



CASBO Briefs

August/September, 2011

President's Message

A few thoughts from Jane A. Neel, CASBO's President

Wow! What an exciting, although inconvenient, end to the summer!

I sit in my office, it's Monday, August 29th, and Hurricane Irene has moved on. As I'm sure for many of us, there is no electricity and the ED001 deadline is looming. Could it be possible that the school year starts with the cancellation of the first day of school?

I hope that this message finds everyone back to normal with your home and family, as well as, your school district. As I work with our IT staff coordinating the move of our Business Office server to an area with a generator, I wonder how many of our districts are truly testing our backup and disaster recovery plans this week. Does everyone have a backup plan, and is it working now that you need it?

In my district, we lack a sufficient number of generators to keep essentials up and running. We have refrigerators and freezers full with food with the opening of school just around the corner. The Business Office server is down and we not only have the ED001 deadline; our first payroll for certified staff is only a few days away. The schools still need to be working on student registrations and transportation bus lists.

Perhaps other districts are better prepared, perhaps some are less prepared; one thing that is most important is that our plans need to be reviewed and revised after this unfortunate event, and be fine-tuned for the future.

CASBO has been busy this summer. All the taskforces have been diligently working on our goals outlined in the strategic plan.

Dave Lenihan has been terrific taking the variety of reporters' calls to discuss the impact the Governor's budget has on school districts and what direction the What Will Our Children Lose Coalition is headed.

We have been in contact with Wilkes University to discuss an online Masters Education program for school business managers. Work is ongoing with regard to CASBO's new logo. We look forward to a budget development workshop being coordinated with CAPSS to be held on October 25, 2011 at EASTCONN.

Your CASBO colleagues will also be making presentations at the ASBO Annual Meeting in Seattle. A session on "Bids, RFPs, RFQs: Which, When, How, Why?" will be conducted by Corinne Eisenstein and Wilma Pietro of Meriden Public Schools; and a leadership development track session, "Shining Stars in School Business", will be presented by Corinne and me.

It is a pleasure to see that CASBO members are participating in their organizations, whether they are presenting at ASBO, EASTCONN, or a CASBO workshop; active in the WWOCL Coalition; or part of planning/participating in the Leadership or Mentorship Academy program, all are contributing and working toward achieving our goals and making CASBO the best.

I hope your school year has settled in and I look forward to seeing you at our October Workshop.

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R U Updated?

www.ct-asbo.org

The start of the school year is a great time to make sure that your member profile on the CASBO website is up-to-date. Please take a few moments today to do so. It is so simple:

- >Go to www.ct-asbo.org/login.cfm and input your user name & password
- >Once on your profile, click on View/Edit Profile, just below your name
- >Update the information and be sure to click SAVE

Updating your district information is just as easy, from your profile page:

- >Click on View Organization
- >Once on the district profile, click on View/Edit Profile, just below the name
- >Update the information and again, be sure to click SAVE

Now, how to make use of all of resources on the website:

Enhanced Member Profile: The database maintains and makes available much of the information that is important to you; including salary information for the SBO, director of facilities, and superintendent, budget changes, substitute teacher payrate, lunch prices, etc. You can quickly view the reports or export them into Excel. The updated, viewing, and exporting can all be done through your member profile. Simply login, once on your profile page, scroll to the bottom and your choices appear on the left side. Click on the report name and the report will appear immediately and the number of districts listed per page can be adjusted at the bottom of the screen. To export the report, click on the icon in the upper right corner, input your email address, and the link will be sent shortly.

The MarketPlace: Vendor members are excited about this feature and it makes the SBO's job a little easier. CASBO has gathered together in one place, information from vendor member companies that offer goods and services. The companies have been grouped within a drop-down menu system, which can be searched for all matching member companies. It allows the users to search in several ways. One important note, when using the search, be

sure to change the "Match" criteria to ANY from ALL. Access to The MarketPlace is also available at the bottom of your member profile.

CEU's: CASBO issued Continuing Education Unit certificates are now available right on your profile on the Professional Development tab. Rather than filing, or possibly losing, a paper, your credit history will be stored on the website and available for viewing and printing at your convenience.

SwapShop: A new feature for full and regular members is the Swap Shop. If a district has items to sell, they may list them on this page for up to 30 days. To list an item or view listings, look for the fly-out from Member Services. Be sure to check here often, you never know what you might find!

To access these features, please go to Member Login and use your login and password. If you have suggestions for new features or fields you'd like to see or if you have any difficulty using the site, please contact Sharon Bruce.



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QR Codes Explained

By Bridget Casey of the Miami Herald.

Is it a printing error? A pixilated maze? One of those puzzles where you have to cross your eyes to see the hidden image?

Two-dimensional matrix bar codes are expanding into the mainstream. You can find them in magazine and newspaper ads and in stores including Best Buy, Lowe's, Gap and Macy's. They're even showing up on television: Jimmy Fallon recently flashed a black and white code on his Late Night show to plug a featured band.

The codes are designed to tell smartphones to do something: open a website, play a video, show a map, add a contact, text a friend. But in order to make them work, you need the right code-scanning app.

The tags most advertisers and retailers use are called QR (quick response) codes. They're one color (usually black), with large boxes in three corners and a scattering of tiny square dots.

Another version, the Microsoft Tag, has multi-colored triangles but can be made with any image watermarked behind multiple circular dots.

To make the codes work, users of smartphones (iPhone, Android, BlackBerry, Windows Phone 7, Palm), need to start by going to the app store to search for a free app that can scan the code. If it's made of triangles, search for Microsoft Tag. For QR codes, searching "QR" should pop up a choice of several apps that pretty much do the same thing. One good reader that's on every platform is Bee-Tagg.

With the app activated, point the camera at the code. It will automatically load the task tied to the code, such as directing the phone to a website. If you don't have time to immediately view the information, most of these apps allow you to view a history of recent scans at a later time.



These codes have been widely used in Japan for several years, but U.S. companies are just beginning to test them. Visit the garden department at Lowe's, and you'll find Microsoft Tags in all the plants that bring up information on how to care for them.

Macy's has tags around the store that offer videos about a particular brand – makeup tips from Bobbi Brown, for example. Some people put tags on business cards that can be scanned to automatically add the person to your contact list.

Best Buy puts QR codes next to the price of every product so users can look up more detailed information. (Tip: Before making an in-store purchase, scan the QR code to see if Best Buy sells the item for less



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QR Codes Explained

online. A TomTom GPS model I

checked was \$10 less at bestbuy.com. The store will honor the cheaper price if you bring it to the cashier's attention.)

If you're feeling creative, you can get in on the action yourself. Several websites will help you make a QR code for free, and Microsoft does the same for its Tags. Just plug in what you want, and it'll spit out an image of the code. But before you start adding QR codes to wedding invitations, you'd better include instructions – and realize only smartphones with the proper app can take advantage of them.

Best wishes to
CASBO's President,
Jane A. Neel, and
Past-President, Don
A. Neel, on their
recent marriage.
Congratulations!

Ideas for What to QR Code in a School District

- ⇒ Quick link to website, especially targeted pages
- ⇒ Teacher email addresses
- ⇒ Emergency contact information
- ⇒ Telephone numbers for absence line

Other ideas? If you are using QR codes in your district, please email ssbruce@comcast.net with your ideas.

Try the QR codes on page 8!

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Member Spotlight is an opportunity to get to know a fellow member better or catch-up with a retired friend. Thank you to Danielle Batchelder for serving as writer and editor of this column.

**Carolyn Dickey
Groton Public Schools**

Carolyn Dickey is currently the Business Manager for Groton Public Schools. Although Carolyn is new to CASBO, she's not new to the inner workings of the public sector. Carolyn was hired by Groton in February 2010. Prior to working in Groton, Carolyn was the Director of Finance and Administration for the Westerly, Rhode Island school district. Carolyn served in that capacity for two and a half years. Prior to that Carolyn was on the House Fiscal Advisory Staff for the RI General Assembly working on public safety (ACI, courts, attorney general, state police, public defender) state budgets for three years. Preceding the General Assembly position, Carolyn worked at Rhode Island College for two years while she was going for her Masters Degree. Carolyn also served on a special education initiative (Rhode Island Technical Assistance Project) before that. Carolyn's total experience in the public sector is approximately 9 years.

Carolyn grew up in Stonington, Connecticut, but currently lives in Westerly, where she has spent most of her adult life. Carolyn has lived in Westerly for the past 27 years. Carolyn and her husband have two children, Kyle who is 28 years old and Rachel who is 26 years old. Carolyn received her undergraduate degree in Urban Affairs from University of Rhode Island then went back to school and in 2005 received a Masters in Public Administration.

Carolyn stated that there are not many differences between the careers she has held in Rhode Island vs. Connecticut. Carolyn said, "Rhode Island and Connecticut globally spending exceeds revenue in both states (in most states!) So the financial problems are similar. However, Rhode Island is a few years ahead with respect to the fiscal crisis."

Carolyn has been in Groton for about a year and a half and her favorite aspect

of the job has been finding efficiencies. Carolyn has also spent a great deal of time on converting systems since she began. The System changes that Carolyn implemented in Groton in the past year and a half include: converting from Pentamation/Sunguard to K12 Microsoft for the financial software; SharePoint software for Professional Development requests and will be expanding to using SharePoint for vacation and sick time paperwork; upgrading KRONOS timekeeper used by hourly staff; converted the food service department from Lunchbox to Horizon and implemented a point of sale systems in all of the schools; began inventory control district wide using Horizon for textbook inventory and management and soon to use K12 for consumable inventory. Lastly upgraded the transportation system-Edulog- which now interfaces with Powerschool for student data and tracking as well as being able to do redistricting scenarios as Groton considers district consolidation. These implementations are just some of Carolyn's successes to Groton Public Schools.

Hopefully, Connecticut can keep Carolyn in our state for many years to come. Carolyn is a great asset for all our schools.

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October Workshop!

Registration is now open for the October 14th workshop. To register, simply login and register your profile site.

Important – Please note the new location for workshops – The Aqua Turf Club at 535 Mulberry Street in the Plantsville section of Southington. An exciting line up is scheduled:

Getting the Word Out: Communication is the lifeblood of every organization, and effective communication is the key to success! Learn how to maximize communication with your stakeholders. This interactive session will cover: what is communication/school district public relations, working with the media, budget communication/getting budgets passed, tips for enhancing your district's communication practices and more. Presented by: Lynn Davis, Communication Specialist, Plainville Public Schools & Nancy Dzija Vaughan, APR, School / Community Relations Coordinator, Waterbury Public Schools

Closing Schools = Money Savings? As many districts are experiencing a declining enrollment, some are closing schools. This panel of school professionals have all been there. They will discuss the multifaceted issues including: How to decide? What are the true cost savings? What have been the obstacles? What are the political/community challenges? What to do with the empty schools? Presented by: Chris Chemerka, Enfield Public Schools & Athena Nagel, Norwich Public Schools.

Does Your District Get the Credit It Deserves?

P-Cards: One of the biggest concerns regarding issuing credit cards to district staff is the control issue. The State DAS has developed a P-Card program that has addressed control issues extensively. Attend this session to see what is new and if it will work for your district. Presented by: Kerry DiMatteo, Connecticut DAS Procurement Services

E-Payables – Using Electronic Payables to Create Payments Transformation for Government: A look at how to evaluate your accounts payable process, with a view to creating efficiency and electronic processing. This may allow for better financial management of the district's funds. Presented by: Eric Hanly, Bank of America

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Do the Numbers Add-Up? Research and analysis are critical in effective decision making. This facilitated discussion will exam effective survey/research methods, evaluating data and how to make the best decisions. Facilitated by: Sharon Smith, JD, Glastonbury Public Schools

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For more information, please read the article on page 4.

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CASBO Website



Sharon Bruce's Email



CASBO Calendar

ASBO Annual Meeting—Seattle

September 16-19, 2011

Board of Directors Meetings—

CREC

September 28, 2011

November 10, 2011

February 2, 2011

Workshops—Aqua Turf

October 14, 2011

January 6, 2012

March 2, 2012

Vendor Day '12—Aqua Turf

April 24, 2012

Institute '12—Mystic Marriott

May 31- June 1