

from the Director's Desktop



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When the new year began, NASBE opened for business in a brand new office. Our old space was just too big for our current staff. So when we found a tenant who was willing to sublease, we came back to Old Town Alexandria—just a few blocks away from the location of NASBE's offices for most of its history.

In the process of moving, we sorted through old publications and documents. We unearthed real treasures—like the art work that now hangs in our entry—and more than a few items that left us scratching our heads asking, “Why on *Earth* did anyone save this?”

The move was also a great learning experience. Here are some important lessons we took away from our relocation—lessons that may be helpful to you as you undertake work on your state board of education:

1/Do not move in December. Perhaps we should have realized that adding the stress of a move to other year-end responsibilities was, well, a bit much. Instead of holiday decorations in our office entryway, we had a big dumpster. (We had rejected the idea of adding twinkling lights around the top.) On the other hand, we did start 2015 in wonderful new offices.

2/NASBE has a solid history to build on. Over the years, NASBE has produced a wealth of resources to help state board of education members, and as we dug through closets, we located most of them. (Our old catalog system was pretty basic: We simply asked long-time editor Dave Kysilko whether we had ever produced anything on the topic, and he pointed us in the right direction.

His retirement forced us to dig through the piles ourselves.) In that process, we realized that many of these older publications still have relevance for the citizen leaders who serve on state boards today. Now we have catalogued all our publications—expect to see more of them as issues arise.

3/Some things are just not worth holding on to. Deep in a closet, we found two *boxes* of plastic lunch trays—50 in all—of the type used in every school lunch room in the country. Try as we might, we never figured out what they were doing in our office. We found a brand new preschool that was thrilled with our donation.

Now that we are in our brand new offices (333 John Carlyle Drive, Alexandria, Virginia, should you be in the area), we have learned some important lessons. First, change can be a good thing. Our move has given us bright new offices and a new opportunity to think about what we do with and for state boards of education.

Second, it's important to remember—and build on—your heritage. We are rediscovering a wealth of great NASBE work. Your state board also has built a strong policy foundation. So before you decide you need to create a policy from the ground up, research what has come before.

On the other hand, you may find your own equivalent of our plastic lunch trays. There are some vestigial policies and practices that it might be time to reevaluate, or just toss! Just don't move in December. Trust us on this.