



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

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## **PRESIDENT COMMENTARY**

### ***CABE's Professional Development: You Can't Afford NOT to Participate***

**By Robert Mitchell, President, CABE**

Boards of education expect district staff to engage in professional development; board members should have the same expectation for themselves. CABE has long been a provider of quality professional development for school board members. This month I want to focus on how your Association provides professional development to help board members work as effectively as possible.

There are a number of opportunities to benefit from the knowledge and experience of both the CABE staff – many of whom are recognized for their expertise in education leadership – and other experts with a number of backgrounds. Every year CABE puts together a series of programs to help boards and superintendents develop their skills.

CABE provides a number of statewide professional development opportunities, including “Hot Topics” which are two- to three-hour breakfast meetings on a specific topic, statewide sessions such as Collective Bargaining and Legal Issues and the CABE Leadership Institute which brings a smaller group together for several four-hour meetings to participate in more in-depth conversations. The annual CABE/CAPSS Convention, the premier education professional development program in Connecticut, will be held November 16-17 at the Mystic Marriott Hotel in Groton.

These programs offer the opportunity to not only learn from the planned program, but also to network with and learn from your colleagues across the state. Hearing the experiences of board members beyond your community is of great value.

CABE offers the Board Member Academy as a way for you to be recognized for your participation in professional development. Board members earn credits by participating in CABE programs. To achieve the first level, *Certificated Board of Education Member, a board member must accumulate at least 20 credits in core areas. After earning an additional 20 credits, board members achieve the Master Board of Education Member (MBEM) level.* More information is available on the CABE website at [www.cabe.org](http://www.cabe.org).

Board members and superintendents receive flyers and emails announcing CABE programs. I recommend you attend those that interest you and especially those that will stretch you. The calendar on the CABE website is kept up-to-date and you can learn about upcoming programs.

Many of these events programs a nominal registration fee to cover expenses. Your board might consider participating in the CABE Express program. For one fee, your entire board of education, superintendent and up to five central office administrators can attend most CABE programs at no additional cost (except meals).

When boards want specific training for their full board, CABE's Field Service programs are an important benefit to CABE members. Most of the individual board training available to CABE member boards of education is a service included in your district's dues. There are usually no additional costs for member districts.

CABE Field Service trainers, some of CABE's Senior Staff, include former board of education members, attorneys and policy experts. Several of our trainers are recognized nationally for their expertise in board leadership and have presented at national conferences.

Some of the key areas with which CABE trainers work with boards include:

- Board/Superintendent roles and responsibilities
- Board/Superintendent relationship
- Board self-evaluation
- Superintendent evaluation
- District and Board goal setting
- Community engagement
- Effective use of data to make decisions
- Effective meetings/governance issues
- Mission/Vision statements.

CABE staff also facilitate annual board retreats and work with boards on a variety of issues.

CABE's Senior Staff is willing to work with boards in areas that don't fit into a specific category. If your board needs assistance, they will gladly talk with you to determine the most effective solution.

CABE is one of several states that participates in the multi-state Lighthouse Project. This program is designed to take research on effective board governance that leads to improved



student achievement and help boards learn to apply that information to better focus the board's work. Participating in the Lighthouse Project involves a commitment of time from a board of education, but the results show the district's improvement. Over 20 districts have participated in the Lighthouse Project at one level or another.

I recommend that you consider actively participating in CABE professional development. In participating, I have gained knowledge and have met people from across the State who also see the value of leading a learning organization by participating in learning activities. You can't afford NOT to participate!