

FROM THE EDITOR

Want to win national recognition—for free?



In 1995, *American School Board Journal* started a new initiative to honor school districts for best practices. And over the past decade-plus, we have recognized hundreds of programs that showcase district leadership, creativity, innovation, and commitment to student achievement.

Now through Oct. 15, we are accepting applications online at www.asbj.com/magna2 for the 2009 Magna Awards. Later this fall, an independent panel of judges will sift through the applications, searching for programs that are developed or actively supported by the school board and the result of appropriate board leadership and collaboration.

What the judges look for are programs that are successful in view of their primary objectives and promote the advancement of student learning. Special consideration is given to programs that can be replicated in districts with similar conditions and resources.

The best part about applying for the program is how much it costs: Nothing. That's right—nada, zilch.

Thanks to our corporate partner, Sodexo School Services, the Magna Awards program is free to all districts that apply. The only requirement is that your district must be a member of your state school boards association.

Nominations are judged in one of three categories—under 5,000 enrollment; 5,000-20,000 students; and over

20,000 students. One grand prize winner is selected in each category and receives a \$4,000 award from Sodexo. Five additional winners and honorable mention awards will be selected from each enrollment category.

We have moved the application deadline back this year by two weeks in an effort to give more schools and districts a chance to apply. Take a moment to visit www.asbj.com/magna. Click on “Magna Information Page” for more details about the program and tips on the application process. And if you need help or have a question, contact Margaret Suslick at msuslick@nsba.org.

Now that I'm finished with the shameless plug, let's take a look inside this issue, which focuses on school facilities. In “A Moving Target,” Associate Editor Joetta Sack-Min takes a look at how demographic shifts and changes in the housing market are making it harder for school districts to predict enrollment, and what some are doing about it.

On another front, Senior Editor Naomi Dillon leads off our special report on health and wellness with “Saving Dollars, Saving Lives,” which focuses on how employee health and wellness programs can reduce your costs and increase the life expectancy of your staff.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Until next month...

Glenn Cook, Editor-in-Chief