

# THE CORE

California County Boards of Education

## In this issue



## President's message

Juliana Feriani, CCBE President, Tuolumne COE Board Member

It has been a very eventful winter and spring in the CCBE office. CCBE Program Manager, Charlyn Tuter, has been busy scheduling and attending committee meetings for our conference, legislative, policy platform, bylaws, and budget/audit committees. We will be bringing updates about proposed changes as well as our

advocacy efforts, in this and future issues of *The Core*.

One huge project has been completed: our *Guide to Effective Governance* is completely revised, updated, and published. You can find a copy on our website. In the process of revising and updating our guide, we started another project. Our first winter county board governance workshop for first year board members held on March 7 was so successful, we will be holding it in odd-numbered years and advanced board training in even numbered years. Read the new board training article in this issue of *The Core* for more information.

We are still following the theme set in Immediate Past President Heidi Weiland's presidency: Building Bridges. Members of the Executive committee, along with Charlyn, met with CCSESA's executive director, Peter Birdsall and Program Director, Christine Marcellus. We had a very fruitful meeting, pledging to work together on future projects, including training webinars. We also presented them with copies of our revised and updated guide.

Last week, when I was in a meeting with Frank Bigelow, Region 8's state representative, at our Rural School Board Association Meeting, he said something that struck me about legislative advocacy: he cannot be at his most effective unless we all engage in the process. He said we must all speak with a loud voice and be present. We must not talk just to our local representatives and state senators, we must also talk to legislators who do not represent us, but who vote on our issues. It is up to us to get our message heard, our issues discussed, and laws passed that promote and support public education.

Engage; Advocate; Persuade. These three actions can change the future of education in California for our children. ■

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## 2015 Calendar of Events

### May

CCBE Board of Directors Meeting, May 17  
Location: Sacramento

### September

CCBE Fall Conference, September 11-13  
CCBE Board of Directors Meeting, September 11  
CCBE General Membership Meeting, September 12  
Location: Portola Hotel & Spa, Monterey, CA

## County board training opportunities

*Juliana Feriani, CCBE President, Tuolumne Board Member and Heidi Weiland, CCBE Immediate Past President, El Dorado COE Board Member*

For the past year, the CCBE Executive Committee and the Board of Directors have worked on updating our handbook for county board members. Updates included information on LCAP/LCFF laws and applicability, as well as revisions to reporting requirements for the FPPC and conflict of interest laws. As part of that process, we also updated and rescheduled our new board member training to the winter, rather than at our annual conference.

March 7, 2015 was the inauguration date for our updated new board member training. With over 30 participants, including staff members from several county offices of education; trainers Wendy Benkert, Associate Superintendent of Business Services at the Orange County Office of Education and Gayle Garbolino-Mojica, Superintendent of the Placer County Office of Education; and Keith Bray, CSBA General Counsel, the training covered a broad range of topics critical for new board members to perform their duties well. Highlights included Budget and Finance, including the board member's role; LCFF and LCAP; Boardmanship and Board/Superintendent relationships; Charter Schools; Conflicts of Interest; the Ralph M Brown Act; and the appellate duties of the board, including inter-district transfer appeals, expulsion appeals, and charter appeals.

It was a busy and action-packed day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Some of the participants were first-time board members while several others had served two or more terms. The overwhelming responses from the survey was that the board members wanted more training and several participants commented that they wished it could be two days long.

The revised new board member training is just the start of our plans to expand training opportunities for our membership, over and above the training you receive at our annual conference each year in the fall. Next winter, in February or March, we will be holding an advanced board member training; with new board member training held on odd-numbered years and advanced training held in even-numbered years, following election cycles.

Even with all the updates and revisions, this training was built on a solid foundation of past successes. Many of your current and past leaders have worked over the decades to continuously grow and improve trainings and programs to help you develop your knowledge and skills to better serve our students and communities.

All in all, it was a very successful day! We hope to see you at our annual conference September 11-13, 2015, in Monterey, at the beautiful Portola Hotel and Spa and at our Advanced Board Member Training in the winter of 2016. ■

### CCBE Executive Committee & staff

#### Juliana Feriani

*CCBE President | Region 8: Tuolumne COE*

#### Joaquin Rivera

*CCBE President-elect | Region 7: Alameda COE*

#### Amy Christianson

*CCBE Vice President and Editor of CORE  
Region 4: Butte COE*

#### Heidi Weiland

*CCBE Immediate Past President  
Region 6: El Dorado COE*

#### Mike Walsh

*CSBA Director-at-Large, County | Region 4: Butte COE*

#### John McPherson

*CCBE Treasurer | Region 9: Monterey COE*

#### Charlyn Tuter

*Program Manager*

### About CCBE

#### Hours

*Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.*

#### Contact information

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#### Holidays (office closed)

*Jan 1 | New Year's Day  
Jan 19 | Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
Feb 16 | Presidents' Day  
May 25 | Memorial Day  
July 3 | Independence Day Observed  
Sep 7 | Labor Day  
Nov 11 | Veterans Day Observed  
Nov 26 | Thanksgiving Day  
Nov 27 | CCBE Holiday  
Dec 25 | Christmas Day  
Dec 23-31 | CCBE Holiday*

# The not so hidden value of board evaluation

By Mike Walsh, CSBA Director-at-Large, County, Butte COE Board Member

As a member of the CCBE Executive Committee and the CSBA Board of Directors I'm often asked what I do in my spare time. My answer: I run my company. My company's focus is strategic planning and leadership/professional development. The majority of the time when our first-time clients approach us, it's because they are experiencing a pain or a discomfort of some sort amongst the team. In the more than 20 years I've been involved in this line of work, I can honestly say that I've been contacted fewer than five times because the governance team was operating wonderfully. In those cases, the team thought it was important to be proactive so that things continued to operate well.

It reminds me of conversations I've had with my doctor. He has never told me that I should only come to visit if I'm experiencing pain or discomfort. He believes that even though I'm a fairly healthy individual, regular medical check-ups are a great way for me to stay healthy. Monitoring my health on a regular basis is an important part of taking a proactive approach to good health.

Board evaluations can help in exactly the same way. Regular evaluations are a great way to remain a healthy board if you're fortunate enough to serve on one that already operates well. If you're not that fortunate, then the value of board evaluations is pretty easy to understand. It's an opportunity to discover what is causing the pain that exists among the board members. And with the help of technology, it doesn't require the hassle of scheduling an appointment.

So why do so many organizations and boards avoid regular evaluations? For the same reasons that so many people avoid medical check-ups. There's no overwhelming pain that can no longer be ignored, or they're just not sure of the value. In the book, *The Advantage: Why organizational health trumps everything else in business*, author Patrick Lencioni offers a few other reasons. He suggests that there are two requirements for success in business. First, you have to be smart at the work that you do. In the case of a school board, that means understanding subjects like budgets, inter-district policy, programs, and charter school regulations. That's simple, right? Those are examples of some of the tangible conversations that happen at every board meeting. The ability to participate in those conversations and reach sound decisions requires a certain level of "smartness."

The second thing needed for success, he argues, is that the organization has to be healthy. He describes "healthy" as having minimal confusion, high morale, and low turnover. On a school board, that involves the ability to: manage conflict or disagreement, maintain productive relationships with the superintendent and staff, and monitor progress towards goals.

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## Legislative Committee update

The CCBE Legislative Committee tracks state and federal legislation corresponding to the CCBE legislation priorities. The committee takes positions on legislative bills and advocates on behalf of county offices of education and other educational organizations.

Over the course of three months, the committee reviewed 31 pieces of legislation. CCBE's Legislative Committee took similar positions as CSBA on a number of these bills. Please visit the [CCBE website](#) to view the bills and positions the committee took.

CCBE continues to collaborate with CCSESA's legislative committee. As CCBE's representative on this committee, Heidi Weiland has attended CCSESA's face-to-face legislative committee meetings who have taken similar positions as CCBE.

## Nomination period open for CCBE's president-elect, vice president and treasurer

Leaders are wanted to help guide CCBE's future. Nominations for CCBE's 2016 president-elect, vice president and treasurer are being accepted through July 31. Candidates must serve on a CCBE-member county office of education board, and nominations must come from either the governing board of a CCBE-member county office of education or from an individual member of a CCBE-member board. One nomination is required, followed by candidates' own formal declaration of candidacy by July 31. Nominees will be announced by November and the General Membership will elect the officers at its Dec.4 meeting in San Diego. Nomination materials can be located at [www.theccbe.org](http://www.theccbe.org) or contact Charlyn Tuter at [ctuter@csba.org](mailto:ctuter@csba.org).

## The 2015 CCBE Directory is now available to download!

As part of your CCBE membership benefits, a directory, which contains contact information on all county board members, CCBE Board of Directors, CSBA Board of Directors, and CCSESA Board of Directors is updated every year. To download your copy of the 2015 Directory, please visit [CCBE's website](#).



# YouthBuild: A model for culture change

Mike Walsh, CSBA Director-at-Large, County, Butte COE Board Member

I recently read a quote in a design document from the Alabama State Department of Education that said,

*“School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students. But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.”*

## Carnegie Task Force on Education

That has become one of my guiding thoughts as I look at what districts and county offices are doing to educate students. I want to take a few moments to shine a spotlight on one program that I've been fortunate to be involved with over the last two years.

The Kern YouthBuild program has been in operation since 2012 and is partially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Patrick Moore serves as the program manager for the Kern County Office of Education. According to him, since they opened the doors at the Blanton West Campus, they have planned to service 60 disadvantaged youth aged 17 to 22. We provided four cohorts with six months of construction training and allowed individual time as needed for the students to earn their high school diploma.

We have had several partners along the way with the program and each has given life lessons for success. The partnership with DOL and the funds received also came with a youth coach and a Federal Project Officer — both of whom were of great support to the program. According to our Statement of Work, we agreed to establish a certificate/degree, increase literacy/numeracy by one grade level, and reduce recidivism. We also set goals for work readiness skills and leadership skills hence the connection with CASC. (Editorial side-note: The California Association of Student Councils is a leadership organization that I was involved in during my time in high school and an organization that I continue to support in my vocation. CASC asked me to join them in working with YouthBuild. Their model is based on youth teaching youth.)

The population served included but was not limited to; high school dropouts, low income, unemployed, homeless, foster youth, and incarcerated individuals to name a few. With the help of CASC our enrollees have since then become better citizens



of Kern County and have engaged in more successful endeavors for the future. Several of the individuals have completed the requirements for a high school diploma and have received a National Certification in construction. Some of our youth have completed the steps and are now attending Bakersfield Jr. College with various fields of study. We have several participants that are employed as well with Goodwill, Walmart, Ross and TempServ.

The Kern YouthBuild grant will be coming to a close December 2015 and we are anticipating that will meet the requirements of 65 percent with a certificate/degree, and 55 percent increase in literacy/numeracy. With the follow-up from CASC the participants have committed to meeting with our career associate for assistance in job search and enrollment in junior college. As for the future, we look forward to our continued partnership with Kern YouthBuild and CASC. ■

## CCBE Annual Conference

# Modoc County's leadership model

Gary L. Jones, County Superintendent, Modoc County Office of Education

The most satisfying relationships are those built on mutual respect and trust. The Modoc County Board of Education and Modoc County Superintendent of Schools are proud of our commitment to each other and to our respective roles as educational leaders.

Our model of success is directly related to accurate and timely communication. We share pertinent information with each other when issues arise, so that none of us are caught unaware. This is especially important when the communities of our county and school districts face difficult situations or decisions.

## Leading through difficult times

Together, we have faced some tough issues. The most significant problem as community and school leaders caused us to seek assistance from the state's Attorney General, Controller, and Superintendent of Public Instruction. In 2009, our county government had mismanaged their budget and cash flow so badly that they began spending school cash from the pooled assets of the county treasury.

Our collective response was quick, aggressive, and coordinated to guarantee that our fiduciary responsibility to the county office of education and school districts would be respected by county government officials. The support from school district board members and superintendents was unwavering.

Being solution-oriented, we demanded and received changes in how the county treasury managed pooled assets and we modified our cash management practices to protect a significant portion of our assets from future malfeasance or mismanagement. While we were always cognizant of our fiduciary responsibilities, we learned to intently watch the actions of other government agents whose standards are not as high as ours.

## Anticipating the effects of bad practices and policies

In past years, the Modoc County Board of Education and Modoc County Superintendent of Schools have been especially concerned about the billions of dollars of cash deferrals from schools to support the state's general fund. We anticipated and discussed a worsening financial future and how to prepare for the accounting manipulation by the state that mirrored what we had experienced with the Modoc County government's use of school cash.

Consequently, our collective advice was "protect your reserves, protect your cash." As a result, our school systems weathered the storm of the financial downturn as good as and probably better than most.

Now we find ourselves facing a bad state policy, passed without public airing, which constrains local school leaders in their management of reserve levels and undermines their fiscal responsibilities. We are falsely told that reserve levels of six percent are safe and reasonable. Had such a reserve level been in force in

The 2015 CCBE Annual Conference is developing into a fantastic educational and social experience. Capturing one of CCBE President Juliana Feriani's goals, the theme for the conference is Moving Forward Together. The Conference Committee has been working very hard to make sure this conference is the best yet! This year's conference will offer unique opportunities for County Board members to learn about "hot" legislative and policy issues while providing an opportunity to get to know fellow board members from throughout the state. For new board members, the conference will be a delightful chance to reach out and network with fellow board members and to share tips and best practices.

This year's conference will take place at the Portola Hotel in Monterey. To make your hotel reservations, please visit <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/ccbecsbafall2015> and mention you are with the CCBE Annual Conference to receive the conference group rate. Registration for the conference will open in May. Keep an eye for the announcement or visit our website for further details about the conference and registration information.

The conference will kick-off on Friday, Sept. 11 in the afternoon with two board engagement workshops followed by a President's Reception that will allow board members to interact and get to know each other. The strands for the Saturday workshops include: Boardmanship, Governance Roles and Responsibilities, and Programs and Services Provided by County Offices of Education.

The conference rate for members includes workshop materials and most meals. Do not miss what promises to be great conference that will help you become a better board member. See you in Monterey Sept. 11-13!

prior years, our county's schools would be suffering today.

As a board and county superintendent, we have no expectation that state leaders will be trustworthy in managing the state's future budgets or maintaining proper reserves for the benefit of schools. Recent history indicates that state leaders disregard cyclical economic weaknesses and practice political expediency over sound fiscal policy. Therefore, we review our revenues, expenses, and cash on a monthly basis and monitor trends that could affect school funds.

### Training supports continuous improvement

So much of our attention has been focused on school finances over the last several years that we were pleased to see the changes brought about by the Local Control Funding Formula and Local Control and Accountability Plans. These changes have required a new knowledge base; a knowledge base on students and learning, programs and services to districts, and professional development.

The Modoc County Board of Education and Modoc County Superintendent of Schools recognize that training must sup-

port continuous improvement. We believe this, not only for staff, but for ourselves. So, while we offer bi-annual professional development training to school district boards that cover topics of governance, board/superintendent relationships, school finance, strategic planning, etc., we see such training as a minimum standard.

There is a clear understanding on the part of the county board members and the county superintendent that the Modoc County Board of Education will function most effectively when members possess the knowledge to ask the right questions of the administrators of the Modoc County Office of Education.

Therefore, we have components of each board agenda that teach about specific school programs, their design, benefit to students, compliance issues, oversight requirements, and funding. In addition, state and federal policy proposals and their potential effect on local schools are a regular topic of focus.

The best training model is one that encompasses accurate and timely communication. We learn together. We seek solutions to problems in a complementary way. Our model directly relates to our commitment to grow in our respective roles as educational leaders. ■

#### *The not so hidden value of board evaluation, continued from page 3*

Over the years, it's only when the pain in the healthy areas becomes too large to ignore that I receive phone calls. This is unfortunate, since it's always easier to build on good health habits, than it is to replace poor health habits.

Lencioni goes on to explain that in his experience he has never thought an organization wasn't smart enough to succeed. He has met a few that the health (culture) of the organization left him concerned for that company's survival. Here's why:

*"An organization that is healthy will inevitably get smarter over time."*

Ask yourself, what are we doing intentionally as a board that will lead to increased organizational health, and smarter decisions as a board? Do we have a plan for our own professional

development and continued learning? Governing boards have a fundamental responsibility to evaluate their effectiveness. If you're not sure where to start, then I would suggest taking a close look at the County Board Self-evaluation tool designed by CCBE. It's a great tool that looks at both smart and healthy areas of a county board. Some of the areas are board unity, communication, board development, fiscal and judicial responsibilities, and advocacy.

I'm not a doctor, even if I did play one in my high school production of MASH. Yet sometimes I feel like one when I work with non-profit boards. So let me dispense some non-profit board doctoral advice now based on my experience: an ounce of prevention always trumps a pound or two of cure later on. ■