



CABE's Annual March to the Capitol as part of Day on the Hill.

CABE 2014-15 Annual Report

A summary of this report was published in the September 2015 CABE Journal. You may access it online at http://issuu.com/cabepublications/docs/2015_september_journal_for_printing

**Introduction:
It's Your
Association—
Get Involved!**

This year, CABE continued its progress in helping Boards become more efficient and effective. This is due to the hard work of our CABE Board of Directors and Staff, working to address the needs of our member boards and those equally hard-working member boards which support this relationship.

Our aim is always to continuously strengthen these relationships, which translates into more success at the State, regional and local levels.

We continue to work closely with various coalitions and partnerships, which have resulted in more access to legislators and the Governor's staff and greater visibility, both at the Capitol and in the media.

We also continued our partnership with the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE), particularly with our emphasis on the need for student growth, through the Light-house Project, our work with school governance

councils and workshops which highlighted each board's critical role in increasing student achievement. As our members began to implement the new Common Core State Standards, we published articles on the issues facing districts and spoke about the Standards at a number of forums.

We also worked hard on the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) as it wrestled with issues of timing of the use of Smarter Balance testing and other concerns around professional educators' evaluations. We helped ensure that the concerns of school boards, together with superintendents and principals were taken into account.

We were also actively involved with the National School Boards Association, including presenting workshops at its Annual Conference, having Immediate Past President Lydia Tedone elected to the NSBA Board of Directors,

Advocacy: Supporting School Boards at the Legislature, State Board and Congress

Patrice McCarthy serving on the Council of School Attorneys' Board of Directors, Robert Rader on the Liaison Committee (representing state school boards association executive directors) and developing a paper representing all states' executive directors on the *Future of*

School Boards.

We again urge all board members to be involved with the work we do. Don't wait for someone else to take the lead – we need every board member to be involved with school board's one statewide association!

CABE's positions on a broad range of local, state and federal issues are adopted each year at the Delegate Assembly. The State Relations Committee then develops *CABE's Legislative Priorities*, and Board Members and Staff implement the advocacy agenda. CABE was involved in an unprecedented number of discussions with legislative leaders and the Governor's office, and partnered with numerous other organizations to promote public education. Highlights of CABE's advocacy efforts were:

- Relentless efforts to maintain current levels of education funding, including maintaining the student transportation grants;
- Participation in meetings with legislators around the state. Board members gave legislators factual and anecdotal information on issues to be debated in the General Assembly.
- CABE staff reviewed all pending legislation, monitored, provided testimony and

lobbied those with an impact on education. The focus of CABE's legislative efforts centered on increasing flexibility for school districts, defeating numerous new mandates, and working with other organizations on issues of mutual interest.

- A successful *Day on the Hill* program, which included the participation

of many high school students and school business officials.

- The use of the *Advocacy Action Center*, which makes it easier for board members to communicate with their legislators and to access more information on pending legislation. During the Session emails were sent out on a regular basis to all members who requested the most current legislative information.
- Participation in and monitoring of numerous task forces, including those addressing school security, student assessments, the achievement gap, Municipal Opportunities for Regional Efficiencies, implementation of high school reform, and teacher and administrator evaluation.

Federal Relations Program

Our Federal Relations Committee lobbied the Connecticut Congressional delegation on several key issues: the reauthorization of ESEA, school safety and security, modifying federal special education requirements, limiting the US Department of Education authority, and recognizing the responsibilities of local school board governance.

Legal Issues

Over the last year, CABE's attorneys have responded to hundreds of requests from board members and superintendents asking for individual assistance on legal issues involving student discipline, teacher tenure, contract issues, personnel practices, freedom of information, parliamentary procedure, meeting procedures, grievances, referenda, special education and other issues.

Other legal services to school districts included: workshops for board members and other organizations on such issues as referenda, freedom of information, collective bargaining, student discipline, board roles and responsibilities,



Connecticut delegation at the Federal Relations Network Conference in Washington, D.C.

Policy Services:
**Helping
Boards of
Education
Lead Their
Districts**

parliamentary procedure, Common Core and teacher evaluation. CABE also participates as *amicus curiae* in cases of statewide impact.

In the last year, we've conducted several workshops on teacher evaluation and student achievement, as well as CABE's annual Labor Relations and Legal Issues workshops.

In addition to legal issues, CABE has also been collecting and distributing information on district budgets each season.

Policy Highlights

Twenty-six issues of the email newsletter, *Policy Highlights*, were distributed on an every-other-week basis to board members and superintendents, highlighting current educational topics with policy implications. Throughout, the major focus remained on issues pertaining to student achievement.

Policy Requests and/or Samples

Approximately 600 requests for policy information and/or sample policies from member districts were addressed, usually on the same day the request was received. The website-based *Core Policy Manual* continues to receive a great number of "hits" for sample policies in addition to the district manuals that have been placed on line through the *CABE Connecticut Online Policy Service (C.O.P.S.)*. In addition, 27 districts were under contract for *Customized Policy Services* during the year for the review and development of new district policy manuals or updates to selected portions of the manual.

Customized Policy Manuals

Six districts entered into contracts for customized policy manual development. A new manual was completed for one district. Four additional districts have new manuals close to completion.

Policy Update Service

One hundred and three districts subscribed to the *Policy Update Service* publication. Subscribing districts received four mailings which reflected timely policy issues, including the need for new and/or revised policy topics based upon legislative action, judicial rulings or contemporary policy issues, especially in the areas

Negotiations and Labor Issues

The report formats for the salary and benefit information of superintendent, administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and custodians are designed to be more user-friendly. Many individual data reports were also provided upon request to assist individual boards with their negotiations. Data and surveys are also available online to members at the CABE website.

of technology, health, student discipline and personnel issues.

CABE Policy Reference Core Manual

The *Manual*, containing approximately 600 sample policies and regulations, was continuously revised throughout the year. Moreover, new policy topics were added. It is easily "searchable" and remains accessible for CABE members on the CABE website in a multi-searchable user-friendly format.

Policy Audit Service

Eight districts had audits completed of their existing policy manuals. This service provides the district with a report on the strengths and weaknesses of their existing manual with recommendations to update the manual.

Custom Policy Update Service

Twenty districts subscribed to the *Custom Policy Update Service*. In this service, CABE assumes the responsibility for updating the district's existing policy manual. Major focus was placed on providing needed policies, administrative regulations and information. Topics included safety and security, bullying, technology, student health issues, student-staff relationships, graduation requirements, school calendar, student discipline and various personnel issues.

Connecticut Online Policy Service (C.O.P.S.)

Thirty-six districts subscribed to the *Connecticut Online Policy Service (C.O.P.S.)*. Districts appreciate that their manuals are easily accessible and searchable online and are kept current through CABE.

E-Services: Providing Up-to-Date Information to Boards of Education

Field Services: Helping Boards of Education Become More Effective

Communications and Technology

The Association continues to work on improving communications with our membership through a Facebook page. If you have a Facebook account you can join CAFE www.facebook.com/ConnecticutAssociationBoardsEducation. We also have a Twitter account you can follow @CTAssocBdsOfEd.

Board Chair Listserv

CAFE has seen a very successful continuation of the *Board Chair listserv*. It has provided board chairs with a new means of communicating ideas and concerns with each other and CAFE. Topics of discussion and sometimes friendly debate have included special education, budget processes and budget developments.

- **CAFE Website** — (www.cafe.org) – The CAFE website, “powered” by finalsite, keeps board members and the general public up-to-date about various services and information provided by the Association. Through our website, members have access to: policies and regulations from the CAFE Core Policy Manual; The *CAFE Journal*; superintendent/administrator data; a NCLB Resource Page; and much more.
- **Webinars** – CAFE has continued using webinars to provide timely information to more people. Some of these are presented live and others are recorded and placed on the CAFE website for review at our members convenience. To see our growing

Lighthouse Project

Our partnership with the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) continues to be highly successful. Funded by a grant from SDE; CAFE and SDE personnel have helped a number of districts improve student achievement through more effective board leadership. Lighthouse trainers have been working with a cohort involving four other states and ten Connecticut school districts.

Media Assistance for Member Districts

CAFE continues to offer this service to mem-



CAFE offers webinars on a variety of topics. They are archived on our website.

selection of Webinars, visit our website and click on Podcast/webinars from our Education tab.

- **CAFE Email Services** – We provide timely emails so our members receive information on areas of interest with no additional membership fee. By providing us with an email address members receive: Advocacy, Policy, Program and Labor Relations Highlights and the weekly (biweekly during July and August) e-newsletter, *What's Going on at CAFE*.

CAFE-Meeting

This program allows your central office to create and deliver board packets in a paperless environment. CAFE-Meeting saves districts time and money, and allows board members easier access to data before and during meetings. As of July 30, we have 19 districts enrolled.

bers who need the services of a communications experts:

- To improve internal communications with political leaders, parents, students and taxpayers.
- For member boards to get help in times of crisis communications.
- To learn about timing your message to rally support for your budget.
- To help member boards get the message out on the good programs in their district.

This work, in conjunction with Baldwin Media, will continue over the next year.

Professional Development: Strengthening Board of Education Leadership

Leadership Institute

CABE's Leadership Institute graduated its tenth class, having now served over 95 participants. The participants were very enthusiastic about their experiences and urged CABE to continue this program, as well as the opportunity for graduates to meet during CABE's Summer Leadership Conference to continue to develop their leadership skills. It is jointly sponsored by CABE and the State Department of Education. Participants met for three five-hour sessions, including a webinar. Through facilitated discussion and outside presenters, they had the opportunity to discuss in depth a variety of education issues.

Board Member Academy

Throughout the past year, CABE has continued its commitment to be the NUMBER ONE Connecticut provider school board of professional development, by providing high quality training for local and regional school board members across Connecticut.

By offering workshops, hot topic workshops, an annual Convention, area meetings, individual workshops, the *CABE Journal* and other publications, CABE presents board members and administrators with many ways to increase their knowledge and skills.

Board Member Academy Certification

To encourage board members' participation in professional development, CABE's Board Member Academy provides points for service, leading to two awards: *Certificated Board of Education Member (CBEM)*, which requires 20 credits and *Master Board of Education Member (MBEM)*, which requires 20 additional credits.

The Academy addresses the continuing educational needs of school board members by focusing on core areas of board responsibilities.

Individual Board Workshops

CABE staff continues to regularly meet with boards of education as they desire to provide professional development. Staff continues to facilitate customized workshops from basic roles and responsibilities, the superintendent search process, goal setting and full-day board retreats.



2015 CABE Leadership Institute graduating class.

Statewide Workshops

Attendance at our workshops in 2014-15 was approximately 654.

Workshop topics included: candidate briefings, new board member, negotiations, legal issues, leadership, policy, and an update on what happened at the 2015 Connecticut General Assembly. Several of these workshops were sponsored in part by the State Department of Education.

CABE/CAPSS Convention

The Convention, *Public Education in 2027: Courageous Leadership Teams* was held on November 14 and 15, 2014.

- Attendance at the Convention was 686 board members, superintendents, business managers, administrators, education officials and invited guests
- General session speakers included *Pasi Sahlberg*, *Rick Mastracchio*, Connecticut Education Commissioner *Stefan Pryor*, and *Bill Daggett*.
- Workshops included: Schools and Public Safety, School Climate, Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members and Superintendents, Leadership Coaching, Working with Municipal Officials to Achieve a Common Goal, Mental Health Needs of Students, and Supporting Technology Initiatives in Your District.
- Members of the State Board of Education participated in a lively discussion with the attendees
- Approximately 56 exhibitors of education-related goods and services participated in the exhibit hall.

Other Services:

The Critical Work of Boards of Education

CABE Search Services

As part of CABE's ongoing effort to provide local boards of education with the resources they need to carry out their most important responsibilities, we continue to strengthen our Search Services program. *Jacqueline Jacoby*, Senior Search Consultant and Associate Consultants *Paul Gagliarducci*, *Mary Broderick*, and *Robert King* are uniquely qualified to assist boards in recruiting and retaining key personnel such as superintendents, principals and other critical members of your district staff.

CABE Search Services has performed or is conducting 11 searches at this time.

School Governance Councils

CABE continues to provide training for those School Governance Councils that request our support. We provided training for School Governance Councils in two districts and are glad to help out when other members desire the training for their councils.

Finance and Support

The Association ended the fiscal year in a positive financial situation. CABE has continued to ensure its resources are consistent with the needs of our members.

We want to remind you, if you would like to use the Rovins Conference Room, please let us know. We don't charge for use of the room and it's a great place for a meeting or a retreat. We want our building to be seen by board members as *your* building!

Unemployment Cost Control

Our Unemployment Cost Control Program membership totaled 22 districts in 2014-15. This program, which is administered by Corporate Cost Control, offers consultation, claims processing and full administration of all unemployment compensation claims for a district.

Business Travel Insurance

CABE contracts to provide Business Travel Insurance to all school board members whose boards are CABE members. This policy provides \$25,000 of Accidental Death coverage and is free of charge to CABE members. Coverage is for any school board member traveling on school board business.

Publications

The CABE Journal was published eleven times this year, in both paper and electronic forms.

The Journal's primary audience is school

board members, superintendents and district administrators throughout the state. The *Journal* is also sent to state and federal legislators, other education organizations (local and national) and others who have an interest in keeping up-to-date with education issues in our state.

The *Model Student Parent/Guardian Handbook* was revised to reflect current issues and legislative changes.

CABE Board Recognition Awards:

- **CABE Board Leadership Award Level One** – In 2014-15, 12 boards of education received the Board Leadership Award for their work on their leadership skills. Boards need to fulfill 22 of 34 Level One criteria to earn this Award.
- **CABE Board of Distinction Award Level Two** – In 2014-15, 13 boards of education received the Board of Distinction Award. This Award was granted to boards who have achieved Level One at least twice in the prior four years and meet the eligibility criteria.

Student Leadership Awards – The CABE Student Leadership Awards program continues to be very popular, with 444 students from 109 CABE member school districts earning the award. This program enables each high school and middle school in member districts to nominate a boy and a girl to be honored for their leadership qualities.

Awards of Excellence for Educational Communications – This year CABE presented 33 Awards of Excellence in Educational Communications and 73 Honorable Mentions.

Affiliate Membership Program

- **Business Affiliates**
CABE invites private sector companies, institutions and firms with an interest in public education, to become our partners and to show their support. The program grew to 28 partners in 2014-2015. Membership consisted of: 1 Diamond, 5 Gold, 8 Silver, 8 Bronze Plus and 11 Bronze Members.
- **Education Affiliates** – This program helps provide education-related organizations with a closer relationship with CABE. In 2014-2015, we had 12 Education Affiliates.

A current list of Business and Education Affiliate members can be found on page 3 of the September 2015 CABE Journal.