

The Nevada Association of School Boards Presents 2017 Awards and Elects New Officers

On Saturday evening, November 18, at its Annual Conference held in Reno at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa, the Nevada Association of School Boards recognized the achievements and contributions of school board members, teachers, administrators, educational advocates, and others from across the State. In addition, the Association elected new officers for 2017-2018.

2017 Awards and their recipients include:

INNOVATIVE EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

This Award recognizes the invaluable service provided to Nevada's children by those individuals who demonstrate their leadership by promoting and implementing innovative programs designed to improve student achievement.

Don Bland, Health Science and Career Education Program, Pioneer High School, Carson City School District—Nominated by the Carson City School District Board of Trustees

Don Bland is in his second career serving in Pioneer High School, Carson City. He previously worked for a consulting group that specialized in master planning for school districts in California. After that chapter in his life, Mr. Bland began his Nevada teaching in Lyon County where he developed a Gifted and Talented program that benefitted many students attending Lyon schools. Four years ago, Mr. Bland arrived at Pioneer High School as a biology teacher. There he implemented a Health Science Career and Technical Education course. This program has since evolved into a three-year sequence that includes Health Information Management I and II. Mr. Bland has worked with local healthcare companies to get their help in obtaining the most up-to-date software in this field, making Pioneer High School the only school in Nevada to offer electronic recording. Mr. Bland has worked with Physician's Management to begin an internship program for interested students. As a result of the experiences that Mr. Bland has provided students in this health care program, its graduates are able to enter the working world right after graduation with a generous wage of \$18.00 per hour. Graduates are actively recruited by local healthcare companies. Mr. Bland also started a Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) Club. His health students competed in the 2017 State Leadership conference in Reno where they earned both gold and silver medals. As if all of this were not enough, Mr. Bland started a music class that includes beginning and advanced guitar with keyboard and percussion components. He is truly a Renaissance man AND innovative educator—highly respected throughout Carson City School District.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF THE YEAR (2)

This Award category recognizes the invaluable service provided to Nevada's children by professional school administrators. Determinations are based on multiple factors including length of service, school improvement and student achievement, unique contributions, effective professional development strategies for educational staff, innovative and successful practices which have resulted in increased student achievement in the school, district, or state.

***Joseph Uy, Principal, Ferron Elementary School, Clark County School District—
Nominated by the Clark County School District Board of Trustees***

Principal Joseph Uy has created a school culture of achievement and celebration that has squarely placed this incredibly diverse elementary school in Clark County on the Nevada Shining Star School list. Ferron Elementary School earned a four-star rating in 2014. In 2016, Ferron was named a Nevada Highlighted School. Mr. Uy challenges faculty to set aggressive learning goals for their students. He is in every classroom every day providing feedback and support for teachers to become more successful in meeting their students' learning needs. Faculty and staff are recognized publicly and individually for their contributions to accomplishing school goals and for creating a welcoming, respectful, caring environment. Mr. Uy is an active member of an east Las Vega Valley coalition of principals who explore best practices for school improvement. Last summer, the group attended the Harvard University Urban School Leadership Academy. Mr. Uy brought lessons learned from the Leadership Academy to his school and community. This year, Principal Uy has supported the entire District as a recruiter both here and in the Philippines. Because of his efforts Clark County School District was able to fill multiple vacancies with highly qualified teachers.

***Tom Brown, Principal, Galena High School, Washoe County School District—
Nominated by the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees***

Tom Brown began his career for Washoe County School District as a substitute teacher in 1992. Subsequently, he taught math at Galena High School, where he was named assistant principal in 2003 and principal in 2006. During his tenure as principal, Galena High School's graduation rate has risen 13 percentage points, from 73% in 2006 to 89% in 2016. Gaps in achievement among student groups have continued to narrow under his leadership; for example, the graduation rate for Hispanic/Latino students rose from 70% in 2014 to 79% in 2016. Galena High School consistently performs near the top of the District's high schools. Tom works closely with his staff to provide the support and resources every student needs to succeed. Principal Brown is a shining example of the many ways in which cooperation, collaboration, and dedication to student success create a positive environment where students, teachers, and staff members perform to the best of their abilities every day.

DISTRICT LEVEL ADMINISTRATOR IMPACTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

This Award category recognizes the invaluable service provided to Nevada's children by professional school administrators who work at the district office and who impact learning and achievement.

***Noel Morton, School Performance Director—Humboldt County School District—
Nominated by the Humboldt County School District Board of Trustees***

After serving many years in Humboldt County School District as a teacher and administrator known for her strengths in leading school improvement plans, **Noel Morton** was hired as the District's School Performance Director. She was charged with the task of supporting each school as well as the District in the audit process. Mrs. Morton singlehandedly organized and led the District community (from Board members to students) through focus group interviews and survey collection, eventually leading to the development of *School Performance Plans* built on live data and involvement of all stakeholders. Mrs. Morton created a user friendly computer program that uses real time data to track each student's progress through the system. She also

developed an administrative report card to help keep administrators, including herself, accountable for their commitments to continued student success. Mrs. Morton exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding and dedicated leader who believes it is her job to provide the necessary supports for every teacher and administrator to realize Humboldt County School District's vision that ***Every child will graduate: beginning with kindergarten, each will be prepared and confident to succeed.***

SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

This Award category recognizes the invaluable service provided to Nevada's children by employees who often work behind the scenes to impact learning and achievement.

Robin Griffith, Jobs for America's Graduates Coordinator and Educator, White Pine County School District—Nominated by the White Pine County School District Board of Trustees

Robin Griffith has been an educator with the White Pine School District for over twenty-five years. She helped supervise P.E., then moved to White Pine High School as a School to Careers Coordinator and now serves as the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Coordinator. Through these programs, Robin prepares students for the working world. They complete applications, resumes, participate in mock interviews, and prepare their own tax forms and checking account reconciliations. Robin easily makes connections with students and recognizes when students are having difficulties at school and home. She is not afraid to advocate for them with parents, administrators and community members. Robin began helping students who came to school hungry and bullied by providing them with food on her own and a safe haven in her classroom at lunch and during study hours. When this became more than she could handle alone, she reached out to School Board members. This past January, the School Board voted to provide funding from their own salaries each month to help Robin feed these students and even to provide some of them with food for the weekend. Now, her students are making educational advances, graduating and becoming productive citizens rather than worrying where their next meals are coming from or where they can find encouragement.

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR

This Award recognizes the consistent use and development of skills and programs focused on board-superintendent cooperation and teamwork to improve student achievement.

Dr. Dave Jensen, Superintendent, Humboldt County School District—Nominated by the Boards of Trustees from Elko and Humboldt County School Districts

Dr. Dave Jensen, Superintendent of Humboldt County School District, maintains a clear, well-articulated vision for success and combines that with a strong set of values. Student well-being and student achievement are always his top priority. This clarity of purpose and clear focus has influenced the successful development and implementation of multiple programs that have increased student achievement within the district. He works hard to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and that they have opportunities to engage in dialogue with the administration and the Board. He works closely with the Humboldt County School District Board of Trustees to look for ways to improve outcomes and achieve goals. Dr. Jensen also serves as an effective leader at the state level, forging strong relationships with his fellow superintendents as well as other members of the

State Board of Education. He is recognized for his knowledge and experience, and represents the interests of both rural and urban school districts within Nevada in a balanced and skillful manner.

MEDIA AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING EDUCATION REPORTING IN A COUNTY WITH POPULATION BELOW 100,000

This Award recognizes the role of media representatives in print, radio, and television in counties with populations below 100,000 when consistently outstanding reporting occurs and the media representative demonstrates excellence in these areas:

- ✓ *Working to get to know the board president, superintendent, and district communication director, as well as the district's mission, goals, and strategic plan;*
- ✓ *Reporting school news in a fair, accurate, and balanced manner;*
- ✓ *Maintaining a policy of "no surprises" by always giving school officials the opportunity to comment on information to be aired or published;*
- ✓ *Providing a high profile to positive news about school and district accomplishments; and*
- ✓ *Visiting schools.*

Steve Ranson, Lahontan Valley News—Nominated by the Churchill County School District Board of Trustees

A "true friend of education," **Steve Ranson** has built an impressive professional legacy as a journalist, as an English and journalism teacher in Nevada schools, and as a Nevada Army National Guard military journalist. Steve's interest in journalism has been with him since childhood. He was a teenage sportscaster in high school and delivered the weekend news on Reno's Channel 4. After college, while teaching in Wells, Nevada, during the late 1970s, Steve discovered a love for community journalism and began writing articles for the local newspaper. During his 30-year academic career, including 10 years as vice principal at Churchill County Middle School, Steve was always involved in journalism: teaching it during the day and writing articles for the Lahontan Valley Newspaper covering school community news when he wasn't in the classroom. He retired from Churchill County School District in 2005 and went to work full time for the Lahontan Valley Newspaper. In addition to his academic career and his news reporting career, Steve served as a military journalist for the Nevada Army National Guard from 1982 until his retirement as a Lieutenant Colonel in 2009--writing military news from as far away as Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, the Arabian Sea and Southeast Asia. Churchill County School District honored Steve with the Teacher of the Year Award in 1995; the Nevada Press Association named Steve co-journalist of the year in 2012. Churchill County School District is grateful for Steve Ranson's many, many contributions to our community. He is a respected and talented professional.

MEDIA AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING EDUCATION REPORTING IN A COUNTY WITH POPULATION ABOVE 100,000

This Award recognizes the role of media representatives in print, radio, and television in counties with populations above 100,000 when consistently outstanding reporting occurs and the media representative demonstrates excellence in these areas:

- ✓ *Working to get to know the board president, superintendent, and district communication director, as well as the district's mission, goals, and strategic plan;*
- ✓ *Reporting school news in a fair, accurate, and balanced manner;*
- ✓ *Maintaining a policy of "no surprises" by always giving school officials the opportunity to comment on information to be aired or published;*
- ✓ *Providing a high profile to positive news about school and district accomplishments; and*
- ✓ *Visiting schools.*

Brian Loftus, KLAS--Nominated by the Clark County School District Board of Trustees

Brian Loftus is currently a morning anchor for CBS affiliate KLAS in Las Vegas. After earning a Bachelor of Arts in English followed by a Master of Arts in Teaching, Brian spent a number of years teaching and coaching at the middle and high school levels before transitioning into broadcasting. His experience and passion for education is evident in his weekly segment, "What's Cool at School," which features positive school programs and activities around the Las Vegas valley. In highlighting school and district accomplishments, Brian approaches every situation in a professional manner by contacting the appropriate officials ahead of time and tirelessly working to cultivate encouraging stories and relationships with all levels of leadership. With this, he is able to help communicate the accomplishments of the district as a whole. More importantly, Brian's coverage helps to illustrate the Clark County School District's Pledge of Achievement strategic plan and its indicators of student success.

ORGANIZATIONAL FRIEND OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

This Award recognizes the invaluable service provided to Nevada's children by an organization or community group advocating on behalf of K-12 public education.

Save Our Schools Washoe—Nominated by the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees

For decades, Washoe County School District tried to work with the community for a sustainable funding source for the growing repair needs of aging schools and new building needs to relieve overcrowding in our schools. All efforts failed. The District can educate about existing and projected school conditions and capacity; but it cannot raise taxes or fees. A group of community leaders called **Save our Schools (SOS) Washoe**, completely independent of Washoe County School District, put a ballot question on the 2016 general election to fund construction and repair needs for the District. This ballot question, WC-1, would raise sales tax by just more than half of a percent, meaning \$5.40 per \$1,000 purchase. These funds could be used only for construction and repairs. Through an unprecedented grassroots outreach campaign that engaged parents and created strong advocates throughout the county, the WC-1 ballot measure passed with 56.39 percent in a community that had not passed a major tax increase for schools since 1998. Due to the passage of WC-1, Washoe County School District now has a sustainable funding source to repair and renovate existing buildings and build 15 new schools through 2025.

SCHOOL BOARD SECRETARY OF THE YEAR

This Award recognizes the vital role that board secretaries and other support staff play in working behind the scenes with local school board members and superintendents to facilitate board decision-making and activities to improve student achievement, extend family engagement, and enhance community awareness.

Paula Wright, Board Secretary, Humboldt County School District—Nominated by the Humboldt County School District Board of Trustees

The Humboldt County School District Board of Trustees felt blessed to have Mrs. Paula Wright as a member of their team for most of her 29 years with the Humboldt County School District, prior to her retirement the end of the 2016-2017 school year. One essential service Mrs. Wright provided was her historical knowledge. During Board meetings in which a topic of importance was being discussed, Mrs. Wright would frequently reference prior meetings, some as long as 15 or more years ago, and provide insight into prior Board action and discussion. This skill provided an uncanny ability for the Board to weigh prior Board discussions with current needs, ultimately leading to a decision truly in the best interest of students. Mrs. Wright also had a fantastic work ethic accompanied by loyalty and a tremendous dedication to the Humboldt County School District. She worked very well with fellow employees and provided her assistance whenever possible, always with a smile. She will be missed.

DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

This Award recognizes the consistent, effective communication skills demonstrated during meetings of the NASB Board of Directors as well as promotion of leadership skills and strategies for recognizing and rewarding student, administrator, educational staff, school, and district achievement.

Pete Mangum, NASB Director, White Pine County School District—Nominated by the White Pine County School District Board of Trustees

Pete Mangum has worked diligently for three terms as a Trustee for the White Pine County School District including eight years as a Director for the Nevada Association of School Boards. He has been a driving force in the District's school safety initiatives. He attended National School Safety Conferences and worked with Mr. Paul Johnson, the District's Chief Financial Officer, in applying for grants from POOL/PACT to pay for other members of the District to attend. He has worked with administrators, local law enforcement and first responders in staging mock disaster drills (active shooter, earthquake, chemical spill, for instance) in order for them to review and reform the District's safety plan. Mr. Mangum also has worked closely with the JAG students at White Pine High School in developing a food pantry for kids in need—no questions asked. Even though he is in his final months of service as a School Board Trustee, Mr. Mangum remains active, always willing to volunteer, offer support, and be an example to his fellow Board members, district employees, and students of being a life-long learner.

NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

This award recognizes the dedicated service of Nevada's newest school board members. School boards may nominate members in their first term of service.

Katy Simon Holland, Trustee, Washoe County School District—Nominated by the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees

Katy Simon Holland was elected to serve on the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees in November of 2016 and was sworn in as the School Board Vice President January 10, 2017. She brought a wide range of accomplishments to the Board: teacher, small business owner, Washoe County manager, and local government innovation teacher. She oversaw an \$800 million budget with 3,200 employees, earning a 90% voter approval rating, during her time with the County. Trustee Simon has a passion for serving the children and families of Washoe County and being a responsible steward of taxpayer funds. She has shown her commitment to the Board's mission to: ensure annual student academic growth, develop and retain highly effective personnel, engage family and community members, establish a system that is effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable by using meaningful structures and processes, and ensure schools are safe, secure, supportive, and welcoming environments.

VETERAN SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

This award recognizes the dedicated service and leadership of local board members who have served for more than one term.

John Mayer, Trustee—Washoe County School District—Nominated by the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees

A lifelong resident of Sparks, **John Mayer's** career revolved around serving the children of Washoe County in a variety of roles including teacher, coach and principal before retiring from WCSD in 2000. He is a tireless advocate for the well-being of children. Trustee Mayer was instrumental in providing vision to draft the District's Strategic Plan to ensure the District had a clear path to success. As he cleverly noted: "You know, it's like going from here to New York City without a roadmap. If you don't have a strategic plan for a school district for setting your goals and setting how you're going to accomplish those goals, you're in big trouble." Mr. Mayer also serves as a Board Liaison to the Washoe County School District Student Advisory Board, a role that he deeply enjoys as it allows him to listen to the concerns and suggestions of student leaders from district high schools who provide input, ideas, and advocacy to the Board. In addition Trustee Mayer visits each school at least once a year where he enjoys talking with students about what they are learning while encouraging them to study hard, graduate, and follow their dreams.

INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS OF THE YEAR

This award recognizes the consistent use and development of effective boardsmanship skills and acknowledges productive involvement in raising the level of community support for schools and the promotion of leadership and successful practices which improve student achievement while advancing the course of public education in the community, the district, or the state.

Karen Chessell, Douglas County School District—Nominated by the White Pine County School District Board of Trustees

Karen Chessell became a Trustee of the Douglas County School District in January of 2006. She has recognized how important it is to reach all students and to be sure that educators are presenting options and opportunities for all students. She has been very conscientious about Board decisions regarding career pathways and a strong supporter of Douglas County School District's initiatives to open new career pathways and bring Jump Start to the District as an option for early college graduation. At the state level, Karen is a Director on the Nevada Association of School Boards, where she represents her colleagues well. When there are issues which affect the state, Karen seeks input from the Superintendent and fellow Board members so she can engage the Nevada Association of School Board Trustees in good discussions about policies and legislation. White Pine County School District is proud to have nominated Karen Chessell as the Nevada Association of School Boards Individual Member of the Year.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S AWARDS (8)

Members of the NASB Legislative Advisory Committee were recognized for their dedicated work on behalf of students across the State throughout the 2017 Session of the Nevada Legislature:

- ***Bridget Peterson, NASB Legislative Chair—Lyon County School District;***
- ***Wade Poulsen, NASB President—Lincoln County School District;***
- ***Tim Sutton, NASB Director—Nye County School District;***
- ***John Mayer, NASB Director—Washoe County School District;***
- ***Sheri Samson, NASB Director—Mineral County School District;***
- ***Stacie Wilke-McCulloch, NASB President Elect—Carson City School District;***
- ***Bob Burnham, NASB Vice President—Eureka County School District; and***
- ***Erin Cranor, NASB Past President and Former School Board Member—Clark County School District.***

GOVERNANCE TEAM OF THE YEAR

This Award recognizes the vital role of local boards working hand in hand with superintendents and collaborating with district leaders to improve student achievement across all levels.

Carson City School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent Richard Stokes

Carson City School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent Richard Stokes have worked in cooperation and trust to implement a learner-centered instruction practice districtwide that is improving student achievement across all grade levels. In 2012, the Carson City School District received ten million dollars as part of the federal Race-to-the-Top grant. With those monies, the District embarked on an ambitious goal of restructuring and aligning all curriculums at the secondary level. As this grant-funded project wrapped up during the 2016-2017 school year, the District had redesigned and aligned 350 secondary courses and built 3,000 common assessments. Additionally, 100,000 learning targets were developed and tracked by students in real time (ongoing). Included as part of the learner-centered instruction project, all schools established a School Support Team. Carson City students are already seeing benefits from the learner-centered model. The 2016 graduation rates were the highest they have been in years. Another indication that students are learning more is the increase in pass rates across all secondary grades. The learner-centered instruction practice is helping more students achieve competence and mastery; therefore, more students are meeting graduation requirements.

SCHOOL BOARD OF THE YEAR

This Award recognizes the consistent use and development of skills and programs focused on board-superintendent cooperation and teamwork to improve student achievement.

Humboldt County School District Board of Trustees and Superintendent Dr. Dave Jensen

The ***Humboldt County School District Board of Trustees*** has worked collaboratively over the last several years to identify, adapt and adopt best practices. As an example, The Board directed the implementation of community input through a process called *Thought Exchange*. The data collected was used to develop a strategic plan to drive the focus of Humboldt County School District over the next three to five years. Decisions were/are based on an inherent focus on defined goals and objectives based on a commitment to the success of every student in Humboldt County. Under Superintendent Dr. Jensen, selected by the Board of Trustees in 2012 to accomplish the defined goals, graduation rates have increased, plans for improvement have been established for each student who is not currently proficient and learning opportunities for those who are currently demonstrating a high level of achievement have been extended. The Board has consistently provided opportunities for the professional development of teachers, staff and administrators and holds all, including themselves, accountable for reporting on the effectiveness of the training. The Humboldt County School Board also has been instrumental in the building and completion of the two-story, 36,000 square feet, state-of-the-art Boys & Girls Club in Winnemucca.

Additional Presentations and New Officers—

The Association recognized 2016-2017 **President Wade Poulsen** [Lincoln] for his dedicated service to NASB over the course of the last year and for his vision in moving the Association toward greater achievement of its strategic goals.

Nine (9) individuals were recognized for completion of the Certified Public Official Program. Created by Extended Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno, in partnership with the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities, Nevada Association of Counties and Nevada Association of School Boards, the Certified Public Official (CPO) Program is an in-depth series that provides diverse resources for educational and professional development responsive to the changing needs of elected and appointed officials in public office throughout Nevada. In addition to completion of required modules in areas ranging from budgets and ethics to employment law, fifty-two additional units are required in leadership and governance, community development, and other subjects designed to enhance effective governance.

- ◆ Glenda Deputy, Humboldt County School District
- ◆ Chris Garvey, Clark County School District
- ◆ Richard Gent, Churchill County School District
- ◆ Matt Hibbs, White Pine County School District
- ◆ John Mayer, Washoe County School District
- ◆ Wade Poulsen, Lincoln County School District
- ◆ Carmen Schank, Churchill County School District
- ◆ Stacie Wilke-McCulloch, Carson City School District
- ◆ Jeff Zander, Elko County School District

The Association elected new officers for 2017-2018:

President— Stacie Wilke-McCulloch, Carson City School District

President Elect— Bob Burnham, Eureka County School District

Vice President— Bridget Peterson, Lyon County School District

Legislative Chair—Tim Sutton, Nye County School District

For questions, please contact Dr. Dotty Merrill, Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards, 775/443-5988.

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