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Kevin Cassidy will serve as OSBA president in 2020

Kevin Cassidy, a member of the Baker School Board since 2013, will serve as president of the Oregon School Boards Association’s Board of Directors starting Jan. 1.

Cassidy, who currently holds the office of president-elect, will be president for one year. OSBA is a non-profit member services agency for more than 200 locally elected boards serving school districts, education service districts and community colleges. There are more than 1,400 volunteer school board members in Oregon.

Cassidy said the Student Success Act (SSA), passed in 2019, will create new opportunities for the more than 581,000 students in grades K-12 in Oregon. The act will raise about $1 billion annually for schools through a new business tax.

He said it has been exciting to hold a leadership role in advocating for the act’s passage. But even more inspiring, he said, is to be part of seeing districts across the state looking at innovative ways to address students’ social-emotional needs, provide early-learning opportunities and replicate career and technical education (CTE) programs such as the Baker Technical Institute.

Cassidy has been a longtime supporter of BTI.

“Every student follows a different path to success,” he said. “Expanding our CTE programs around the state helps move students into living-wage jobs and boosts Oregon’s economy at the same time. These programs also keep kids engaged in school and on track to graduate.”

Baker School District board chair Chris Hawkins said it is Cassidy’s commitment to innovative learning that has helped expand programs in Baker City and beyond.
“His leadership has helped pave the way for many innovative learning experiences for Baker students such as BTI and Baker Web Academy,” Hawkins said. “Through his support of the Web Academy, these student opportunities have reached beyond the borders of Baker City. It is no surprise that he has extended his efforts to better students educational experience at the state level with OSBA.”

Among Cassidy’s goals in 2020 are ensuring that school boards provide vision and oversight for spending the SSA funding transparently and with accountability in mind.

“Legislators and the public have given us a vote of confidence, but we now have an obligation to meet their expectations – or temper them if they are unrealistic,” he said. “We also have to effectively tell our own stories on how we are making strategic, data-driven investments that will boost student achievement.”

Cassidy also wants to share the lessons he has learned through relationships built at OSBA and at the national level to help make Oregon school board members the best they can be. He points to the experience of his grandfather, Duane Cassidy, as the inspiration for his volunteer school board service.

Duane Cassidy held a seat on the Baker School Board after serving in the military in World War II. He was able to hand high school diplomas to three of his four sons.

“My grandfather always told me that was the greatest thing he got to do,” Cassidy said.

Cassidy also serves at the statewide level on the Oregon 2020 Census Committee and on the Fair Dismissals Appeal Board.

“We are excited to see Kevin take on this new role with the OSBA,” Hawkins said. “We know he will be successful and wish him all the best. His nomination for OSBA president is well deserved and Kevin will fully dedicate himself to this role as he has done in every role he has undertaken. Congratulations, Kevin!”

Cassidy and his wife, Darnel, have one son, Kale, a senior at Baker High School. Cassidy looks forward to the moment when he can hand his son a diploma next June.

**About Baker School District 5J**

Nationally recognized Baker School District 5J (BSD) is a major employer in Baker City, OR, serving 1,700 students locally with an additional 2500 online students across the state of Oregon. Through enterprising, collaborative endeavors, BSD is creating an engaging educational foundation for future Oregonians. BSD believes strong school collaboration with local partners enables us to create vibrant communities that support lifelong learners.