

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF PUPIL SERVICES ADMINISTRATORS
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 4, 2018

Because this will be my last report as OAPSA's Executive Director, the following is a summary of the various activities I have undertaken during the nearly five years served in that position. Many of these activities have persisted since I started in this position in July, 2013. It has been very interesting to observe the changes that have occurred over these years and also to become aware of new initiatives that have emerged.

One of my first actions after becoming Executive Director was to develop a tri-fold brochure that could be used in recruitment of new members. That tri-fold was updated each year for several years but in the 2015-16 year I added a one-page flyer that contained essential information about OAPSA membership and was much easier to send electronically. After that one year when there were both formats, starting with the 2016-17 year we only produced the flyer. In addition to printed membership recruitment items, I also developed a large three-panel display board that is placed on a table at conferences and other large meetings. That display board highlighted the many benefits associated with being a member of OAPSA and also provided information about the organization and our upcoming meetings.

In addition to mailing the three-panel brochures to a number of locations and also sending the one-page flyer to various locations each year, I also used the large three-panel display board (along with printed material) when representing OAPSA at large meetings. These included several years at the OEC Leadership Conference in the exhibit hall, three NAPSA national conferences that were held in Ohio, and the Ohio Alliance of Public Charter Schools conference.

Increasing OAPSA's membership was one of my main goals. During that first year (2013 – 14) after I became Executive Director, our membership that year was 215. For 2014 – 15 it was 227; for 2015 – 16 it was 289, for 2016 – 17 it was 318, and for this current year just ending it is 380+.

I was also heavily involved in NAPSA and served on their Board of Trustees for several years. In addition, I was involved in the planning and holding of three NAPSA conferences, two of which were held in Cincinnati and one in Cleveland. I also attended other NAPSA conferences as OAPSA's Executive Director.

I have long been involved with the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities and for many recent years have served as OAPSA's representative. First I was the "Statewide Organization Representative" and for the past several years have been serving as Secretary. (Note: This is very interesting in that early in my career when I was President of the Ohio Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children...OFCEC...I was with the group of parent and professional organization representatives that created the former Ohio Coalition for the Education of Handicapped Children and I served as secretary of OCEHC for several years back in 1972 – 1975.) As I leave OAPSA, we will need to determine how OAPSA can continue to be directly involved with both the Coalition's Governing Board and Executive Committee.

Soon after I became Executive Director, I worked with Ashland University to begin offering graduate credit for attending OAPSA conferences. This met a need for OAPSA members to have an opportunity to obtain graduate credit toward licensure renewal. Some of the participants chose to register for one graduate credit which meant they had to attend at least three OAPSA conferences during the year and then write a "reflection paper" describing what they learned by attending these conferences and how it helped them in their positions. In the years when OAPSA held four meetings a year (February being two days so a total of five conference days), we could also offer an opportunity to register for two graduate credits.

During my time as OAPSA's Executive Director and until last year, I served as one of OAPSA's representatives to the Committee of Practitioners (CoP). This statewide committee provides oversight and direction to departments within ODE that are involved with federal funding. In addition to dealing with the various federally funded programs serving school districts throughout Ohio, there was heavy involvement within the CoP regarding the transition from NCLB to ESSA. Last June it was announced that the CoP was changing its membership

configuration and statewide organizations such as OAPSA no longer would be included but instead they were moving toward individual memberships selected through an application process.

Another area of heavy involvement was serving on the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) workgroup which started soon after I became Executive Director. As a result of an OSEP review during 2011 – 12, Ohio was found to have a number of violations and therefore had to participate in the development of an improvement plan. OEC created the workgroup for this purpose and I represented OAPSA on it from the start. Initially there was Phase 1 which was designed to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the areas in which Ohio had received poor ratings and then to prioritize these areas in order to focus on one. The area identified was early childhood education and literacy with the thought that, unless children get off to a strong and effective start, their future years in school are at risk. Phase 2 of the SSIP process was to develop a detailed and specific plan regarding how this area of priority focus could be configured and implemented. The third phase was the implementation of that plan which focused on early childhood literacy. The first year of Phase 3 involved a small number of school districts in the state which were assisted by their respective SSTs. The second year expanded that number of school districts and now the third year continues that expansion. Overall, the SSIP will be in place through 2020.

There were some situations in which I cooperated with other state-wide organizations that were addressing problems being encountered by their members. For example, several years ago (related in part to significant changes in STRS retirement procedures which resulted in an exceptionally high number of school psychologists retiring), the Ohio School Psychologists Association (OSPA), through the leadership of its executive director, Ann Brennan, created a state-wide workgroup (including university representatives) to examine the factors related to the major shortage of school psychologists and what could be done to help turn that around. The focus of that group expanded to include other areas of related services that were experiencing shortages as well. The workgroup was engaged in this process for more than two years and I was involved as OAPSA's representative from the beginning. A report was issued which serves as a resource for other actions that have since been initiated.

Legislative activity, especially during the biennium budget process and for situations such as Medicaid reimbursement to school districts, is a very important area. Over the years, I have been involved in communicating and distributing information and resources regarding major legislative issues but as Executive Director, I have not been directly involved in lobbying per se. Non-profit (501 (c) 3) organizations such as OAPSA are regulated regarding the extent to which they can participate in lobbying activities. However, the dissemination of information regarding legislative issues to our members is an important role and function of the executive director.

Over these past nearly five years, I have remained in touch with ODE/OEC, OSPA, OCECD, and other groups and representatives. Although some of the major activities in the past (e.g., SSIP, CoP) no longer include OAPSA involvement, there are still several key issues and areas of concern and OAPSA should maintain a level of participation in each.

I have immensely enjoyed my years as OAPSA's Executive Director and will miss my ongoing contacts with each of you. However, in the past year I have had a couple of medical setbacks that have affected my day-to-day activities and it is clearly time for me to step down. I'm so pleased that Donna Stelzer will be the new OAPSA Executive Director and am 100% confident she will do an excellent job starting with "day one". I mean this with all sincerity...Donna is clearly one of most competent and well-organized professionals that I have met in my long career.

Submitted by Dr. John Opperman
OAPSA Executive Director