

State Board Member Report: NASBE Annual Conference
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The Annual Conference for the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) returned to meeting in-person for 2022, bringing together Board Members from across the United States and territories as far away as Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. The Conference was held October 26-29 in Phoenix, Arizona. The Conference included both general and breakout sessions led by NASBE Staff, State Board Members, Department of Education staff, and educational consultants on topics such as teacher workforce, assessments, literacy, board governance, and reengaging students after Covid. It provided a wonderful opportunity to network with colleagues dealing with similar challenges across the country and learn how other states operate. Discussions at the Conference also help NASBE staff shape future workgroups, monthly virtual meetings, and studies for the Standard magazine.

A few highlights:

--The Early Literacy Work Group held a pre-conference school visit to Wildflower Accelerated Academy, a K-8 school in the Avondale School District recognized at the state and national levels for their academic achievement. During the visit, we learned about the Read On Arizona initiative that brought together districts and community partners to focus on literacy. We visited classrooms and met with staff to learn how they prioritize literacy in a collaborative environment with structured literacy blocks, weekly professional development, attendance incentives, and a master schedule built to include floating paraprofessionals to support reading instruction in multiple classrooms. <https://readonarizona.org>, <https://www.chooseaesd.org/wf>, <https://www.readbetterbetter.org>

--Challenges in retaining a high-quality teaching workforce was a recurring topic, including a keynote from National Teacher of the Year, Kurt Russell, and smaller sessions on recruiting and certifications.

--During the session on State Mathematics Issues and Strategies, members discussed efforts to modify high school math courses to align with higher education and career pathways.

--NASBE is creating a new "JEDI" committee: Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

--NASBE General Assembly met on Saturday, October 29 to pass bylaw revisions; approve the updated Public Education Positions on teacher workforce and education leaders; and elect the next NASBE Board. Christine Benson (IL) assumed the President position and Sarah Moore (AR) is the new President-Elect.

A full list of session topics is available on the NASBE Conference website (<https://www.nasbe.org/event/annual-conference-2022/>).