



LYNN KNIGHT, CSRM

Director of Business Services
School District of Nekoosa
Nekoosa, WI



2021 Candidate for 2022 Board of Directors
**ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS
OFFICIALS INTERNATIONAL**

BIOGRAPHY

Lynn Knight has been the director of business services for the School District of Nekoosa for the past 13 years. Prior to this position, she spent seven years working in a public accounting firm auditing governmental entities, including school districts. She is a past president of the Wisconsin ASBO and this year was recognized as Wisconsin ASBO's 2021 School Business Manager of the Year. A past president of the local United Way, she currently serves as treasurer on the United Way board. One of her passions is animal rescue; she has volunteered for a not-for-profit dog rescue and helped place more than 100 dogs into their forever homes. However, she is considered a foster failure as she has adopted five rescue dogs that she previously was fostering.

VISION STATEMENT

As I reflect on a vision statement for ASBO, it's difficult to gather all that's happened in the past year to predict how a business official's role will change in the future. ASBO's vision to be the leading authority in school business profession will continue. To go further, to be the leading authority in school business profession by recognizing the changing role of business officials and serving the needs by providing networking opportunities, offering professional development, and advocating for school districts across the world.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

The vast inequities in education were highlighted during the pandemic, as many students in underserved areas did not have the resources to learn remotely. How can ASBO International help close the learning gap and support accelerated learning recovery?

One of the challenges of the pandemic is that it hit quickly across the world. Educational institutions did not have time to prepare their staff or students for long term remote learning. Districts scrambled to provide professional development for their staff, computer devices for their students, and hot spots to access the internet. Because of the high demand from basically every school district in the country, many students did not have the tools to continue their learning and therefore fell behind. As the world begins to recover, districts are researching strategies to help our students get back on track. The federal government has recognized the struggles of school districts and has provided districts with the funds to help in this monumental endeavor.

Each school district is unique as to how they have weathered the pandemic. The common theme is that we can all learn from each other. ASBO can continue to provide learning opportunities from the members and from their network of vendors. As the guidelines for the federal funds are interpreted, ASBO can continue to provide guidance to the members as well as clarifying confusing language. Similar to the survey that ASBO released in March 2021, ASBO should continue to survey members on how the federal funds are being utilized as well as strategies districts are using to close the gap and increase learning and share the information with the members.

What needs do school business officials have now and what skills will they need in the next 5-10 years that ASBO International should focus on?

As far back as I can remember, business officials have been a jack of all trades. The pandemic has shifted a business official's focus. Pre-pandemic, projects were planned, curriculum was purchased on a schedule, and equipment was on a rotation basis. A business official could plan for expenditures and could accurately predict revenues to balance the budget. The year 2020 changed all that. After schools closed, students began learning differently, online curriculum was a hot commodity, and the greatest need for equipment was laptops and hot spots, at whatever cost.

Now more than ever, business officials need each other. It's not only important to have a network of colleagues to discuss operational strategies but also to have one voice when lobbying our government for education.

The pandemic has altered our learning landscape. Public schools across the world have seen a decline in enrollment and now, we are not sure that some students will return. Schools have been forced to give parents an alternative to brick and mortar which will also add another layer onto the business officials many responsibilities.

ASBO can assist the business officials by focusing on the changing role of the business official and continue to offer ideas on how the business official can be even more efficient. I believe that the future business official will have a larger presence in teaching and learning budgeting strategies and they need to be prepared to offer data driven input. ASBO has a perfect opportunity to take the lead in guiding the future business official through these changing times.

With a goal of continuing to meet the needs of all our members, what can ASBO International do to encourage racial diversity on the board, on committees, in our membership, and in our cadre of professional development presenters?

Diversity at every level has been in the forefront of the nation. It is a part of every news broadcast and a topic of discussion for leaders across the country. Businesses are reviewing policies and focusing on combatting the lack of diversity in their workplace. Unfortunately, the task is not easy. Our world has become complacent in accepting violence as a way of conveying a message which in turn leads to biases and discrimination. We need to change the way we communicate the message. How we do that is the big question.

ASBO International is no different in trying to solve the lack of diversity issue. The first step is to recognize there is a problem. Once the problem has been put on the front burner, planning can begin to tackle the problem. I believe that ASBO is much farther along than most companies. ASBO's Learn on Demand has many resources to help promote an inclusive culture. ASBO's annual conference has also focused on diversity in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Unfortunately, there is not just one solution to solve the lack of diversity on a global scale. Awareness is key to begin the discussion on how diversity can be addressed.