2020-2021 Early Career Superintendents Academy Sessions

❖ Tuesday July 21, 2020  8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

8:30 a.m.  Introduction by Jon Bales, WASDA Executive Director

8:45 a.m. Political Lessons: Overview of Legislative Issues Related to the COVID 19 Health Crisis and Resulting State Financial Shortfall – John Forrester, SAA

John Forrester will share his insights regarding the conversations and ‘leanings’ of the state legislature. What are the lessons learned, and what are the implications of what is occurring in the state legislature that are likely to play out with local school boards and community in the coming months?

9:15 a.m. School Budget Essentials in the New Environment – Baird School Finance Team

Does your 2020-21 district budget reflect the most recent actions of Congress and the state legislature? Have you prepared for multiple possible budget scenarios? Given the current state of affairs, what are the most financially responsible actions to take to position your district for the short term as well as long-term financial health? The School Finance Team from Robert W. Baird Co. will provide an update regarding key school finance variables superintendents must monitor and address, and provide recommendations to promote strong financial stewardship.

10:15 a.m. Effective ‘Back to School’ Communications in the COVID Environment – Joe Donovan, The Donovan Group

Back to School communications for the 2020-21 school year will be different than ever before. New health and safety procedures, social distancing, personnel issues, potential staggered start and end times or alternate days, bussing logistics, procedures if more active cases are identified….the list seems endless. Joe Donovan, from the Donovan Group, will offer recommendations for communication planning and messaging for school reopening.

11:15 a.m. General Q&A: Superintendent Interactions

11:30 a.m. Adjourn

❖ Wednesday July 22, 2020  8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

8:30 a.m.  Introduction by Jon Bales, WASDA Executive Director

8:45 a.m. Navigating Legal Challenges Associated with Returning to School – Attorney Mike Julka, Boardman Clark

Districts are facing significant legal issues associated with reopening school including personnel contractual matters, bus contracts, liability concerns, etc. Attorney Julka will review statutory parameters and provide guidance regarding areas superintendents need to be prepared to address.

10:15 a.m. Back-to-School Preparation: Q&A with Leaders “In the Know” – Jon Bales, Mike Clark, Joe Donovan, Mike Julka

What dilemmas are you facing as you prepare for the start of school? Bring your questions for discussion, analysis and planning by the team of leaders who are most ‘in the know.’

11:30 a.m. Adjourn
Wednesday August 5, 2020  9:15-10:15  (8:30 - 11:30 a.m. First Year Superintendents Workshop)

9:15 a.m.  ‘Reading’ and Understanding the ‘Tea Leaves’ and Getting in Front of the Politics Associated with Opening Schools This Year – Joe Donovan, The Donovan Group

Understanding community opinions and expectations is fundamental to shaping decisions and messaging communications for staff and community. This pandemic year makes getting communications right more important than ever. Joe Donovan will share strategies to identify key opinion leaders and proactively seek opinions and expectations to navigate the politics in your school community.

Thursday August 6, 2020  8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

8:30 a.m.  Preventing a Crisis: Strategies to Promote Communications and Alignment Between the Board and Superintendent – Jon Bales/Kathleen Cooke

We can predict what is likely to happen if the superintendent makes a decision, as example, to require all staff and students to wear masks when they return to school in the fall, but the school board doesn’t know anything about it, and doesn’t support the idea. It is essential that the superintendent and school board are aligned about fundamental principles and core values, as well as the parameters that guide decision-making. This is especially important to navigate the challenges associated with reopening school, or closing for a resurgence of the COVID19 virus. Learn key strategies for communication, promoting focus, and gaining alignment between the board and superintendent.

9:00 a.m.  What are the Legal Implications of ‘Safe and Healthful’ Facilities in the COVID Environment? – Attorney Kirk Strang, Strang, Patteson, Renning, Lewis & Lacy, s.c.

The term “Safe and healthful facilities” means many things to people in the COVID environment. What do superintendents need to be prepared to address? What can you do and say if, as example…..staff don’t want to return to work because they think the environment isn’t safe? Can you require people to have their temperature taken? What are your legal responsibilities, and your liabilities? Attorney Strang will provide guidance for frequently asked staff and parent’s questions/attitudes/issues related to ‘safe and healthful facilities.’ Your questions can be posted during the session to be addressed by the presenter.

10:00 a.m. Implementing New Title IX Regulations – Attorney Kirk Strang, Strang, Patteson, Renning, Lewis & Lacy, s.c.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, in education programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. The new regulations, which become effective August 14, 2020, have significant implications for K-12 school district policies and procedures governing sexual harassment investigations. This session will review the provisions superintendents need to ensure compliance with the new federal guidelines.

11:15 a.m. General Q&A: Back to School Preparations and First Year Superintendent Needs

11:30 a.m. Adjourn
Wednesday August 12, 2020  10:00 – 10:40 a.m.  (10:00-11:30 a.m. First Year Superintendents Workshop)

10:00 a.m. Enhancing Virtual Education: Preparing for the Inevitable or Finding the Opportunities? – Roger Rindo, Oconomowoc Area School District and Greg Kabara, Nicolet High School District

Virtual learning experiences during the COVID school closing last spring, varied greatly. Research indicates that the average student could be 7 months behind, while disadvantaged students could have a 10 month gap as result of their COVID-based virtual learning experience. Many schools will use virtual or blended learning models to reopen school in September. Health experts predict that a second wave of COVID may return in the fall which could necessitate further reliance on technology to serve students. How can virtual education be upgraded, or enhanced as a companion piece to face-to-face instruction, so that its strengths can be maximized for the greater benefit of students, and acceptance by staff? Learn strategies from two districts that have successfully harnessed virtual opportunities by prioritizing professional development of staff, to promote student results while building a positive reputation in the school community.

Wednesday August 19, 2020  10:45 – 11:30 a.m.  (10:00 - 11:30 a.m. First Year Superintendents Workshop)

10:45 a.m. Finalize Your Back to School Preparations: Q&A addressing Legal, Finance, Political and Communications Questions - Kirk Strang, Mike Clark, Jon Bales and Joe Donovan

This is your opportunity to seek wisdom and guidance for the legal, finance, political and communication issues that are standing between you and opening school. Bring your questions and concerns for discussion and problem solving.

11:30 a.m. Adjourn

Wednesday August 26, 2020  10:00-10:45 a.m.  (10:00 - 11:30 a.m. First Year Superintendents Workshop)

10:00 a.m. Board and Superintendent Roles and Responsibilities – Attorney Bob Butler, WASB

In times of crisis, why do some organizations thrive, while others digress into conflict? Bob Butler will share from the WASB point of view, strategies that superintendents and school board presidents can implement to promote clarity of roles for peak performance. Discussion will include importance of the board and superintendent operating collaboratively, from their respective ‘lanes’ during times of crisis, and strategies that can be used to achieve this. This session will also provide an overview to the basics of school and governmental law related to school board responsibilities including the school board and board member power and duties, respective roles of the board and the district administrator, conflicts of interest and board member liabilities.

10:45 a.m. Defining Superintendent Evaluation – Jon Bales, WASDA
**Wednesday September 9, 2020  10:00 – 11:00 a.m.**  (10:00 - 11:30 a.m. First Year Superintendents Academy)

**10:00 a.m.  Five Levers to Improve Learning** – Dr. Jim Rickabaugh, Consultant

Dr. Rickabaugh will provide a powerful framework to ensure schools are engaged in the work most likely to develop capacity of the organization and result in improved student learning. The discussion will include applications of the framework in this pandemic year and other contextual forces in play now and in the coming months.

**Thursday October 1, 2020  10:30-11:30 a.m.**  (10:00 - 11:30 a.m. First Year Superintendents Academy)

**10:30 a.m.  Is Your Team Prepared to Communicate and Defuse a Crisis?** – Joe Donovan, Donovan Group

Effective crisis communications and management are essential to your leadership. Learn principles of communication and crisis management that will promote clarity while preventing or minimizing the damage a crisis can inflict on the organization, its stakeholders and its reputation.

**Wednesday October 7, 2020  10:00 – 11:30 a.m.**

**10:00 a.m.  The Superintendent’s Role in Ensuring Equity and Achievement for All** – Presenters TBD

The research is clear. Specific superintendent actions can positively influence student achievement. How can research be translated into everyday leadership behaviors to increase student achievement and ensure equitable achievement opportunities for every learner in your district? Learn from the successes of experienced superintendents who have worked collaboratively with their school community to make significant changes resulting in dramatic gains in achievement for all learners.

**Wednesday November 4, 2020  10:30 - 11:30 a.m.**

**10:00 a.m.  Financial Management Brief: Direct and Indirect Financial Impacts of Employee Handbooks** – Baird Financial Team

How often have you heard the phrase, ‘this doesn’t cost the district anything’ as people reference staff handbook items? The Baird Financial Services Team will provide an eye-opening view of the direct and indirect costs of common employee handbook items.

**10:30 a.m.  Executive Presence** – Kathleen Cooke, Michael Gallagher and Joe Donovan

What is Executive Presence? How does it contribute to your leadership influence? How can you develop great executive presence? Learn how to harness specific attributes and actions to increase your leadership image and results.
10:00 a.m. Financial Management Brief: Communicating Taxpayer Impact of Property Tax Bills – Baird Financial Team

Property tax bills will be sent in December. This session with the Baird Financial Team will help you anticipate stakeholder questions and concerns and develop meaningful and understandable communications regarding the impact of the property tax bill for your school community as well as individual taxpayers.

10:00 a.m. Using Long-range Planning to Support Short Term Budget Planning – Baird Financial Team

It’s time to begin planning your district budget for 2021-22. What is the best strategy for your team’s work including aspects of student achievement and equity? Members of the Baird Financial team will help you to initiate a thoughtful, transparent budget planning and development process. (Bring your customized financial analytics to reference during the activity.)

10:00 a.m. Financial Management Brief: Determining Staffing Needs and Salary Adjustments – Baird Financial Team

What factors need to be considered for staffing and salary adjustments as you develop the draft 2021-22 budget? How should your planning lead into board direction and upcoming negotiations? The Baird Financial Team will provide steps for projecting adequate staffing levels and salary adjustments.

Sample Second Semester Sessions

How to Communicate your Accomplishments and Results to the Board during Your Evaluation

Are you prepared with the proper documents or artifacts to illustrate your accomplishments? Do your documents align with the goals and expectations of the board? Evaluation sessions are typically nerve-wracking for the board president as well as the superintendent. Learn tips to effectively prepare for your evaluation and communicate your work and results to the school board.

Financial Brief: How Student Count Impacts School Funding

Open Enrollment or resident student. Tuition placement for special education services. Tuition waiver. How are categories of enrollment counted and funded? What impact do they have on the budgeting process? The Baird Financial team will clarify what you need to know to develop a realistic budget for 2020-21.


It is a biennial budget year. How will the legislative proposals under consideration affect your district? Members of the Baird Financial Team will help you analyze the impact of state budget proposals so you can effectively communicate with your school board, develop your draft 2021-22 budget, and advocate with your legislators.
Financial Literacy – Debt 101

There are many procedures and statutory provisions relating to bonding and indebtedness. Learn from the experts what superintendents need to know including understanding the debt issuance process, Funds 38 and 39, ENNA filing requirements, the bond rating process role of bond counsel and other related topics.

Providing Leadership When Expectations Conflict

Successful leaders understand that expectations of the staff, community or board may conflict. Rather than feeling caught in the middle, they employ strategies to identify and build common ground and ownership for direction while serving as a child advocate. Learn tips utilized by experienced leaders who have successfully prevented or navigated conflicting expectations to create a culture of high expectations, transparency and results.

Strategic Communications to Achieve Results

Effective communications don’t happen by chance. They result from deliberate, intentional planning. This session will assist us to understand and apply a communications planning approach to identify communication goals, develop messages, select communication tools, involve stakeholders and assess results. Participants will work with the presenter to apply communications planning concepts for crisis communications. Come prepared to examine your greatest communication challenge in light of the concepts presented.

Leading for Equity: Predictive Modeling to Ensure Success for All

Do you have a sense of urgency and an unwavering focus to ensure equity and close achievement gaps? Learn how achievement gains can be realized by focusing on individual students ‘by name, by face’ through targeted instruction, setting and monitoring key performance objectives and applying predictive modeling to ensure the success of every learner.

Leading with New Eyes: Shifting Mindsets, Disrupting Assumptions, and Creating New Metaphors

Description: The process of transforming a system requires deep reflection, questioning old assumptions on which we have relied, developing new metaphors for the work, and shifting mindsets about what is possible. This session will feature ideas and activities to assist system leaders and stakeholders in transforming their organization by "seeing through new eyes." This interactive session will provide participants with opportunities to engage in activities and reflect on their assumptions, metaphors and mindsets about learning, leading, teaching, and schools.

How Do High Performing Superintendents Approach Legal Issues? – Part I

Description: Complex school legal issues are best resolved by using disciplined, systematic processes of critical thinking and decision making which include appropriately framing the issue, analysis, questioning and evaluating options from various points of view. This session will identify questions high performing superintendents ask as well as the steps and decision points they address when tackling a complex legal issue. Strategies will be presented, then applied, to a real-world problem during a round table case study activity.
Overcoming Challenges and Leveraging Opportunities to Achieve Meaningful Change in Your District Initiatives

Description: A wise superintendent once said, ‘People’s appetite for change is usually greater than their ability to digest it.” This is why there can be ‘push-back’ even when a school board or community has demanded that things must change! Some districts have mastered implementing change and embracing new ideas, with seemingly little opposition. Why the difference? What do they know? How do they do it? High performing leaders think and act differently during change processes using mental paths to discern and forecast possible issues, identify and analyze assumptions, apply leadership theory, and engage community in meaningful ways to develop ownership for decisions and capacity for implementation. This session will review strategies utilized to successfully manage organizational change and provide opportunities for participants to act on and apply them to their own district’s change initiatives.

How Do High Performing Superintendents Approach Legal Issues? – Part II

Description: Hone your critical thinking and decision-making skills as you apply strategies utilized by high performing superintendents to real-world complex school legal issues during this interactive session. Practice anticipating unfolding scenarios and analyzing issues from multiple points of view, learn to identify salient points, material facts and evidence, and select the best possible course of action for complex legal issues.

Finishing the Year Strong and Planning Proactively for the Next Year

The school year is coming to a close. Many accomplishments have been achieved in your first year. But, one good year doesn’t make a good run. Expectations will actually increase if you’ve had a good year. Attention to several tips can help ensure you have a strong finish to your first year and a productive start to your second.