

Why Attend?

Building your boardmanship skills is well worth the time and money—now you can help others understand why.

The most important benefit of attending the Annual CABE/CAPSS Convention is the valuable information you take home to your community. The ideas and strategies you learn through networking with fellow board members and superintendents, attending clinic sessions, workshops, roundtables, speakers, and exhibitors can be considered back home in your own district.

Show your community how this Convention benefits the children of your public schools. School board members should promote the understanding that public money will go farther if school board members are well informed. Decisions you make about school policy, personnel, finance, curriculum, and communications can be expensive and time consuming if you are merely reinventing the wheel. Mistakes cost time and dollars — resources your district cannot afford to waste.

Receiving good ideas and information about programs and activities already implemented elsewhere can help you move ahead in a much more effective and cost-efficient way.

You can help the public and news media understand why participation in board member development programs is essential, how the school district benefits from what is learned, and why attendance at these programs is not only legitimate but a sound investment for the district. You take your responsibilities as school board members seriously; let your community know!

The following communications practices and procedures can strengthen your relationship with the community and news media:

Before the Convention

- ☞ Make a public announcement at a board meeting that representatives from your district will attend. Indicate who will attend, the purpose and the value of their participation. Prepare a press release to coincide with this public announcement. Incorporate basic information about the program and your district participation.
- ☞ Answer factually and promptly any inquiries about the upcoming Convention. All inquiries should be channeled for response to one official spokesperson — usually the board chair or superintendent.
- ☞ Review the meeting program and determine which sessions, discussions, and activities will directly benefit your school district. Prepare to explain your choices.
- ☞ Designate an attending representative to prepare a written or verbal summary report to the entire board following the Convention.

During the Convention

- ☞ List specific questions you want answered during the sessions. If the speakers don't satisfy your needs, ask questions during or after the presentation. Take notes on each session.

- ☞ Collect material to share with board members who did not attend, including available speech texts that have relevance to your school district, literature from exhibits on applicable education products and services, and other materials such as reports, studies, or reprints.
- ☞ Get acquainted and talk informally with other attendees during breaks, receptions, and other social events. You can gain a great deal by networking with colleagues from districts confronting the same challenges that you face.

After the Convention

- ☞ Prepare a news release for distribution as soon as possible after your return. It should include the success of the Convention, its overall value to the school district and local community, local school district representatives who attended, and the education topics discussed. Include quotes by your attendees on how the Convention related to your school board's programs and goals.
- ☞ At a board meeting, share the highlights of the report and your own observations and impressions. If you discovered that your district is more successful than others in a given area of activity, point this out and compliment the staff and board.
- ☞ Be available for response to media inquiries, interview requests, and other matters relating to the Convention. Be prepared, informed, and direct in your response.
- ☞ Explain the benefits and return on investment for Convention participation. School governance is a huge and complex responsibility. Training school board members to be effective leaders and decision makers is an educational investment that benefits the entire community.
- ☞ Be positive and well-informed about the Convention programming and its importance to the local school district. School board members, chosen by the community to set policy for a complex school system, must have access to the best and most current information if they are to serve the students and community effectively.