



For the Good of the Cause

A History
Wisconsin Technical College
District Boards Association

1971-2004

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Acknowledgements

In 1981, the VTAE District Boards Association celebrated its 10th anniversary. For that occasion Association President Carl Plaum drafted a brief history of the Association from its early beginning. In January 2003, the Association asked the undersigned to write a more extensive and updated history.

To prepare for this undertaking, we conducted interviews in 2003 with Richard Anderson, Ed Chin, Joan Jenstead, Harland Kirchner, Eugene Lehrmann, Dennis Nitschke, Carl Plaum, Robert Sorensen and Frederick (Fritz) Wenzel. Each of these individuals played significant roles in the early years, as did many other individuals. These interviews provided insights as to how the Boards Association was formed and matured. The Association's written minutes also provided direction in the drafting of this history.

Hopefully, this history will help current and future technical college board members realize the commitment made by early members of the Association and will inspire others to further strengthen this organization. The Wisconsin Technical College System is recognized as one of the very best in the United States and worldwide. Individual board members from each of the technical colleges, working collaboratively through the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association, have been an important part of this success story.

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May, 2004

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Preface—The 1960's

From Municipal Schools to Full-Fledged Districts

In 1985, Dr. Kathleen A. Paris published *A Political History of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education in Wisconsin*,¹ which carefully reviews the political history of the Wisconsin Vocational, Technical and Adult Education System², or "VTAE." Her work provides an appropriate political backdrop to the years in which municipal vocational schools became area-wide college districts. These were the years just preceding - and the legislative actions that allowed for - the District Boards Association's formation:

"The most significant state legislation since 1911 was passed in 1965. Through the 50's and into the 60's, local vocational and adult schools had faced a struggle in trying to provide occupational training with only a municipal tax base to draw upon. Early in the 60's, the Directors' Association (predecessor of today's WTCS Presidents Association) had gone on record unambiguously endorsing the concept of area, rather than city districts. Privately, the small schools were opposed, but could exert no influence due to increased state control through funding and program approval prerogatives. The State had

been legislatively inching towards area consolidation. In 1964, Chapter 414 enabled county boards to form VTAE districts. That year, five districts in the Fox River Valley were interested in forming a VTAE district. Their interest resulted in Chapter 418, which enabled two or more contiguous school districts to form a VTAE district.

In 1959, the State Board staff had proposed district organization on the basis of the ten Congressional Districts. (Congressional Districts, of course, are based on population.) But disagreements among the staff and among the directors as to the configuration caused continual changes and alterations in the proposal. (Eventually it would be left to an interagency committee designated by the governor to come up with a district design.)

Due to the opposition of the smaller schools, C.L. Greiber (VTAE State Director 1944-1970) had not included mandatory redistricting as part of the 1965-67 budget bill. He preferred to leave the door open for voluntary area

redistricting. He planned to use state fiscal resources to aid districts offering occupational preparation programs.

Redistricting legislation came from outside the vocational-technical system. David Martin, a Republican Assemblyman from Neenah-Menasha, was the legislator responsible for it. Martin was interested because his father had been a general science teacher at the Appleton Vocational School. Martin asked for and received permission from Governor Knowles to develop a plan of action for vocational education.

Martin asked Greiber to prepare a mandatory redistricting bill which was to be confidential at first. Seven drafts later, Greiber explained proposed Assembly Bill 501 to the Directors' Association. There was no open opposition and all agreed that 1970 was a reasonable implementation date. The provisions for redistricting were quite general – a district could be formed from any contiguous combination of counties, municipalities, or school districts operating high schools.”³

“Lobbying against mandatory redistricting continued. Local school superintendents were against it. They feared that taxation up to the full 2 mill levy would erode the tax base. (Few districts actually ever reached

the 2 mill limit.) The Wisconsin Association of School Boards wanted local school boards to have the prerogative of appointing the vocational boards, as WASB explained, to keep up a working dialogue.

July 22, 1965, saw frantic activity in the Assembly around 501A. By the time it was passed, it included two amendments. Amendment 10A was a so-called anti community college amendment – that no collegiate transfer program could be offered in a vocational-technical or adult school in any town, city, or village where there was an existing institution of higher learning unless the city had a population of 150,000 or more. The other Amendment 12A was that local boards would charge resident tuition at 20% of the instructional cost for state-wide full-time collegiate transfer courses approved by the Board.

The Senate added Amendment 4S to the redistricting bill that stipulated that compulsory students, ages 16-18, could be referred to vocational schools if one existed in the city of residence.

On September 10, 1965, Governor Knowles signed the bill as amended and it became Chapter 292, Laws of 1965. By 1970, everyone in Wisconsin would have to be in a Vocational, Technical and Adult Education District.”⁴

As set forth in the 1965 Statutes, VTAE districts were to be governed by local boards, as they had been since the state adopted the nation's first comprehensive school continuation legislation in 1911:

“Local boards were an integral part of the 1911 legislation. The rationale for them was to ensure that the course of vocational education would be guided by laypeople who were knowledgeable about the world of work. The boards were to be appointed by existing governing bodies to ensure equal representation of management and labor and to ensure that board positions would be filled with people genuinely interested in nurturing quality vocational education programs.”⁵

Initially, the VTAE boards were to be “composed of seven members – two employers (those with power to hire and fire), two employees, two members at large, and a local school district administrator (superintendent) from one of the public school districts. Members were appointed for staggered six year terms, except for the school district administrator who served a two year term. There were no restrictions on the number of annual successive terms for the board chairperson.”⁶ This composition would continue until the current nine-member format was adopted in the early 1980's.

The initial VTAE district boards were appointed in 13 districts by a committee comprised of county board chairpersons with land in the district. In three districts, Milwaukee, Fox Valley and Southwest Wisconsin, the appointing authority was the constituent school board presidents of school districts within the VTAE district's boundaries.

This appointing authority arrangement, based on whether counties or schools petitioned for the district's creation, remains today.

Forming the Association

It was against the political backdrop of young, area-wide VTAE districts crafted from the former municipal vocational schools that district board members gathered on July 24, 1971, at MATC in downtown Madison for the organizational meeting of the Wisconsin Vocational, Technical and Adult Education District Boards Association.

Members present selected Marvin Brickson (MATC-Madison) president, Harland Kirchner (Fox Valley) vice president, and Leah Rigler (WI Indianhead), secretary/treasurer. Six directors were selected to serve to the annual meeting of October 27, 1973: Ralph Bowes (MATC-Milwaukee), William Pierce (Waukesha County), Franklin Mittlesteadt (Moraine Park), Walter Calvert (Southwest Wisconsin), Arthur Medtlie (Chippewa Valley), and Kermit Goertz (North Central).

Carl Plaum (Moraine Park) writes in *VTAE Boards Association 1971-81*, “The District Boards Association was formed to fill a need. A need for articulation among board members, a need for board member inservice, and the need for pooling and directing efforts for the advancement of vocational, technical and adult education in Wisconsin. As we worked toward these goals, other needs also became evident. We realized that better working relationships with the district administrators were essential as was better articulation and understanding between district boards and the state board, as well as public school boards and the vocational district boards.”⁷

Interviews with Harland Kirchner, Carl Plaum, Richard Anderson, Frederick Wenzel, Eugene Lehrmann and Dennis Nitschke identified some of the reasons for forming a

boards association:

- Sharing information between board members such as curriculum, working with business and industry, changing technology, and unique experiences;
- Providing opportunities for board members to share their challenges and decision making, and to gain information through discussions on matters of local concern;
- Communicating at a statewide level with legislators, the state VTAE board, the state director, and business and industrial organizations; and
- Providing needed education and assistance to individual board members about their role as part of a local governing body and state education system.

Eugene Lehrmann, VTAE state director from 1971-79, attended the July meeting and remembers it well. Local board members asked him how the state board felt about an association. He said, "I encouraged them." He remembers there was considerable debate about the form the organization should take. Should it include district directors, now college presidents, and others? Should it be a part of WASB, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards? Should it be an organization for local VTAE board members only? Director Lehrmann said he "encouraged a separate boards organization with the district directors attending to help and to give advice, but not to do the thinking for board members."⁸

1970's – The Growing Years

“Doing what we said we'd do.”

Making the districts work was the new challenge for the VTAE system on the eve of the 1970's. Eugene Lehrmann was appointed state director in 1971 and saw as his biggest challenge to “do what we said we would do – deliver

“The Association's first quarterly meeting was held on April 29, 1972, at Waukesha County. Thirty-one district board members and district directors signed the attendance roll.”

vocational, technical and adult education to everyone in the new districts.”⁹

A new, but yet to be recognized, partner in making the districts work was the VTAE District Boards Association, incorporated in June of 1971, and first meeting for organizational purposes in July of 1971. The Association's first quarterly meeting was held on April 29, 1972, at Waukesha County. Thirty-one district board members and district directors¹⁰ signed the attendance roll. William

Pierce, president of the Waukesha board, welcomed the members and introduced programs entitled, “Liability and the Board Member,” and “Legal Implications of Liability and the School Board Member.”

The members agreed to hire a secretary part-time from Madison Area Technical College who would get the vari-

ous notes to the executive committee and delegates, and take care of correspondence. It was further agreed that for future meetings, the hosting district director would arrange for a secretary for purposes of taking and typing minutes. This arrangement was to continue through 1986, when Tama Meili joined the organization.

The minutes also report an executive committee meeting was held with State Director Lehrmann; that Governor Lucey should be invited to the next meeting to tell them what the role of the VTAE is in the state of Wisconsin; and that each delegate (now board of director member) should attempt to bring five other board members to the next meeting.

Association Organization in the Early Years

In the early years, the organization of meetings was more typical of a convention with each district selecting a voting delegate to represent the district at business meetings. At meetings, the delegate, the district director, and other board members sat at an assigned district table collectively discussing and making decisions on the agenda's action items.

The operational functions of the organization were handled by the executive committee which included the president, vice president, secretary/treasurer and four other members. Frequent participants in these meetings were State Director Lehrmann and a district director.

In fall, 1972, the Association officially requested that the district directors, through their VTAE administrators association, appoint a liaison to the Boards Association. In December, William Sirek, district director at Fox Valley, was named as the first liaison.

A major structural change was made in the Association's governance in 1974 by placing a voting representative from each local district on the executive committee. The committee would be renamed the board of directors in the 1980's. Throughout the 1970's, the executive committee met separately one month before each quarterly general delegate meeting.

The Executive Secretary Debate

“The committee recommended ... that the Association engage a person who would demonstrate to all concerned that the Boards Association strongly supported the concept of local autonomy....”

until his untimely death in May, 1975. His passing forced the executive committee to reassess the situation at its

June meeting.

Meeting on June 13, 1975, President Kirchner announced to the executive committee that a small group of Association members and district directors had met to discuss the feasibility of employing a full-time executive secretary. The executive committee formalized this process and appointed an ad hoc committee of three board members and three district directors to study the issue. In the interim, William Pierce, Association secretary/treasurer and Waukesha County board member, was empowered to act as executive secretary.

The ad hoc committee recommended to the executive committee that the Association engage a person who would:

- demonstrate to all concerned that the Boards Association strongly supported the concept of local autonomy;
- keep the board informed on all matters as they relate to the VTAE system;
- act as the organization's executive secretary;
- be responsible for the mechanics involved in meetings of the Association; and
- be involved in legislative matters.

MATC-Milwaukee board member Ralph Bowes reminded the members that the Association's current bylaws prevented legislative activities by the Association. In January, 1976, Kermit Goertz, of the North Central board, reported back that the estimated cost of the executive secretary would be approximately \$35,000 per year. The committee decided to table the idea for the time being and the ad hoc committee was discharged by President Kirchner.

The executive secretary and lobbying issues rose again at the April 22, 1977 meeting in Janesville. A committee of

five was appointed to define the duties and costs of an executive secretary who would not serve as a lobbyist. In October, 1977, several options were presented:

- Retain the present executive secretary model within the membership.
- Hire a part-time executive secretary.
- Hire a full-time executive secretary.
- Arrange for legislative information and services to be provided by a local district.

After substantial discussion, the executive committee decided to continue with the present arrangement of empowering William Pierce to act as executive secretary.

Richard Anderson, president at Waukesha County beginning in 1973, stated that “Bill Pierce was a tireless worker for the District Boards Association. Bill traveled the state, visiting all sixteen boards to encourage their participation in the Association and ACCT. He was the single guy to fend off attacks on the system and caused the districts to get organized and have a unified approach. He served as program chair and treasurer from the mid-1970’s through the early 1980’s, only giving up the task when the Association went to a full-time executive secretary.”¹¹

The 1970’s closed with William Pierce acting as executive secretary and the Association’s secretary/treasurer, and with the membership carrying on its seven-year debate over hiring a full-time executive secretary and his/her role in lobbying.

Joining ACCT

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)

was organized in 1972 as a national organization to represent and provide a voice for community and technical colleges across the nation with the U.S. Congress and with the many federal agencies affecting two-year colleges. Prior to the creation of ACCT, community and technical colleges were represented by a division within the national school boards association. At the Association’s January, 1973 meeting, formal action was taken to join the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), with annual dues of \$100 per year.

MATC-Milwaukee was a leader in gaining Wisconsin’s involvement in the national organization in the early 1970’s. 1974 saw the first major involvement of the Association in ACCT when the executive committee passed a resolution to support the candidacy of Milwaukee board member Lillian Sicula for the ACCT executive board. Sicula was elected to the ACCT board in October, 1974, and re-elected in 1978, at which time she became ACCT’s treasurer and served on its executive committee.

The Wisconsin VTAE District Boards Association received national recognition when MATC-Milwaukee hosted the ACCT regional conference at the Marc Plaza Hotel in May, 1975. The Association’s minutes from the middle and late-1970’s indicate Sicula’s continuing efforts to promote active participation by local boards and individual members in ACCT’s conferences.

Legislative Understanding

The evolution of the executive secretary debate provides insight into the organization’s philosophy on lobbying and lobbyists. At the quarterly meeting held on April 28, 1973, the organization’s first official interaction with the

Wisconsin legislature began with the attendance of Assembly Majority Leader Tony Earl and Senate Majority Leader Ray Johnson.

By January, 1976, the Association established a joint committee of district directors and district board members in response to a district cost control proposal in the state's budget review bill. Carl Plaum relates that the "Wallace Commission" was formed in 1976 to consider changing the make-up of the VTAE districts and their governance. On April 13, 1976, a special Association executive committee meeting was held in Stevens Point to hear the Association committee's response based on its studying the issues. The Association's response would be presented as input to the commission.¹²

In early summer of 1976, three legislative hearings were held around the state. The Appleton meeting, led by State Representatives Marlin Schneider and Herbert Grover, laid out the proposals: convert local boards to advisory-only status, remove local board taxing authority in return for state funding, eliminate district boundaries and create a free flow of students, form a VTAE state board of regents, raise tuition rates to 25 percent of cost, require universal access for individuals age 16 and over, and, require state building commission approval (like the UW and state agencies) for capital construction projects.

At the remaining two hearings, the benefits of appointed boards and increased state aid were addressed. The special committee's work and the Association's coordination helped to assure the proposals to change the districts' governance and funding were defeated and pulled from the budget review bill.

In late 1976, the services of the Communiqué consultant firm were engaged to help all districts develop legislative

action plans. This was the largest single expenditure undertaken by the District Boards Association to date.

January 21, 1978, a committee was appointed to help organize a meeting between Wisconsin members attending an ACCT event and Wisconsin's congressional members. This appears to be the first organized action towards working with the U.S. Congress.

Completing the Beginning

The 1970's saw a fledging organization take root, grow and become a recognized voice for all local district boards across Wisconsin. First, there came a realization by local boards of their role and responsibility in governing local schools. Next, key local board members from throughout Wisconsin saw the need for a statewide boards association and committed themselves to organize and nurture such an organization. Local board members also realized that more could be accomplished for vocational and technical education by working collectively on issues that were important to local institutions, including relationships with the state and national legislative bodies. Finally, there was a growing commitment to work cooperatively to strengthen local board governance skills.

1980's – The Maturing Years

Opening the Decade

The Association entered the 1980's with a foundation of accomplishments in the 1970's that would provide the philosophies and structure for continued growth. As the decade began, all 16 VTAE boards were official members of the Association. A full complement of committees was actively working that included: legislative, awards, budget, nominations, bylaws, liaison with the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB), and a special committee on the Association meeting structure.

The Association's positive relations with VTAE State Director Robert Sorensen were evident as he completed his first year of service in 1980. Local board members were serving on the state board's standing committees, also reflecting a positive working relationship. Some early concerns about a boards association within the district administrators association appeared to have passed and an ongoing positive working relationship was taking root. The president of the Boards Association attended meetings of the administrators association as its guest.

In the fall of 1980, the Milwaukee Sentinel published allegations against the MATC-Milwaukee district director and members of the MATC board. The board was subsequently replaced by the appointing authorities. The district director would be acquitted of all charges. The media attention fueled a Legislative Audit Bureau investigation and audit of six VTAE districts. At a special meeting of the executive committee on this matter, the Association's leadership reviewed the Legislative Audit Bureau's report

on the six districts.

Plum writes, "During this time, a policy statement on the conduct of Association business was developed and adopted. The end result of all this activity was the achievement of greater unity among all district board members. Noted also was the involvement and leadership of the Boards Association in development of uniform guidelines for district policies. These policy guidelines addressed the major concerns of several audits conducted throughout the VTAE system. Subsequently, all district boards developed and adopted policies."¹³

The Maturing Organization

Plum writes, "The spring, 1981, quarterly meeting heard and adopted the recommendations of a special study committee reviewing the structure and format of the quarterly Association meetings. The basic structure and format were retained with some minor changes, such as seating arrangement."¹⁴ The committee recommended:

- Retaining the quarterly structure.
- Retaining the Friday/Saturday, two day format, with Friday afternoon (1-5:30) as the Association business session, followed by an evening social, and a Saturday session for in-service education.
- Retaining a schedule rotating around the districts.
- Seeking to incorporate the local district's presence and flavor into each meeting.

Waukesha's Bill Pierce continued his triple duty responsibilities as secretary/treasurer, program chair and acting executive secretary into the early 1980's (when Earl Mihlbauer would join as the first full-time executive secretary in 1983).

Ed Chin was appointed the VTAE's assistant state director for finance in 1983 and fondly related his thoughts on what the Boards Association brought to the VTAE system:

- Broad local community support for the VTAE system;
- A statewide perspective to the strong local VTAE system;
- An effective mechanism for local districts to work together on common issues;
- Working successfully with the state legislature through the Association's organization of a coalition to uniformly support key issues; and
- Cooperatively working with the state board in support of the Wisconsin VTAE system.

The Association particularly found its footing with legislative advocacy, according to Chin. "When the Boards Association testified before the legislature, they listened."¹⁵

The Association executive committee (soon to become the "board of directors") negotiated a contract with the VTAE apprenticeship consortium to provide office space and secretarial support to the Association's executive secretary.¹⁶ The offices were located adjacent to the VTAE state office, in Madison's Hilldale Mall complex. This arrangement continued until December 16, 1986, when Tama Meili joined the Association as the administrative assistant and office manager.

The Association negotiated with the Fox Valley VTAE dis-

trict to serve as the organization's fiscal agent. Fox Valley would provide accounting services, purchasing, and payroll and personnel services. Except for purchasing, this important and positive working relationship continues today in 2004.

In spring, 1988, the Association board of directors discontinued the arrangement with the consortium and established a permanent home for the Association. In July, 1988, the office was relocated to 22 North Carroll Street, on the Capitol Square in Madison. These new facilities provided close access to the legislature and state agencies, and provided a work and meeting area for district board members, district directors, and state board staff for Capitol interactions. While the space has been shifted and expanded within this street address, the Association offices remain at 22 North Carroll Street today.

Selecting an Executive Secretary

The organization continued its volunteer management style into the early 1980's. Frederick (Fritz) Wenzel, of the Mid-State board, became president of the Association in July, 1982. He immediately set forth to the members his belief that the Association retain a full-time executive secretary to remain successful. He stated that a person was needed to manage the Association af-

fairs, organize meetings, work with the state board, interact with the legislature, and to speak for the collective body of district boards. Wenzel recalls that the idea initially met with skepticism across groups. The state board did not like the idea, the districts generally thought they could lose power and were concerned about costs, and the district directors themselves had concerns.¹⁷

***"When the Boards Association testified before the legislature, they listened."
— Ed Chin***

Nevertheless, Wenzel appointed Association past president and Moraine Park board member Carl Plaum as chair of a search committee. Each district board was asked to appoint a search committee member and to take formal action to support selecting an executive secretary and funding the position. Plaum immediately requested assistance from Dennis Nitschke, executive secretary of the VTAE east central consortium, to assist the search committee.¹⁸ The east central consortium was a formal organization of the Moraine Park, Fox Valley, North Central, Northeast Wisconsin and Lakeshore districts to promote coordination and sharing of services among them.

In writing the position description, it immediately became clear to Nitschke that the boards were opposed to hiring anyone for purposes of lobbying the legislature. As Nitschke tells it, "Lobbying was not something an executive secretary should do."¹⁹ The committee worked through the fall of 1982 into the spring of 1983 to gain local district support for a full-time executive secretary, prepare for the interview/selection process, and publicize the position to a national audience.

In April, 1983, fifteen district representatives met at MATC-Madison's downtown campus to interview seven candidates screened from the national application process. The committee recommended two candidates for consideration to the Association's executive committee, led by President Fritz Wenzel. The executive committee interviewed the finalists and selected Earl Mihlbauer, director of business and marketing programs at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, as the Association's first full-time executive secretary.

"Each district board was asked to appoint a search committee member and to take formal action to support selecting an executive secretary and funding the position."

Upon the hiring of a full-time executive secretary for the Association, four major themes emerged as critical to the organization's future: First, the organization would place an emphasis on strengthening local boards through board development. At each quarterly meeting of the Association, programs were presented relating to board development. Second, an emphasis was placed on managing legislative interaction in cooperation with the state board, administrators association, and a new VTAE coalition.²⁰ Information was provided to board members on pending legis-

islation. In addition, legislators were invited to quarterly meetings. The Association began recognizing legislative leaders who were helpful in advancing the cause of vocational-technical education in Wisconsin.²¹

Third, the executive secretary would establish a working relationship with the state board on behalf of each local board and the collective boards. The executive secretary attended all state board meetings and presented a report on Association activities, a practice that continues today. Working closely with the state director also provided opportunities to communicate the Association's positions to the state board.

Fourth, the executive secretary developed extensive relationships with other organizations in an effort to build alliances for the overall support of vocational-technical education in Wisconsin. These alliances were especially important in support of Association legislative positions.

The district administrators association, recognizing the new executive secretary's role, opened its door and amended their bylaws to make the Boards Association executive secretary a voting member of the directors' group.

The executive secretary's changing role to increase interactions and lobbying efforts with the legislature precipitated the board of directors to re-title the position to "executive director" in 1986.

Legislative Challenges

The legal issues and legislative audits they triggered had drawn new attention to the VTAE system. Throughout 1981, legislative pressure was exerted to change the system to one in which local boards would be elected by popular vote. Pressure also was felt to make the VTAE state board more accountable to the public by the addition of more "at large" positions.

The state board responded by initiating its own governance bill, AB 718, in fall, 1981, which was endorsed by the District Boards Association. The bill retained the seven member board, changed the term to four years, and required each board establish a fiscal committee and program committee. Seven other Assembly bills relating to VTAE governance were introduced into the mix that fall.

The final bill passed in 1982 as Chapter 269, Laws of 1981, would alter the VTAE boards' traditional composition and create the nine-member board much as it continues today:

"(E)ffective July 1, 1983, the composition of local boards would be modified to include three employers, three employees, two members at large and a local school administrator. Additionally, any two of these nine members would

be required to hold an elected office locally. All members would have staggered, three year-terms. Finally, no chairperson would be able to serve more than two successive full annual terms."²²

According to Sorensen, in the face of the legal difficulties and greater legislative scrutiny, "The state board stepped forward with a governance bill and submitted it as a piece of legislation. They took control of the situation."²³ Sorensen reflected that the same thing

"(T)he sixteen districts and the state board pulled together as a unit much more than they had in recent years. This act of 'pulling together' was, in the minds of some, of critical importance in preserving the shared VTAE state-district partnership."

— Kathleen Paris

was happening at the local level. "Local boards were criticized by the audits for not looking closely enough at what was happening. Now the Boards Association had not been very powerful to this point, but when fingers started pointing back to local boards, they started saying, 'We will do this and we will do that...'"²⁴

Kathleen Paris writes, "There were some very positive outcomes of the intense scrutiny of the VTAE system. The audits provided legislators and the general public with an education on VTAE programs and operations. But in addition, the sixteen districts and the state board pulled together as a unit much more than they had in recent years. This act of 'pulling together' was, in the minds of some, of critical importance in preserving the shared VTAE state-district partnership."²⁵

The appointment of the Association's full-time executive secretary in July of 1983 brought a new dimension to the organization's interactions, even though the membership had eschewed lobbying in the 1970's as not a dignified role for an organization.

Tony Earl was elected governor in fall, 1983. He and his staff were believers in the VTAE system and were particu-

larly convinced that there was a need for a stronger state board in the management of the schools. In cooperation with State Director Sorensen, the governor's office introduced Assembly Bill 1012 to incorporate the mission of the VTAE system into the statutes.

Desiring to provide the state VTAE board with more authority over local district programs, the governor's office incorporated an addition as follows: "The state VTAE board shall have the authority to implement, modify or discontinue a local VTAE district education program to meet statewide needs."²⁶

The Association executive secretary, district directors, and board members held many negotiating sessions on the bill's intent and language with the governor's staff, state VTAE staff and AFL-CIO staff. The Association convened a special meeting on Sunday, March 4, 1984, to discuss the substitute amendment to the bill. In the process, members heard from lobbyist Gary Goyke, who attended as a consultant. After considerable debate, the members authorized the officers to retain Goyke as a consultant and lobbyist to assist with the current legislative challenge. This arrangement continued until the late 1980's.

In the end, the Boards Association opposed the bill and lobbied the Assembly with a newfound vigor. On its final vote, the bill failed by a significant majority.

This unplanned foray into the world of lobbying and legislator interaction focused the attention of all members on the need for education and training concerning working with the legislature. In April, 1984, the Association sponsored an informal breakfast to which members of the Joint Committee on Finance and their aides were invited. Board member Karen Weden, North Central, who would

later serve as Association president, reported: "The results of this session indicate that we have become very visible in the Capitol."²⁷ This was the beginning of the Association's biennial legislative seminar process. Recognizing the challenges of legislative communication, the April in-service was entitled, "Organizing at the District Level to Effectively Communicate with the Wisconsin Legislature." Senate Majority Leader Tim Cullen, from Janesville, was the keynote speaker.

In spring, 1986, Paul Hassett, retired president of the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, and vice president of the state VTAE board, announced that his personal mission for the next two years was to focus on the VTAE system. Earl Muhlbauer, working with the state director and district directors, made arrangements for and accompanied Hassett on visits to a number of the sixteen districts. These visits opened the communication avenues between the executive director and Hassett that were to continue on a monthly basis to the end of his state board presidency.

By the spring of 1987, representing district board members and the districts with the legislature had risen to become one of the Association's top two agenda items. Research and production of informational papers and documents focusing on the "financial funding crisis" emerging in the system was a dominant activity in early 1987.

On June 6, 1987, a special meeting of the board and members was called in Wisconsin Dells to review and take formal action on in-depth papers evaluating the seven components of newly-elected Governor Tommy Thompson's state budget bill that specifically affected the VTAE system. Like other Wisconsin governors, the bill included policy as

"The district administrators association and the Boards Association's legislative committees also had coalesced into a cooperative unit addressing the system's challenges."

well as fiscal provisions. For example, one of the seven Thompson components was: “Examine the allocation of responsibilities between the state board and the local districts’ boards for programming and management.”

Working together and creating liaisons with other groups and organizations became a central theme for the Association. Mihlbauer, as executive director, became an active participant in the Association of Wisconsin Lobbyists and the Wisconsin Society of Association Executives.

The district administrators association and the Boards Association’s legislative committees also had coalesced

into a cooperative unit addressing the system’s challenges. Throughout the mid to late 1980’s, there had been a collective representation of the system and individual colleges with the legislature through the district state relations committee formed in 1984 by State Director Sorensen and the administrators association. John Kröll served as the state board staff’s director of federal/state relations. Several districts had their own representatives: Dennis Nitschke, for the east central consortium districts; Bill Moylan, for Waukesha; Beverly Simone, who would go on to become president at Western Wisconsin and Madison, for MATC-Milwaukee; Phil Waller, for Blackhawk. This group was joined by Dan Jarosik, director of the Wisconsin State Advisory Council, Joyce Wesley of the Wisconsin Vocational Association, and Earl Mihlbauer.

The board of directors met for a special meeting on Friday evening and Saturday, September 16-17, 1988. Association President Harry Guzniczak, MATC-Milwaukee, set forth goals for the meeting: To confirm a current legislative position for the Association and a legislative interaction plan, to define the Association’s goals for 1988-89, and to strengthen the Association’s common sense of purpose.

On Friday evening, State Board President Delmar DeLong outlined his priorities for the year:

- The system must “sing the same song” and go together to the governor and legislature.
- The state board must debate the hard issues and take positions.
- Everybody needs to “tell the good side of everybody else.”
- He intends to create a forum for dialogue and communications to discuss issues before they become a crisis.

“The system must ‘sing the same song’ and go together to the governor and legislature.”

– Delmar DeLong

This important meeting was the birth of the Association’s annual planning meeting and office reception.

In 1985, Ken Opín, chief lobbyist for the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers, and Executive Director Mihlbauer created a draft set of by-laws for a new umbrella organization that could bring the VTAE system’s principal advocates together to collectively address agency and legislative actions affecting the system and local colleges. The “VTAE coalition” was

comprised of: Wisconsin Federation of Teachers, Wisconsin Education Association Council, the state VTAE board, district administrators association, District Boards Association, Wisconsin Vocational Association, and Wisconsin Council of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education. The members focused their attention on areas of “common ground” agreement where collective support could be effective and agreed not to place any labor relations issues on the table.

Working with ACCT

Wisconsin technical colleges took an early interest in ACCT with all of the colleges serving as members by the early 1980's. The Boards Association assumed a leadership role in organizing and coordinating participation in the national legislative seminar. The Washington legislative seminar created the opportunity for VTAE board members and district directors to meet with members of Congress and the Senate in their offices, and to become familiar with federal legislation affecting the colleges.

In the mid-1980's, the Boards Association invited members of the state board and state staff to participate in the Washington conference. This brought the Wisconsin team together to address federal issues affecting the local colleges.

In 1983, the Fox Valley board nominated Harland Kirchner as a candidate to the ACCT board of directors. The Boards Association endorsed this nomination and committed its resources and members to campaign for the candidate. Kirchner was a formidable candidate. He was a charter member of the Fox Valley VTAE district board appointed in 1967. He was a leader in the organization of the Wisconsin District Boards Association serving as vice president 1971-73 and president 1973-75. He also served as mayor of Clintonville and was a successful businessman. Kirchner was elected to two terms on the ACCT board. In 1987, he was selected by the ACCT board and members of ACCT to receive the national association's most distinguished award, the M. Dale Ensign Trustee Award.

The executive secretary/executive director also became an active participant in the ACCT affiliate organization, the National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE). Earl Mihlbauer served as vice president and president of the organization during the 1988-1990 period.

Active participation in ACCT brought opportunities to interact with trustees from other states and Canadian provinces which, in turn, brought respect and visibility to the District Boards Association and the Wisconsin VTAE system.

Ten Years Gone By

The maturing years saw dramatic changes in the Association. Earl Mihlbauer became the first full-time executive secretary of the Association, followed later with a move of the Association's office to 22 North Carroll Street, and the addition of Tama Meili to the staff. Legislative matters became a top agenda item including the formation of coalitions in support of vocational-technical education in Wisconsin and in Washington through the ACCT legislative seminar.

“Active participation in ACCT brought opportunities to interact with trustees from other states and Canadian provinces which, in turn, brought respect and visibility to the District Boards Association and the Wisconsin VTAE system.”

1990's – The Commitment Years

The Third Decade

Reflecting on twenty years of involvement with the Boards Association, Dennis Nitschke has stated that he thought the 1970's was the decade of "awareness," the 1980's the decade of "comprehension and understanding the issues,"

"The January-March legislative session was one of cooperation.... It was a joint effort by all parties involved."

– Earl Mihlbauer

and the 1990's the decade of "commitment and maturing relationships" with the state board and the administrators association.²⁸

In 1990, Dwight York finished his first year as the state director. York came to the position as a past public school superintendent, member of the State Assembly,

and close colleague of Governor Thompson. His first year was a time of learning and understanding the mission of the VTAE system and the significant role the various actors and organizations played in fulfilling that mission to the citizens of Wisconsin.

Early on, York questioned the Boards Association's role in the grand scheme of the VTAE system. Given time, according to Earl Mihlbauer, York came to understand the role of the local district board members, and that the District Boards Association was his strongest ally in fulfilling his leadership mission. The January 26, 1990, Association minutes reflect this realization when J. Robert "Doc" Curtis, Association president and Madison board member,

reported to the membership, "There has been an enthusiasm felt among board members and a cooperation among districts and the state board."²⁹ Mihlbauer reported at the same meeting, "The January-March legislative session was one of cooperation. The Association worked with State Director Dwight York to pass the interdistrict tuition bill. It was a joint effort by all parties involved."

Jim Catania, district director at Blackhawk and then vice president of the administrators association, speaking to the Association board of directors at their August 4, 1990 planning meeting stated,

"I was requested to discuss how the boards and administrators associations could more effectively work together. I would like to restate the topic: How can the district directors, boards and state board work more closely together in developing a positive image on a statewide basis for the common good. The system is evolving and changing. The strength of the system lies in being able to respond quickly and anticipate change. The Boards Association is a respected, powerful and effective group. The district directors are the boards' employees. There are no issues that separate the two, just a different point of view or perspective. The question then isn't how do the boards and directors work together, it's how do these entities work closely with the state board. There is continuing need for more communication, sharing, and joint planning among the three entities. Unilateral position-taking should be kept to a minimum. There needs to continue to be a clear and understandable legislative agenda."³⁰

Organization Maturity

The structure of the organization's quarterly meeting format was once again a topic of review. At the 1990 planning meeting, an ad hoc committee made recommendations to strengthen the organization:

- Experiment with a Friday in-service, luncheon and speaker, and a Saturday business and board of directors meeting;
- Experiment with an alternative activity to attending the board of director meetings;
- Give the host college time on the program to present unique local activities;
- Urge district directors to participate with their boards at quarterly meetings;
- Consider a joint in-service with the state board; and
- Maintain Association regular representation at state VTAE board meetings.

Participation in Association quarterly meetings had continually expanded throughout the 1980's. In January of 1991, a new item was instituted called the "open forum." It provided an opportunity for any member to bring any issue before the board of directors and membership. It lives on today in the form of "special sessions" and "town hall meetings" supplementing the regular in-service from time-to-time.

Until 1992, Association committees were comprised of members as appointed by the president. A dynamic change was undertaken in April 1992 when the Association requested that each local district board, as a part of its July organizational meeting, select its own representative to the Association's committees.

State Director York, speaking at the August 28, 1992, planning meeting, noted the Association's growing clout:

"Your office reception and planning meeting reflects one of the many good things I see happening. You can send out invitations, but it doesn't mean people will turn out. When people like UW president Katherine Lyall, Secretary of the Department of Administration Jim Klauser, Orlando Canto, the Department of Administration chief policy analyst, Ken Cole, executive director of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Jim Haney, president of Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, and many others attend, you should be complimented."³¹

The Association in the 1980's had entertained two committees related to labor negotiations, the mediation/ arbitration committee in 1985, followed by the cost containment/labor negotiations committee. Fox Valley's Harland Kirchner chaired these committees and was a driving force at encouraging cooperation in the collective bargaining arena. By 1990, a collaborative affiliation had been formed between the administrators association's personnel committee, Marion Smith of the Mulcahy and Wherry law firm of Milwaukee, and the Boards Association.

In early 1990, the committee name was changed to human resources committee, to better reflect the intent and purpose of members. Board members on the committee felt strongly that there was a need to better educate members on human resource management and labor negotiations. In January of 1991, the committee recommended the Association develop a comprehensive in-service education program on labor negotiations and human resources management. The committee's efforts had a strong impact on educating board members on their role in collective bargaining and moved the 16 districts forward in collaborating in this arena.

In 1994, the state VTAE board, after years of debate, led a change of the system's name to the Wisconsin Technical College System. This action opened the door for the Association to become the Wisconsin Technical College District

Boards Association. It also provided the opportunity to move from the district director to college president title.

A major in-service highlight of the decade was a two-day workshop held at Wausau Insurance's Westwood Center, attended by more than 150 board members, state staff, and college administrators, conducted by author and leader in policy governance, John Carver. This extensive in-service resulted in several colleges adopting and implementing policy governance as their local model.

In July of 1996, Assistant State Director Edward Chin was appointed state director of the Wisconsin Technical College System. Chin, throughout his career at the state board, promoted a strong positive working relationship between the district boards and the state board.

By the mid-1990's, the Association had matured into an organization with clear goals, effective management functions and great ownership by the 144 members on the 16 member boards. The harmony was disrupted when Executive Director Mihlbauer was diagnosed with acute lymphoma cancer. He was to continue with this challenge through his June 30, 1997 retirement. Thankfully, he has attained 100% remission and leads an active life today.

Association President Ken Day, Northcentral, established a search committee to select a new executive director and begin a new era of leadership for the Association. Paul Gabriel, an attorney and assistant dean of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was selected as the Association's second executive director, effective July 1, 1997.

A New Executive Director

The board of directors of the Association, recognizing the critical role the executive director played in their continued success, provided for Gabriel to work with Executive Director Mihlbauer for a three-month transition period

from April through June. The new director had the opportunity to help plan and participate in a quarterly business and in-service meeting; to interact with the state director and state board; visit with members of Congress and their staff in Washington; visit ACCT staff in Washington; meet with more than 75 members of the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly; and visit many of the colleges and attend district board meetings. Gabriel completed his first quarterly Association meeting on July 19, 1997, reporting that it had been a smooth transition.

At the two-year point in his tenure, Gabriel noted that he "believes the commitment to public service and volunteer efforts by trustees, joined with the mission of the technical colleges, is a powerful combination. An added benefit has been the personal relationships that have been formed through working with the Association."³²

The 1990's ended with Executive Director Gabriel announcing at the October meeting that the Association's website, www.districtboards.org, was ready for unveiling, with future plans to include a bulletin board area where members would be able to post questions, and interact with other trustees.

Legislative Commitment

The Association opened the 1990's with a sound foundation in the legislative affairs area including a commitment to building members' advocacy skills, a cooperative working relationship with the administrators and state board, an effective VTAE coalition, and respect by the governor and legislature for the Boards Association and for the vocational-technical education mission it represented.

Since the organization of the VTAE system, most local district boards acted in a somewhat independent manner, except as directly governed by Wisconsin statute and state board policies. The need for cooperation between districts,

balanced with local autonomy, was very apparent as the 1980's closed, and State Board President DeLong made his "sing the same song" address to the Association. The Association's efforts culminated on June 28, 1990, with the adoption of a legislative protocol resolution:

"WHEREAS, the Wisconsin VTAE system is comprised of 16 individual districts with unique needs as it relates to programming, finances and facilities to serve the citizens of the district, and

WHEREAS, periodically individual districts within the system are faced with circumstances that may necessitate selective actions by the legislature to address the unique need of that district, and

WHEREAS, legislative action addressing one district may impact all districts within the system,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the 16 district boards individually and collectively through their representation to the VTAE District Boards Association hereby agree that all requests to the Wisconsin legislature to address the unique needs of the system or an individual district by any of the 16 district boards will be presented to the board of representatives of the VTAE District Boards Association for discussion and comment before it is submitted to the legislature for consideration. If timing is of the essence, the president shall call a special meeting of the board of directors."³³

This resolution would guide districts until 2000, when the Association would adopt a protocol based on a district sharing information with the Association, WTCS staff, and college presidents, rather than seeking permission to request legislation. The change would reflect the stability all parties had earned and banked through their common efforts and openness of shared purpose through the 1980's and 1990's.

The 1993-95 state budget process was to be the highlight of the Association's maturing legislative interaction. By law, the state board is required to submit a budget pro-

posal to the governor, who then crafts and presents a state budget to the legislature.

State Director York and Assistant State Director Chin, practicing their philosophy of inclusiveness, invited the Association and members of the VTAE coalition, to participate in the development of the budget recommendations to the governor. Chin and Mihlbauer have stated on numerous occasions that the 1993 session may have been the system's finest lobbying hour. A high-quality budget document was prepared by state staff, printed by the Association, and endorsed by all the coalition members.

State Director York invited the players to meet with the governor's state budget director to discuss and lobby for the VTAE budget. However, the governor proposed a smaller increase than requested despite a steady decline in state aid to the VTAE. Chin and Mihlbauer convinced the state director, district directors and board members that the system should seek a substantial raise in state aids by lobbying the legislature's Joint Committee on Finance. Breakfast meetings were held in each VTAE district with all members of the Senate and Assembly and lobbying continued in the capitol by York, Chin, Mihlbauer, district directors, board members, and coalition lobbyists.

As Mihlbauer relates, "It seemed almost surreal the day Joint Committee on Finance member Ben Brancel told Chin and me that he was going to lead the VTAE's efforts to increase general aids." The final result was the committee voting 10 to 6 to support an 11% increase in general aids from \$99 million in 1993 to \$112 million in 1995, the largest budget increase for any state agency in the budget cycle.

Respect at ACCT

The Wisconsin Boards Association began the decade of the 1990's by hosting a joint meeting of the Association with the ACCT central region seminar at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee on June 28-30, 1990. A new dimension of cooperation was attained with State Director York when he participated in the 1990 national legislative seminar. Wisconsin was recognized in 1990 as one of only 15 states with 100% ACCT membership among its college boards.

In 1993, Joan Jenstead of the Waukesha County board was elected to the ACCT board of directors as the central region representative. Joan was an outstanding representative, having graduated from WCTI, pursued a successful business career, served on the board of WCTI since 1984, and elected as vice president (1989-1991) and president (1991-1993) of the Boards Association.

In 1997, Wisconsin again gained national visibility and recognition when Fox Valley Technical College trustee Jerald Schoenike received the ACCT Central Region Trustee of the Year Award.

Wisconsin continued its active participation in the fall of 1998 when Linda Christman, MATC-Madison, was a candidate for the ACCT national board.

Reflecting

The commitment by board members to make the Boards Association a stronger voice for vocational and technical education was evident throughout the 1990's and prepared the way for the appointment of a new executive director. Association programs on board member development proved worthwhile and cooperation between the colleges and other groups on influencing legislation was effective. Through participation in ACCT, Wisconsin was recognized as a national leader in technical education. The VTAE

system became known as the Wisconsin Technical College System and the Association changed its name to the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association.

2000's – The Partnership Years

In many ways, the long work of Association members and Executive Director Mihlbauer to build a unified voice and positive working relationships reached a new level as the 1990's gave way to the new decade and millennium. "I really felt we could take a leadership role to build new partnerships because of the solid base the members and staff had worked so hard to create," Paul Gabriel reflected. "I didn't take the partnerships for granted. However, I couldn't have taken them for granted anyway, because veteran members kept reminding me it wasn't always this way."

Building a Curriculum for Board Members

Formalizing a trustee curriculum and establishing a new assistant director for member learning position at the Association have been major drivers of change in the early 2000's. The Association's commitment to design a curriculum - a "DACUM" process - in December, 1999, focused trustee programs more on the specific "competencies" reflecting trustee excellence. Led by WIDS, the Wisconsin (now Worldwide) Instructional Development System of the WTCS foundation, the Association identified the characteristics, duties and tasks representing excellence in trusteeship.

Partnering with WIDS helped the Association members "walk the walk" of technical college curriculum design, as well as better informing trustee programs through measurable skills and competencies. This work continues to guide Association learning programs and led to invitations to present on the Association's experience at ACCT re-

gional and national trustee conventions in 2000 and 2001. Perhaps most important, the WIDS/DACUM process helped broaden Association programming from the sharing of pertinent information, which the Association members said the organization had always done well, to include more programming to build trustee skills.

And Then There Were Three

The development and implementation of an assistant director position focusing on member learning and communication took the Association to a new level of capability. In spring, 2000, Association President Linda Christman, MATC-Madison, created an ad hoc committee on Association activities and staff resources. It assessed the allocation of current staff to major activities, the ability to meet the Association's mission and vision given those resources, and the need for change, if any, to the mix of activities and staffing. Led by Past President Bob Beaver, Mid-State, the committee concluded that the Association needed to invest in its member learning and communication efforts while also increasing the amount of time the executive director spent coordinating lobbying and advocacy efforts on the system's behalf.

In spring, 2001, the member boards made a major new commitment to the Association by authorizing creation of an assistant director position for member learning and communications. The position became a reality with the hiring of Steve Tenpas. Steve came to the Association from the UW Hospital and Clinics in Madison, where he served as training manager. Paul Gabriel has noted that

adding Steve was a major turning point in the Association's life. "It has led to steady improvement in the learning value of our meetings, in the value of our website resources, and in our ability to sustain and grow learning themes over time and between quarterly meetings." It also changed the executive director's role. Since the staff change, the Association's formal and informal advocacy efforts have expanded. The executive director's report to the Wisconsin ethics board reflects a 35% increase in the year following the assistant director's addition to the staff. After three years, lobby-related hours have increased by almost 60%.³⁴

Less measurable but just as important, the director's and Association's role has expanded in building other types of partnership activities. Some of the key activities over the new decade have included:

- the executive director addressing approximately 1,000 members of the Wisconsin Counties Association in fall, 2001, to reinforce our partnership and their leadership in appointing district board members;
- district board members committing to attend and participate in WTCS board meetings and events and creating a working group to seek new opportunities for partnership with the state board;
- reaching out to Wisconsin's two tribal colleges to encourage their participation in ACCT;
- active participation of the WSG student government president in Boards Association meetings and of the Association executive director in WSG meetings;
- through the interdistrict/interagency cooperation committee, board member support and participation in the development of the WTCS insurance trust, eTech college of Wisconsin, and CCBenefits socioeconomic benefits study; and

- the Association's leadership realizing an extraordinary 5,000 square foot interactive showcase of WTCS programs and opportunities as part of the WI Association of School Boards convention in January, 2001.

The 2001 Wisconsin Association of School Boards convention brought dozens of technical college faculty, staff, students, and board members together with interactive technology and hands-on demonstrations around clusters of learning programs. Hundreds of visitors attempted virtual surgery, ran an "ultrasound" machine, explored a virtual firearms range, and interacted with youth apprenticeship students, among many other exhibits and demonstrations. Omnitech Computer Corporation loaned the exhibition 40 new computer systems through MATC-Milwaukee, and donated several new laptop computers to be awarded as door prizes to visitors' school districts.

Technology Drives Change

As office and communications technology has changed, the Association has moved rapidly to an electronic-based communications system. Two district boards, Chippewa Valley and Western Wisconsin, began a pilot program of "paperless" communication with the Association through email and the internet in 2003. The experiment has become almost invisible, however, the Association's communication with members and partners is increasingly electronic.

The Association website, www.districtboards.org, has quickly evolved in its capability, having undergone both a major redesign and regular improvements.

The early 2000 years are also marked by bringing office systems and Association operations to a new level. Led by Marge Linse, Chippewa Valley, the Association reviewed, rewrote and adopted reworked bylaws, policies, and procedures, staff position descriptions, and a first-ever person-

nel manual. The Association brought a new phone system and peer-to-peer office computer network on line, expanded and reorganized the Association's office suite, and continues to improve small but important services, from the capability to produce its own member directories, to automating meeting registrations.

New WTCS Leadership

State Director Ed Chin announced his retirement in fall, 2001, effective in early 2002. Two of the many positive reflections on his tenure were the large number of friends and close colleagues he made among district board members, and his close working relationship with the Association and its staff. After a national search, veteran college president Dr. Richard Carpenter was tapped to become the WTCS president and state director. Dr. Carpenter began as president in May, 2002. He announced his departure in May, 2004, to return to a college presidency at the Community College of Southern Nevada.

Legislation Present and Future

The legislative experience has changed markedly in recent years. The Association and WTCS have responded well, but the challenges are as daunting as ever. While biennium budget bills continue to dominate legislative sessions, state deficits and tax pressures have greatly reduced expectations. An increase in general aid that would have seemed modest in the past would be wildly positive today. Nevertheless, the WTCS has taken its advocacy to a new level of district and partner grassroots support and has succeeded as a result. The 1999-01 and 2001-03 bills were signed in better condition for the WTCS than as introduced. Even in the face of a \$3.2 billion state deficit, the governor's 2003-05 budget bill recommended only a

modest \$1 million cut to WTCS funding. In contrast, the UW was cut by \$250 million. On the first day of budget votes, the WTCS cut was expanded by \$15 million. Forty-one days later, on the last day of budget voting, the \$15 million was fully restored after a vigorous grassroots campaign led by the Association.

A veteran college president recently pointed out that the Association and WTCS play very good "defense" in the capitol. This has been helpful as proposals to change district authority and governance surface, and as bills are introduced to cut or end programs such as youth options and youth apprenticeship. This capacity was perhaps never more important, nor more successful, than during the Assembly "Taskforce" review of the WTCS. Created in spring, 2003, the taskforce was given a very broad charge to review WTCS mission, governance, funding, operations and facilities. From the start (when the Association fought to include WTCS representation in the taskforce membership) to the finish (making presentations linking our funding and governance with our positive impact and role in the state), the WTCS came together and turned a difficult and potentially threatening experience into a positive learning experience.

The taskforce reflects something important about the legislative process and our challenges in the early 2000's and beyond. This is a time of broader "macro-level" initiatives that take and will take enormous and coordinated efforts to address in positive fashion for the WTCS. Initiatives like a constitutional amendment limiting taxing and spending, or issues affecting WTCS-UW transfer and mission issues, are examples. So, too, are WTCS initiatives such as the enormous reallocation of resources to address nursing and healthcare worker shortages, and the 'advanced manufacturing solutions' package of initiatives. Addressing these kinds of issues will require both playing better defense than ever, and, more importantly, playing better offense.

ACCT Today

Wisconsin is a leader in ACCT participation. Data from the 2003 annual convention in Denver is illustrative: Wisconsin board members comprised 2.5% of trustees attending (40 out of approximately 1,600) but more than 16% of the trustees presenting sessions (14 out of approximately 85). That's a presenter rate more than 6 times the attendance rate.

Following Joan Jenstead's ACCT board service, Wisconsin worked hard to place a member into the national leadership. Despite having the endorsement of regional nominations committees, larger states such as Illinois were no match for Wisconsin candidates when it came down to votes. After attempts by Linda Christman, and Sandra Haasl, Mid-State, Haasl was appointed to fill an open seat in 2003, and was re-elected several months later. Wisconsin's return to leadership, however, was short-lived as Haasl moved out of state and left the Association and ACCT in spring, 2004.

In recognition of her service, the Association presented Joan Jenstead with a lifetime membership in ACCT in 2000. WITC President David Hildebrand was honored as the Central Region CEO of the Year in 2001. The state also saw its congressional leadership recognized in 2001 when Wisconsin's 7th District Congressman, David Obey, received the ACCT-AACC National Leadership Award in Washington, D.C. Paul Gabriel continues to work closely with his peers through the National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE), and was elected NCSACE president for 2001-2002.

Postscript

A most extraordinary thing happens to certain community volunteers. They find themselves in a role that they themselves sought, but, in reality, could not have imagined. It is more than most bargained for, both in effort required and in its reward. They may not have pursued it at all if they'd realized the extent of the responsibility. They bring to the table personal skills, professional experience, commitment to technical education, a sense of stewardship, and many more elements of trusteeship. In many ways they create a most "representative" form of local government. They represent every Wisconsin county and the demographic, geographic, social, economic, professional, and personal faces of a great state.

They come together to combine nine distinct voices at each college board table into one board voice. Since 1971, they have come together to combine those sixteen voices into something larger at the state level.

Thirty-three years later, the Technical College District Boards Association is strong, but not without significant challenges. Like the boards and colleges it represents, it is ever-changing and must respond more quickly to add value and to thrive. One of the great challenges of keeping legislators and the public aware of today's technical colleges is fueled by how fast the colleges change. The faster the rate of change, the harder it is for even well-informed people to keep up with you.

Change brings great new things and renewal and new energy. It also magnifies the need for continuous learning and relearning. Like the colleges, the rate of change has dramatically affected this Association, the system presi-

dent and board, the college presidents, and all of our leaders. From 1997 to the present:

- The WTCS engaged a new system president and now seeks another;
- 75% of the colleges – 12 of 16 – have engaged new presidents;
- 85% of state board members – 11 of 13 – were first appointed;
- 74% of district board members – 106 of 144 – were first appointed;
- 87% of Association board of director members – 14 of 16 – were first appointed; and
- 100% of the Association's executive committee members were first elected.

If the technical colleges continue to respond to the state's and local communities' ever-changing needs for the next 33 years as they have for the past 33, Wisconsin will surely thrive. If the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association likewise continues to respond to its ever-changing member needs through education, information, advocacy, and interdistrict cooperation, the WTCS will thrive as well.

Paul Gabriel — Executive Director, June, 2004

Endnotes

¹Kathleen A. Paris, *A Political History of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education in Wisconsin*, (VTAE, 1985).

²The Wisconsin VTAE officially became the Wisconsin Technical College System, WTCS, in April, 1994.

³Paris, *supra.*, at 123-124.

⁴*Id.*, at 125.

⁵*Id.*, at 181.

⁶*Id.*

⁷Carl Plaum, *VTAE District Boards Association, 1971-1981*, (1981) (Pamphlet).

⁸Interview with Eugene Lehrmann, May 6, 2003, Madison, Wisconsin.

⁹Paris, *supra.*, at 135.

¹⁰College presidents were formerly known as district directors.

¹¹Interview with Richard Anderson and Joan Jenstead, October 6, 2003, Waukesha, Wisconsin.

¹²Plaum pamphlet, *supra.*

¹³*Id.*

¹⁴*Id.*

¹⁵Interview with Edward Chin. May 6, 2003, Madison, Wisconsin.

¹⁶Anderson and Jenstead 2003 Interview, *supra.*

¹⁷Interview with Frederick (Fritz) Wenzel, October 6, 2003, Madison, Wisconsin.

¹⁸Interview with Dennis Nitschke, April 29, 2003, Madison, Wisconsin.

¹⁹*Id.*

²⁰The VTAE Coalition was formed in 1985 and comprised of the VTAE State Board, Administrators Association, District Boards Association, Student Government Association, WI Federation of Teachers, WI Education Association Council, and WI Vocational Association. The same organizations, under their current names, continue as the WTCS Coalition membership in 2004.

²¹Award recipients are listed in Association Award Recipients, pg.33.

²²Paris, *supra.*, at 181.

²³Interview with Robert Sorensen, May 6, 2003, Madison, Wisconsin.

²⁴Paris, *supra.*, at 208-209.

²⁵Paris, *supra.*, at 208-209, from an interview with Dennis Nitschke, Executive Secretary, East-Central Wisconsin VTAE Consortium, November 3, 1982.

²⁶Draft Assembly Bill 1012, Spring Session 1984.

²⁷Association Minutes, April 14, 1984.

²⁸Nitschke 2003 Interview, *supra.*

²⁹Association Minutes, January 26, 1990.

³⁰Association Minutes, August 4, 1990.

³¹Association Minutes, August 28, 1992.

³²Association Minutes, April 16, 1999.

³³Association Minutes, June 28, 1990.

³⁴Wisconsin Ethics Board Lobby Reports, 2000-2004.

About the Authors

EARL MIHLBAUER was brought up on a farm in rural LaValle Township and the Village of LaValle in northwest Sauk County. He graduated from Kenosha Technical Institute (now Gateway Technical College) in 1965 and from Western Michigan University-Kalamazoo in 1967. He was one of the early pioneers to seek a B.S. degree after receiving a technical institute associate degree. He later earned an M.S. from UW-Whitewater, and pursued graduate studies at UW-Madison. Mihlbauer served as Director of Vocational Education for the Waunakee, DeForest, McFarland and Wisconsin Heights School Districts from 1970 to 1980. He joined Southwest Wisconsin VTAE District in 1980 as Business and Marketing Coordinator, and in 1983, became the first Executive Director of the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association. He retired in 1997 to fight a serious illness, which he conquered, and today pursues an active life as a volunteer.



JERALD SCHOENIKE was born in Clintonville, Wisconsin. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stout with a B.S. and M.S. Degree. He was one of two Wisconsin educators to receive an Education Profession Development Act scholarship to attend the University of Illinois and earned a Doctorate of Education in Vocational-Technical Education in 1974. Dr. Schoenike was superintendent of schools for Clintonville Public School District from 1983 to 1996 and served as the district administrator representative to the Fox Valley Technical College District Board from 1987 to 1997, serving as chairperson of the board for two years. He was elected Secretary/Treasurer and Vice President of the District Boards Association. He was the Association's Board Member of the Year in 1996 and ACCT's Trustee of the Year award for the Central Region in 1997.

Timeline of Key Events

Sept. 10, 1965 Governor Knowles signs law requiring state-wide VTAE districts

The 1970's

June 4, 1971 Wisconsin VTAE Boards Association incorporated

July 1, 1971 Eugene Lehrmann appointed VTAE state director

July 24, 1971 Organizational meeting of the VTAE Boards Association – Marvin Brickson, Madison, selected as first president

April 15, 1972 ACCT organized as a national organization

April 29, 1972 First quarterly Association meeting held in Waukesha district

July 29, 1972 Clare Rejahl appointed as part-time Association executive secretary

Dec. 16, 1972 William Sirek, Fox Valley district director, appointed as first liaison to Association from administrators association

Jan. 27, 1973 Association joins ACCT

April 28, 1973 Members' first formal interaction with state legislators (would become the "legislative seminar")

Oct. 27, 1973 First annual meeting of the Boards Association

Jan. 26, 1974 A representative from each board is named to the expanded executive committee, the precursor to the board of directors

Oct., 1974 Lillian Sicula, Milwaukee, elected to ACCT board of directors

May, 1975 Milwaukee hosts ACCT Central Region Conference

June 13, 1975 William Pierce, Waukesha County, empowered to act as executive secretary

Jan. 21, 1978 Association members first meeting with Wisconsin Congressional Delegation (precursor to the NLS)

July 1, 1979 Robert Sorensen appointed VTAE state director

The 1980's

July 1, 1983 Earl Mihlbauer becomes first full-time Association executive secretary

July 1, 1983 Legislation changes local boards from seven to nine members

Oct., 1983 Harland Kirchner, Fox Valley, elected to ACCT board of directors

April 25, 1986 Title of Association "executive secretary" changed to "executive director"

Dec. 16, 1986 Tama Meili joins Association staff

Oct., 1987 Harland Kirchner receives ACCT's highest award, the M. Dale Ensign Award

June 28, 1988 Association offices move to 22 N. Carroll St.

Fall, 1988 Earl Mihlbauer elected president of the National Council of State Association Chief Ex-

July 1, 1989 Dwight York appointed VTAE state director

The 1990's

Oct., 1993 Joan Jenstead, Waukesha County, elected to ACCT board of directors

April 21, 1994 VTAE changed to "Wisconsin Technical College System"

- April 22, 1994 Association name changed to “Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association”
- July 1, 1994 “District director” title becomes “college president”
- July 1, 1996 Edward Chin appointed WTCS state director
- Mar. 31, 1997 Association hires Paul Gabriel to succeed Earl Mihlbauer
- June 30, 1997 Earl Mihlbauer retires as Association executive director
- July 25, 1998 Revised Association bylaws adopted
- Oct., 1999 Association website unveiled
- Dec., 1999 Association engages WIDS in curriculum design process
- The 2000’s**
- Jan. 16-18, 2001 Association coordinates major exhibition at school boards convention in Milwaukee
- July 2, 2001 Steve Tenpas joins Association in newly-created position of assistant director – member learning and communications
- Oct. 12, 2001 Paul Gabriel elected president, National Council of State Association Chief Executives
- Jan., 2002 Richard Carpenter becomes WTCS president
- June 5, 2003 Assembly Speaker Gard announces Taskforce to Review WTCS

Association Presidents and Officers 1971-2004

<u>Term</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Vice President</u>	<u>Secretary/Treasurer</u>
1971-73	Marvin Brickson (MATC-Madison)	Harland Kirchner (Fox Valley)	Leah Rigler (WI Indianhead)
1973-75	Harland Kirchner (Fox Valley)	Walter Calvert (Southwest WI)	Albert Schumacher (Blackhawk)
1975-77	Harold Brennan (Lakeshore)	Frederick Wenzel (Mid-State)	William Pierce (Waukesha County)
1977-79	Arthur Medtlie (District One)	Carl Plaum (Moraine Park)	William Pierce (Waukesha County)
1979-81	Carl Plaum (Moraine Park)	Fred Wenzel (Mid-State)	William Pierce (Waukesha County)
1981-83	Frederick Wenzel (Mid-State)	James Hasler (MATC-Madison)	Carl Plaum (Moraine Park)
1983-84	James Hasler (MATC-Madison)	Thomas Padesky (Western WI)	Carl Plaum (Moraine Park)
1984-85	Thomas Padesky (Western WI)	Karen Weden (North Central)	Carl Plaum (Moraine Park)
1985-87	Karen Weden (North Central)	Harry Guzniczak (MATC-Milw)	Carl Plaum (Moraine Park)
1987-88	Harry Guzniczak (MATC-Milw)	J. Robert Curtis (MATC-Madison)	Carl Plaum (Moraine Park)
1988-89	Harry Guzniczak (MATC-Milw)	J. Robert Curtis (MATC-Madison)	Jacqueline DeBaker (Lakeshore)
1989-90	J. Robert Curtis (MATC-Madison)	Joan Jenstead (Waukesha County)	Jacqueline DeBaker (Lakeshore)
1990-91	J. Robert Curtis (MATC-Madison)	Joan Jenstead (Waukesha County)	Virginia Nuske (Northeast WI)
1991-92	Joan Jenstead (Waukesha County)	Deborah Streuli (WI Indianhead)	Virginia Nuske (Northeast WI)
1992-93	Joan Jenstead (Waukesha County)	Deborah Streuli (WI Indianhead)	Jenice Bowie (Moraine Park)
1993-94	Deborah Streuli (WI Indianhead)	Kenneth Day (North Central)	Jenice Bowie (Moraine Park)
1994-95	Deborah Streuli (WI Indianhead)	Kenneth Day (Northcentral)	Jerald Schoenike (Fox Valley)
1995-97	Kenneth Day (Northcentral)	Jerald Schoenike (Fox Valley)	Linda Christman (MATC-Madison)
1997-99	Robert Beaver (Mid-State)	Linda Christman (MATC-Madison)	Ruth Mundt (Southwest WI)
1999-2001	Linda Christman (MATC-Madison)	Ruth Mundt (Southwest WI)	Philip Baranowski (Moraine Park)
2001-03	Ruth Mundt (Southwest WI)	Philip Baranowski (Moraine Park)	David Logghe (WI Indianhead)
2003-04	Philip Baranowski (Moraine Park)	David Logghe (WI Indianhead)	John Lukas (Lakeshore)

Association Award Recipients

Board Member of the Year Award

1976	William Pierce, Waukesha
1978	Walter Calvert, Southwest WI
1979	Leah Rigler, WI Indianhead
1980	Ben Guthrie, Nicolet
1989-90	Jacqueline DeBaker, Lakeshore
1990-91	Joan Jenstead, Waukesha
1991-92	Donald McGrath, Blackhawk
1992-93	Conrad Zander, Nicolet
1993-94	Ruth Harker, Lakeshore
1994-95	James Munro, Blackhawk Jerald Schoenike, Fox Valley
1995-96	Kenneth Day, Northcentral
1996-97	Deborah Streuli, WI Indianhead
1997-98	Linda Christman, MATC-Madison
1998-99	Robert Beaver, Mid-State
1999-2000	Philip Baranowski, Moraine Park
2000-01	Audrey Hein, Blackhawk
2001-02	Sandra Haasl, Mid-State
2002-03	Ruth Mundt, Southwest WI
2003-04	Joan Jenstead, Waukesha

Legislator of the Year Award

Prior to 1988	Representative Richard Grobschmidt Representative Calvin Potter Representative Carl Otte Senator Robert Jauch Senator Gary George
1988-89	Senator Joseph Strohl Representative Mary Panzer Representative Peter Barca
1989-90	Senator Joseph Andrea Senator Marvin Roshell
1990-91	Senator David Helbach Representative David Prosser
1991-92	Representative Mary Hubler Senator Joseph Leean
1992-93	Representative David Brandemuehl Representative James Holperin Senator Charles Chvala
1993-94	Representative Barbara Linton Representative Ben Brancel
1994-95	Senator Dale Schultz
1995-96	Representative Michael Lehman Senator Brian Rude
1996-97	Representative Marlin Schneider Senator Margaret Farrow
1997-98	Representative Thomas Ourada Senator Russell Decker
1998-99	Senator Richard Grobschmidt Representative Robin Kreibich
1999-2000	Representative Sheryl Albers

Distinguished Alumni Award

1998	Mark Senti, Florida (Chippewa Valley)
1999	Earl Mihlbauer, Madison (Gateway)
2000	Marilyn Grainger, Waukesha (Waukesha County)
2001	Vernon Jung, Jr., Kewaskum (Moraine Park)
2002	Todd LoCascio, Green Bay (Northeast WI)
2003	Don Jobe, La Crosse (Western WI)
2004	Robin Roberts, DeForest (MATC-Madison)

TECh (Technical Education Champion) Award

The "State Award" until 1993 (Nominating district follows in parentheses)

Prior to 1991	Congressman Thomas Petri Congressman Steven Gunderson Congressman David Obey Senator Gary Goyke Eugene Lehrmann, former VTAE State Director Jack Reihl, Secretary/Treasurer, WI AFL-CIO Allen-Bradley Corporation, Milwaukee (MATC-Milwaukee)
1992-93	Greater Menomonie Community (Chippewa Valley)
1993-94	General Motors Corporation, Janesville (Blackhawk)
1994-95	Banta Corporation and CEO Cal Aurand, Menasha (Fox Valley)
1995-96	Doboy Packaging Machinery, New Richmond (WI Indianhead)
1996-97	J.P. Cullen, Janesville (Blackhawk)
1997-98	Miller Electric Manufacturing, Appleton (Fox Valley)
1998-99	Kell Container and the Kell Family, Chippewa Falls (Chippewa Valley)
1999-00	Webcrafters and the Frautschi Family, Madison (MATC-Madison)
2000-01	Dr. H. Victor Baldi, Appleton (Fox Valley)
2001-02	Fred W. Lenz, Blue River (Southwest WI)
2002-03	J.J. Keller & Associates, Neenah (Fox Valley)
2003	Ministry Health Care, Milwaukee and statewide (Chippewa Valley, Fox Valley, Mid-State, and Northeast WI)

Media Award

- 1997 Marybeth Ajack, *Herald Times Reporter*, Manitowoc (Lakeshore)
Jim Kneiszel, *Journal Times*, Racine (Gateway)
Cathy Peterson, *Phillips Bee*, Phillips (Northcentral)
Jean Berns Jones, *Dodgeville Chronicle*, Dodgeville (Southwest WI)
- 1998 Robert Branen, *Southern Lakes Media*, Burlington (Gateway)
Geeta Sharma-Jensen, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* (MATC-Milwaukee)
Patti Zarling, *Green Bay News-Chronicle*, Green Bay (Northeast WI)
- 1999 Pam Tauscher, *WMTV-TV15*, Madison (Madison)
- 2000 John Lee, *The Post-Crescent*, Appleton (Fox Valley)
- 2001 Rick Barrett, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* (Waukesha County)
- 2002 Scott Wittchow, *Action Advertiser*, Fond du Lac (Moraine Park)
- 2003 Phil Rhein, *Daily Register*, Portage (MATC-Madison)

Association Members Serving 15 Years or Longer

Current Members as of July, 2004

Years Appointed	Name	District
25 1979	Philip Baranowski	Moraine Park
23 1981	Russell Moyer	Southwest WI
23 1981	Jerry Voechting	Lakeshore
20 1984	Joan Jenstead	Waukesha County
20 1979-85 1990	Robert Beaver	Southwest WI, Mid-State
19 1985	Bruce Bradley	Southwest WI
19 1985	Walter Wetzel	Chippewa Valley
18 1986	Lorraine LaBeree	WI Indianhead
17 1987	Linda Carlson	Western WI
16 1988	Douglas Schroeder	Western WI
15 1989	Ruth Harker	Lakeshore
15 1989	Daniel Klawitter	Moraine Park
15 1989	Carolyn Lawrence	Blackhawk
15 1989	James Olson	Western WI

Past Members as of July, 2004

Years Served	Name	District
27 1967-94	William Pierce	Waukesha County
26 1967-93	Fredrick (Fritz) Wetzel	Mid-State
25 1967-92	Harland Kirchner	Fox Valley
23 1972-95	John Kmosena	WI Indianhead
22 1967-89	Robert Fries	Nicolet Area
22 1971-93	Conrad Zander	Nicolet Area
20 1968-88	Carl Plaum	Moraine Park
19 1967-86	Joseph Barta	Lakeshore
19 1967-86	Robert Goetsch	Lakeshore
19 1967-86	Daniel Meyer	Mid-State
17 1968-85	Ray Sommerville	WI Indianhead
17 1974-91	James Hasler	MATC-Madison
16 1964-80	Louis Youngman	Western WI
16 1967-83	Harold Brennan	Lakeshore
16 1967-83	Marvin Brickson	MATC-Madison
16 1967-83	John Kramer	Southwest WI
16 1968-84	Arthur Medtlie	Chippewa Valley
16 1988-2004	Marge Linse	Chippewa Valley
15 1966-81	Kermit Goertz	Northcentral
15 1968-83	Berval Deutscher	Chippewa Valley
15 1975-90	Gerald Thomas	MATC-Madison
15 1977-92	Edward Cooper	Waukesha County
15 1978-93	Arlene Syring	Northcentral
15 1984-99	Jacqueline DeBaker	Lakeshore
15 1987-2002	Ruth Mueller	Moraine Park
15 1989-2004	Linda Christman	MATC-Madison
15 1989-2004	Ruth Mundt	Southwest WI

District Directors and College Presidents 1965 - 2004

Chippewa Valley

(1963)-1974 Cecil Beede
 1974-1994 Norbert Wurtzel
 1994-present William Ihlenfeldt

Western Wisconsin

1965-1986 Charles G. Richardson
 1987-1989 Beverly Simone
 1989-present Lee Rasch

Southwest Wisconsin

1967-1969 Conrad Meyer
 1969-1988 Ronald Anderson
 1988 Norman Mitby (interim)
 1988-1999 Richard Rogers
 1999-present Karen R. Knox

Madison Area

(1960)-1988 Norman Mitby
 1988-2003 Beverly Simone
 2003-present Rose Ann Findlen (interim)

Blackhawk

1968-1985 O.L. Johnson
 1985-1997 James C. Catania
 1997-present Eric A. Larson

Gateway

1966-1967 Eugene Lehrmann
 1967-1983 Keith Stoehr
 1983-1984 Arthur Binnie
 1984-1985 Ed Taibl (interim)
 1985-1993 John Birkholz
 1993-1995 William Nickolai (interim)

1995-1998 Carole Johnson
 1998-1999 Management Team (interim) – Patrick Flanagan, Cassell Lawson, William Nickolai, Mark Zlevor
 1999-present Sam E. Borden

Waukesha County

(1949)-1973 Tony Natalizio
 1973-2002 Richard Anderson
 2002-present Carol Brown

Milwaukee Area

(1958)-1968 George A. Parkinson
 1968-1981 William L. Ramsey
 1981-1982 Edwin A. Taibl
 1982-1990 Rus F. Slicker
 1990-1992 Barbara D. Holmes
 1993-2001 John R. Birkholz
 2002-present Darnell E. Cole

Moraine Park

1967-1971 Harley VanValkenburg
 1971-1979 Robert Sorensen
 1979-2004 John Shanahan
 2004-present Gayle Hytrek

Lakeshore

1967-1988 Frederick J. Nierode
 1988-2003 Dennis Ladwig
 2003-present Michael Lanser

Fox Valley

1967-1982 William Sirek
 1982-1993 Stanley Spanbauer

1993-1999 H. Victor Baldi
2000-2001 Laurence Johnson
2001-2001 James Milslagle (interim)
2002-present David Buettner

Northeast Wisconsin

1972-78 Ken Haubenschild
1978-97 Gerald Prindiville
1997-present H. Jeffrey Rafn

Mid-State

1967-1981 Earl F. Jaeger
1981-1995 Melvin H. Schneeberg
1995-2003 Brian G. Oehler
2003-present John Clark

Northcentral

(1951)-1977 Lawrence B. Hoyt
1977-1984 Dwight Davis
1985 Richard H. Neumann (interim)
1985-1993 Donald Hagen
1993 Dean Dietrich (interim)
1994-present Robert C. Ernst

Nicolet Area

1968-1985 Richard Brown
1985-1987 Jack Lundy
1987-1991 Patricia Travis
1991-present Adrian Lorbetske

Wisconsin Indianhead

1968-1971 Sam Lavine
1971-1978 James W. Covey
1978-1984 Daniel Wagner
1984-2004 David R. Hildebrand
2004-present Hank Hurley

VTAE and Technical College State Directors 1911 - 2004

1911-1916	Charles McCarthy
1916-1918	Frank Glynn
1918-1921	John Callahan
1921-1944	George Hambrecht
1944-1970	Clarence Greiber
1971-1979	Eugene Lehrmann
1979-1989	Robert Sorensen
1989-1996	Dwight York
1996-2002	Edward Chin
2002-2004	Richard Carpenter

Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association

2004