier.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCHES

Through an agreement with a professional search firm, ASBSD helps districts find a quality chief administrator.



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