

# 2018 Summer Board Meeting

## Minutes

The Horace Mann League of the USA

### 2018 Summer Board Meeting

Dates – Saturdays in June – 23<sup>rd</sup>, 8:00 am

Location – Chicago O’Hare Marriott Hotel

Meeting called to order by President, Eric King, at 8:05 am.

Members Present: Eric King, Ruben Alejandro, Martha Bruckner, David Berliner, Talisa Dixon, James Harvey, and Jack McKay

Approval of Minutes of the HML Winter Meeting on February 15, 2018.

Motion by Ruben Alejandro, seconded by James Harvey to approve the HML 2018 Winter Board Meeting minutes. Motion Passed.

Approval of Minutes of the HML Annual Meeting on February 16, 2018. Moved by James Harvey, seconded by Ruben Alejandro to approve the the HML 2018 Annual meeting. Minutes. Passed.

HML 100 Year Anniversary Celebration.

Motion by Ruben Alejandro, seconded by James Harvey that the HML publish a book on “Why Public Education: from Thomas to Horace to John” edited by David Berliner. Further that a symposium and press conference by held in conjunction with the publication in 2022. Further, that an outline of tentative chapters and authors be presented at the 2019 Winter Meeting. Passed.

Spencer Foundation Grant

Motion by David Berliner, seconded by Ruben Alejandro, that a proposed grant outline be written by Eric King and Jack McKay for review by the HML Board within 30 days. Passed

## Institutional Membership

Motion by James Harvey, seconded by David Berliner, that an Institutional Membership classification be created. Further, that the tiered classification be \$500 for districts up to 999 students, \$1,000 for districts between 1000 and 10,000, and those above 10,000, \$1,500. Institutional membership include school board members. Passed.

## Extended HML Winter Meeting time

Motion by Ruben Alejandro, seconded by Martha Bruckner, that the HML Winter Meeting, held on Thursday of the AASA convention, be extended from three hours (2:00 to 5:00 pm to include two evening hours, 7:00 to 9:00 pm time, if warranted. Passed.

## Added Corporate Partners

Motion be Ruben Alejandro, seconded by David Berliner, that each officer and director provide a minimum of one person to contact for a possible corporate partnership. Passed

## Membership Recruitment Strategy

Moved by James Harvey, seconded by Martha Bruckner, that each officer and director provide a minimum of five names of potential HML members. Passed.

## Social Media Development Contract

Moved by Martha Bruckner, seconded by Talisa Dixon, that the HML enter into a contract with Maverick PR to redesign the HML website, logo, and other social media applications for \$1,150. Passed.

## HML Logo

Discussion held on the possible HML logos. Martha Bruckner will relay concerns and suggestions regarding possible logo designs.

## HML Branding

Discussion held on results of a small sample survey regarding the image, means of communications, and benefits of membership. Major findings to be included in a future issue of the HML Post.

#### Nominations Committee Report

Motion by Martha Bruckner, seconded by David Berliner, that James Harvey be presented to the membership at the annual meeting to be Vice President.

#### Reappointment and Appoints to the HML Board

Motion by Martha Bruckner, seconded by Talisa Dixon, that Ruben Alejandro, Ember Conley and Martha Bruckner, be appointed to an additional three-year term

Further that Virginia Cardenas, Clark County Schools; and Bill Mathis, NECP be nominated to a three-year term on the HML Board of Directors. Passed.

#### HML Recognitions at the Annual Meeting

To be announced at a later time. We await confirmation that those selected are available to attend the annual meeting.

#### Adjournment

Motion by James Harvey, seconded by David Berliner, that the meeting be adjourned at 1:30 pm. Passed

## Approval of 2018 Winter Board Meeting Minutes

(See attachment # 1)

## Approval of 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes

(See Attachment #2)

### Financial Report

Year to date REVENUES

2018 Proposed		Actual YTD	Percent
Revenues	Proposed 2018	Actual YTD	% ytd
Beg. Balance	\$3,571.37		
Regular	\$25,000.00	\$ 11,300.00	45%
Retired	\$4,500.00	\$ 2,350.00	52%
Annual Mtg	\$4,000.00	\$ 4,620.00	116%
Donations	\$1,000.00	\$ 425.00	43%
Corporate	\$12,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	58%
Books/Prints	\$500.00		0%
Total	\$50,571.37	\$ 25,695.00	51%

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Year to Date Expenditures

<b>Budget Area</b>	Proposed 2018	YTD	% YTD
Supplies	\$1,000.00	\$486.46	49%
Postage	\$2,000.00	\$623.96	31%
Printing	\$2,500.00	\$997.09	40%
Exec. Director	\$20,000.00	\$5,128.00	26%
Payroll taxes	\$4,000.00	\$3,272.06	82%
Annual Mtg.	\$10,000.00	\$9,495.76	95%
Summer Board	\$2,000.00		0%
Books	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Bank Fees	\$1,000.00	225	23%
Memberships	\$750.00	\$212.65	28%
Technology	\$2,000.00	\$908.50	45%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$45,250.00</b>	<b>\$21,349.48</b>	<b>47%</b>
Carry over to 2019	\$5,321.37		

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Budget Annual Comparison

Balance As			
May '15	May '16	May '17	May '18
\$3,345.90	\$4,704.47	\$9,707.36	\$3,275.92

Membership by State

## **Legal Compliance Report**

Internal Revenue # EIN 47-2227740

IRS Form 990 completed and filed, Quarterly Social Security and Income Tax

State: Unemployment, and Labor and Industries

## **Communications Report**

Under revision – See Discussion topic on Communications

Currently:

Website: [www.hmleague.org](http://www.hmleague.org)

Blog Post: [blog.hmleague.org](http://blog.hmleague.org). <http://blog.hmleague.org/>

Facebook: the Horace Mann League of the USA

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=the%20horace%20mann%20league%20of%20the%20usa>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/mck423>

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/the-horace-mann-league-42a21614/>

## **Discussion Items**

### **Should the HML Board plan a 100 Year Anniversary Project?**

The Horace Mann League was founded in 1922. To celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the League, there are some possible activities:

Topics for discussion:

1. What is the purpose of celebration?
2. Desired outcome of the celebration?
3. What would be some “hands on” outcomes of the celebration, e.g., publications?
4. Who should be involved within and outside the HML?
5. What kind of products, presentations, productions could be developed?
6. What kind of funding is proposed and how we approach corporate partners?

Possibilities:

1. Publish a pamphlet on the contributions of Horace Mann
2. Publish a pamphlet on the importance of public education
3. Publish a fictional interview with Horace Mann
4. Publish a collection of speeches by Horace Mann
5. Publish a pamphlet on the history of the Horace Mann League

Suggested Motion

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the Horace Mann League do the following:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

in preparation of celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the League:

## **Should the HML Board consider a Spencer Foundation Grant?**

It has been suggested that the HML and the Supt's Roundtable submit a grant to hold a research conference on education.

### **Conference Grant Program**

#### **Application Open**

The Spencer Foundation is pleased to announce the latest theme for our annual conference grant program. This funding opportunity is aimed at providing support to scholars for small research conferences and focused symposia. We currently seek **proposals from scholars that seek to better understand education and learning in connection with broader social issues**. We aim to support meetings that deepen the connections between research across various disciplines and encourage scholars to embrace the complexity inherent in the interrelated challenges of education, learning and social context.

Through this program, we will provide grants of up to \$50,000 to support each conference. Proposals are due at 4:00 pm central time on September 4, 2018. To register for the webinar scheduled for July 24th at 11:30 am central time [click here](#). For more detail about the request for proposals [click here](#).

We encourage you to forward this email to colleagues who may be interested in this funding opportunity.

Suggested motion: Moved by \_\_\_\_\_, Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the Horace Mann League submit, \_\_\_\_\_, a grant proposal to the Spencer Foundation.

## **Should the HML Board consider an “institutional membership” rate?**

Institutional Membership where the district would receive the membership and the administrators would sign up. There could be a tier arrangement so that the membership would determine the fee (i.e. \$ 1,000.00 up to 15 administrators, \$ 2,000.00 for 16 – 25, etc.).



Advantages:

1. Additional members

2.

Disadvantages:

1.

2.

Suggested motion: Moved by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the HML provide members with the option of an “Institutional Membership” classification for annual dues.

## **Should the HML Board consider an all-day winter meeting?**

It has been proposed that the winter meeting of the HML Board of Directors meet on Wednesday prior the AASA Conference.

Advantages:

1. Time to full discuss the issues before the board.
2. Lees conflicts with members are presenting at the AASA meetings

Disadvantages:

1. Additional lodging expenses for some.
2. Away from office for an additional day.

Suggested motion: Moved by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ to hold the “Winter” board meeting on the Wednesday, prior to the HML Annual Meeting of Friday of the AASA conference.

## **Should the HML Board expand Corporate Partnerships**

Currently, the Horace Mann League has four corporate partners:

Horace Mann Insurance – \$5000 through 2019

Discovery Education – \$5,000 through 2019

School Leadership LLC, \$2,000 through 2019

Silverback Learning, \$2,000 through 2019

Suggested Motion

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the Horace Mann League officers and directors provide a minimum of one name of a potential corporate partner during the next six months.

## **Should the HML Board develop a new Recruitment Project?**

Currently, the practice is that each officer and director provide a list of at least five potential members. This strategy originally was set at 10 per officer and director. This strategy has not been successful in obtaining names of potential members.

It is suggested that a different strategy be considered in order to obtain names of potential members.

Some suggestions might be:

1. Officers and Directors offer to pay the first-year dues of a potential member.
2. The Horace Mann League offer dues-free membership to potential members for the first year.
3. Officers and Directors provide the names of five potential members. The Executive Director send a nomination letter to the potential member, along with a personal phone call, follow-up on the letter of nomination.

Suggested motion

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the Horace Mann League officers and directors

## **Should the HML enter into a contract to develop a communications plan?**

The plan includes redesigning the HML website, all social media outlets, and logo?

Following up on the decision at the HML winter board meeting, Dr. Bruckner contact the University of Nebraska at Omaha – Maverick PR Association. With the approval of the HML officers, a contract was agreed upon to do the following:

1. Logo design for all publications, correspondence, and media
2. Branding strategy for the HML
3. Website redesign for improved readership
4. Social Media design, e.g., Facebook, Tweeter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google, etc.
5. Weekly HML Post design.

A progress report will be presented at the summer meeting.

See attachment #4 for HML – Maverick PR contract.

Suggested motion:

Motion by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the HML proceed with the communication plan with the contract between the HHM and Maverick PR.

## Should the HML Board change the HML logo?

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Current logo	New #1	New #2	New #3	New #4
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## Should the HML Board respond to the feedback of the Branding Survey Results?

Champion of Public Education

Advocate for Excellence in Public Education

Leaders of Public Education & Defenders of Democracy

School leaders supporting public education

Public Education Cornerstone for Democracy

Public Schools Unite America

Public Education is the Cornerstone of Democracy

Dedicated to advocating public education through . . .

Improving public education through effective leader

Educated citizens uphold democracy.

## **Who are the nominations for Vice President and Directors?**

### **Terms of officers and directors**

The following table displays the terms of current officers and directors.

The following have terms that end in December 2018:

Carol Choye, Steve Ladd, Ember Conley, James Harvey, and Ruben Alejandro.

### **Officer: Vice President**

Possible HML Vice Presidential candidates are:

Ruben Alejandro

David Berliner

Jeff Charbonneau

Ember Conley

Brent Clark

Linda Darling Hammond

James Harvey

Stan Olson

Kevin Riley

Martin Brooks

Talisa Dixon

**Director reappointments**

James Harvey

Ruben Alejandro

Ember Conley

## **New Director Nominations**

Suggested criteria for new director nominations:

1. Be a current member of the HML
2. Evidence of a background in successful leadership positions (potential officer)
3. Ability and interest in preservation of the HML (recruitment)
4. Past evidence of nominating new members
5. Attendance at the HML Annual Meetings (active support and involvement)
6. Ability to attend and contribute to the growth and improvement of the League

Other factors to consider:

1. Regional representation
2. Gender and ethnic diversity
3. Large and small district representation
4. Position representation e.g., superintendent, principal, association leader, etc.

## **Who should be considered for the HML Awards for 2019 Outstanding Friend of the League**

(Awarded to an individual that has improved the League's image and status.)

Past recipients:

## **Outstanding Friend of Public Education**

(Generally, a person or organization that has contributed, nationally, to the improvement of public education. Usually, not an educator.)

## Outstanding Public Educator

(Generally, a person or organization that has contributed, nationally, to the improvement of public education. Usually, an educator.)

Suggestions: not in order of preference

Laura Bush, Foundation for American

Libraries, <http://www.laurabushfoundation.com/about/index.html>

Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of

Education, <https://www2.ed.gov/news/staff/bios/duncan.html>

Dan Domenech, Executive Director,

AASA, <http://dandomenech.org/index.php/sample-page/>

Tyrone C. Howard, Professor,

UCLA, <https://gseis.ucla.edu/media/TyroneHowardCV.pdf>

Gary Orfield, Professor UCLA, <https://law.ucla.edu/faculty/faculty-profiles/gary-orfield/>

Jeanne Oaks, Professor Emeritus in Educational Equity at

UCLA, <http://nepc.colorado.edu/author/oakes-jeannie>

Hank Levin: Professor, Teachers College <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/faculty/hl361/>

## Outstanding Public Educators

Deborah Meier, Author-founder Essential Schools, <https://deborahmeier.com/>

Kevin Kumashir, National Education Policy

Center, <https://www.kevinkumashiro.com/biography/>

Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Professor, Boston

College, <http://www.marilyncochransmith.com/>



# Attachments

## Attachment #1 2018 Winter Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes of The Horace Mann League of the USA, 2018 Winter Board Meeting, February 15, 2018, Omni Hotel – Nashville.

Meeting called to order at 2:30 pm by Martha Bruckner, President

Present:

Martha Bruckner, Eric King (phone), Laura Barron, Ruben Alejandro, David Berliner,

Ember Conley, James Harvey, Stan Olson, Lisa Parady, Kevin Riley and Jack McKay.

Guests: Talisa Dixon, Spike Jorgensen and Virginia Cardenas.

1. Review of events and happenings at the local level by members present
2. Motion by James Harvey, seconded by Stan Olson, that the minutes of the June 24, 2017, meeting in Chicago be approved. Passed
3. Reviewed the 2017 Revenues and Expenditures for the HML.
4. Reviewed the progress on obtaining Corporate Partners.
5. Reviewed the trends in sustaining members.

Discussed strategies: benefits of continued membership, state liaison arrangements, communications of timely events, strengthening commitment to public education, branding of the League's vision, working with AASA state executives, letter of acknowledge for continuing membership.

6. Reviewed the fiscal report of 2017. Recommended an audit of the account be done for the 2017 year. Lost audit done in January 2017 for 2016 fiscal year by Nancy Scott, CPA.

7. Acknowledged the HML Corporate Partners for the 2017-2018 years. Officer and directors were reminded of at least two suggestions of potential corporate parents.

Platinum: Discovery Education – Andy Schaeffer

Platinum: Horace Mann Insurance – Jim Yale

Silver: School Leadership – Charles Fowler

Silver: Silverback Learning – Stan Olson

8. Reviewed the membership trends of the League. Officers and Directors were reminded of at least five potential members per year.

Discussed strategies to increase membership, e.g., benefits of joining, timely information, HML Post, commitment to public education.

9. Reviewed Communication strategies, e.g., Facebook, Twitter and updating hashtag labeling. Will work with Ember Conley (consultant on Twitter) and Martha Bruckner (college students as project), branding of the Horace Mann League – survey of image ideas, add state executives to HML Post mailing list, contact superintendents of districts that have Horace Mann schools. Offer membership incentive and invite school boards members. Suggestion of a TED talk with educational leaders, e.g., Darling Hammond, David Berliner, Diane Ravitch, etc.

10. Recommended that the HML pick up the costs of those who, because of cost, would otherwise be unable to attend, up to \$250 for travel and cover lodging.

11. Acknowledged and accepted the 2018 proposed budget.

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2018 Proposed

<b>Revenues</b>	Actual 2017	Proposed 2018
Beg. Balance	\$3,464.81	\$3,571.39
Regular	\$24,200	\$25,000.00
Retired	\$4,000	\$4,500.00
Donations	\$935	\$1,000.00
Corporate	\$14,000	\$12,000.00
Books/Prints	100	\$500.00
Total	\$46,699.81	\$46,571.39

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2018 Proposed

<b>Budget Area</b>	Actual 2017	Proposed 2018
Supplies	\$994	\$1,000.00
Postage	\$1,685	\$2,000.00
Printing	\$2,342	\$2,500.00
Exec. Director	\$16,971	\$20,000.00
Payroll taxes	\$3,907	\$4,000.00
Annual Mtg.	\$12,356	\$10,000.00
Summer Board	\$1,638	\$2,000.00
Books	\$0	\$0.00
Bank Fees	\$891	\$1,000.00
Memberships	\$810	\$750.00
Technology	\$4,808	\$2,000.00

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TOTAL	\$46,400	\$45,250.00
Carry over to 2019	\$3,571.39	\$1,321.39

#### Audit of 2016 Financials

(Correction. An review of the HML deposits and withdraws for the 2016 financial was done in January 2017, Nancy Scott, CPA.

12. Reviewed assignments for the Annual Meeting

13. Reviewed and proposed that the 2018 Summer Board meeting be on Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, starting at 9:00 am, near the Chicago O'Hare airport.

14. Attachment: Officer and Director terms

#### HML Director Terms

2017	2018	2019
Martha Bruckner	Eric King	Laura Barron
Eric King	Laura Barron	Lisa Parady
Laura Barron	Lisa Parady	
Christine Johns-Haines	Martha Bruckner	Eric King
Jack McKay	Jack McKay	

2017	2018	2019
David Berliner (1)	David Berliner (2)	David Berliner (3)

Jeff Charbonneau (3)	Jeff Charbonneau (1)	Jeff Charbonneau (2)
Lisa Parady (1)	Talisa L. Dixon (1)	Talisa L. Dixon (2)
Carol Choye (2)	Carol Choye (3)	
Steve Ladd (2)	Steve Ladd (3)	
Ember Conley (2)	Ember Conley (3)	
Linda Darling Hammond (3)	Linda Darling Hammond (1)	Linda Darling Hammond (2)
Evelyn Holman (3)	Martin Brooks (1)	Martin Brooks (2)
James Harvey (2)	James Harvey (3)	
Kevin Riley (1)	Kevin Riley (2)	Kevin Riley (3)
Stan Olson (3)	Stan Olson (1)	Stan Olson (2)
Ruben Alejandro (2)	Ruben Alejandro (3)	

#### Branding of the Horace Mann League

The image of the Horace Mann League (HML) is more than the logo or mission statement. Periodically, it is important to remind ourselves about how we and others see and value the association. Each of us have preconceived images and impression of the HML. If we are to place an emphasis on recruitment and retention of members, then we need to be mindful of our values, promises, images, and services to our members. Therefore, it is proposed that we do a self-assessment of our brand image.

Below are questions we could ask ourselves and others:

- How would I quickly describe our brand as the elevator doors are closing. If I had only seconds, what would I say, and makes us unique and better than other alumni associations?
- What is the one promise or commitment we make and try to keep with our members?
- What the three key messages we can proudly make about the HML?
- What five words best describe our association?

- What phrase tells our members who we are and what we stand for?
- If we had to select a symbol to represent our association, what would that symbol look like?
- What is the one reason why you think others join the HML?
- What is the one reason why you think others decline to join the HML?

It is proposed that we survey the HML Board members and analyze the results to find points of consistency and differences. Then, refine the survey as needed and provide an opportunity for the membership to participate.

Based on the results of the findings, the HML Officers propose to keep the current or updated the following:

1. The mission statement of the HML.
2. The value and purpose of the HML.
3. The promise to the members of the HML.
4. The symbol (logo) of the HML.
5. The strategic plan (including publications, activities, events, and other membership services) to move closer the value and purpose of the HML.

Timeline:

1. Survey the HML Board in March 2018, via email.
2. A sub-committee of the Board (officers and Class Representatives) present a summary of the survey results at the Summer Board meeting, including a recommendation of how to proceed.
16. Executive Director's Goals and Contract for 2018
17. Increase membership with incentives, e.g.,
18. annual dues waived for two new members
19. dues waived for first year
20. Increase corporate sponsors with officers and directors
21. Increase engagement of members e.g.,
22. opinion survey and
23. hard copy newsletters
24. Increase attendance at summer board meeting
25. travel expense up to \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## 17. Summer Board Meeting

Dates – (Saturdays in June – 23<sup>rd</sup>, 9:00 am

Location – (Chicago

Agenda

Roll Call

Approval of 2018 Winter Board Meeting Minutes

Approval of 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes

Financial Report

Membership Report

Legal Compliance Report

Communications Report

Discussion Items

100 Year Anniversary Project

Corporate Partnerships

Recruitment Project

Nominations Committee Report

Officers

Director reappointments

New Directors

Awards for 2019

Outstanding Friend of the League

Outstanding Friend of Public Education

Outstanding Public Educator

18. Executive Director's To Do's:
19. Follow up with Bruckner and Conley on Hashtag options (done)
20. Follow up with Parady on TED Talk options (done)
21. Follow up with Nancy Scott on audit of 2017 fiscal year (done in 2016)
22. Follow up with Parady on luncheon conflict with state executives (done)
23. Add state executives to HML Post mailing list (yes, will do for February 27 Post)
24. Encourage members to submit suggestions for the HML Post. (February 27<sup>th</sup> Post)
25. Make reservation at the O'Hare Marriott for June 23<sup>rd</sup>
26. Follow up with officers and directors on attending the Summer board meeting.  
(done)
27. Follow up with Jensen on repairing award. (done)
28. Thank You to: Omni staff, Bruckner, Berliner, Conley, Cardenas, Alejandro  
(done)

## **Attachment #2 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes**

Friday, February 16, 2018, Omni Hotel, Nashville (11:45 am to 1:30 pm)

Call to Order – Welcome————— by Martha Bruckner  
Distinguished Guests & Past Presidents————- by Martha Bruckner

Corporate Sponsors ————— by Laurie Barron

Noon: Invocation and Luncheon————— by Stan Olson  
Business Meeting————— by Ember Conley  
Nomination and Elections  
“How High the Bar” Research Study————— by James Harvey

Award Presentations

**Ambassador Awards**————— by Ruben Alejandro  
**Outstanding Friend of the HML** to Jay Goldman – by Kevin Riley



**Outstanding Public Educator** to Carol Burris—- by David Berliner  
**Outstanding Friend of Public Education** to Kevin Welner and Bill Mathis by Eric King  
Panel and Questions————— by Lisa Parady  
Past Presidents’ Award to Martha Bruckner——— by Eric King  
Adjournment————— by Eric King

## **Attachment # 3 How High the Bar**

William Bushaw Executive Director National Assessment Governing Board 800  
North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 825 Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Dr. Bushaw:

James Harvey from the National Superintendents Roundtable has briefed us on your telephone conversation shortly after the release of *How High the Bar?*, the January report from the Roundtable and the Horace Mann League placing NAEP’s benchmark of “proficient” in an international context. We appreciate the time you and Lisa Stooksberry took to speak with him. During the conversation several issues came up. We want to address them.

### **Lowering Standards**

You asked for confirmation that the report did not recommend lowering standards. It did not do so. Like the National Academy of Science’s report, which you cited during the ‘phone conversation, we suggested that the achievement levels bore reexamination, but our major recommendation was to rethink the terms used to benchmark the standards (p. 21 of *How High the Bar?*). That is to say (again building on NAS’s reasoning), if NAGB judges that maintaining the broad framework of standards set years ago was essential, we believe that renaming the benchmarks (but maintaining the standards) would go a long way toward correcting what we judge to be the damage NAEP’s use of the term “proficient” has done to public perceptions of American education.

You asked also that we inform the National Assessment Governing Board in writing that we were not recommending lowering NAEP standards. This letter responds affirmatively to that request, in line with the understanding outlined in the previous paragraph: maintain the standards but rethink the terminology.

## **Grade Level Performance and Proficiency**

Dr. Stooksberry suggested a solution to our concerns about the term proficient. She wondered if directing the public to NAGB's website would not be a sufficient response to concerns about the public's misunderstanding of proficient. The website continues the longstanding NAGB practice of emphasizing that proficient does not correspond to grade-level performance. That is helpful, but in our view insufficient. NAGB's documents make it clear that proficient does not even mean proficient. As Loomis and Bourque (former NAGB staff members) made clear in 2001, "[S]tudents who may be considered proficient in a subject, given the common usage of the term, might not satisfy the requirements for performance at the NAEP achievement level" (p. 17). It is very unlikely that most educators, never mind most members of the general public, will get into the details of how these complex assessments are designed, how standards and benchmarks are set, or what the benchmarks mean. In our view, to use a commonly understood term such as "proficient" in a highly technical and different sense from "common usage" twists the meaning

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March 26, 2018

## **William Bushaw (2) March 26, 2018**

of the term beyond recognition. Such usage can only confuse the public. not to mention at least one U.S. Secretary of Education.

## **Continuity**

During the 'phone discussion, you quite properly emphasized the importance of long-term trend analysis as a significant consideration in maintaining NAEP's current benchmarks. We agree. Our understanding of the significance of NAEP trend analysis over the long haul was, in large measure, responsible for our report's decision to leave the standards alone, while recommending a change in the terminology. That hardly seems to threaten NAEP's ability to monitor change over time.

Indeed, our suggestion is less disruptive with regard to long-term trend analysis than other changes NAGB has introduced over the years. NAEP began providing testing accommodations for students with disabilities in 1996. It changed the 12th-grade mathematics scale from 0-500 to 0-300 in 2005. More recently NAGB abandoned "Long Term NAEP" until 2024 in favor of new assessments. The abandonment of Long-Term NAEP is a particular impediment to trend analysis. With it, we can compare achievement levels of 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds in the United States today with their peers dating back to 1969 (science), 1971 (reading), and 1973 (mathematics). Until 2024, educators' and policymakers' ability to examine long-term

trends will extend only to the 1990s, when “Main NAEP” was launched. That, of course, assumes that NAEP’s budget by 2024 will be able to accommodate the resumption of Long-Term NAEP.

### **Why Now?**

We understand that you asked why we wanted to make NAEP’s proficiency benchmark a public policy issue now, 15 years into the implementation of NAGB’s policy. The answer is fairly straightforward: whatever weaknesses the proficiency benchmark incorporates in the NAEP assessments take on additional significance when NAEP’s standard is employed as a “career and college readiness” standard in Common Core and state assessments. Judgments about school performance based on NAEP assessments apply only to states and (with the Trial Urban District Assessment) to some districts, not to schools or students. But state and Common Core assessments linked to NAEP’s benchmarks promise to stigmatize individual schools and students.

### **National Academy Report**

Harvey thought we had a confusing discussion around the National Academy of Science’s report,

*Evaluation of the Achievement Levels for Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Education Progress* (2016). Since NAS did not recommend lowering NAEP standards, you wondered why we did so. We did not, to repeat, recommend lowering the standards.

We considered the NAS document in our report. We were impressed with it. You will find references to it on page 19 or *How High the Bar?* We do note that the NAS document struck us as a careful and scholarly work, but one that provided a less-than-enthusiastic endorsement of the NAEP standards.

### **William Bushaw (3) March 26, 2018**

For example, among other comments, NAS reported: considerable variation in panelists’ cut score judgments in mathematics (Conclusion 4.1); final achievement-level descriptors that were not the descriptors used to set cut scores in 1992 — with no effort since to set new cut scores using current descriptors (Conclusion 5.1); the lack of any NAGB effort to pursue studies comparing NAEP achievement levels with external measures (p. 127); the conclusion of the National Academy of Education that the cut scores for the NAEP standards were set very high (Conclusion 5.3); a disconnect between the kinds of validity evidence that has been collected and how NAEP has been interpreted and used ( p. 238); and the lack of appropriate interpretive guidance on the meaning and appropriate uses of achievement levels, making misuse

of the results likely (Conclusion 6.1). It is, of course, the misuse of the results that we are most concerned with.

Leaving aside the many ways in which assessment and educational practice have changed since NAGB defined the NAEP benchmarks, the Roundtable and the Horace Mann League, like NAS, recognized (to use NAS's words) that "making changes to something that has been in place for over 24 years would likely have a range of consequences that cannot be anticipated. We also recognize the difficulties that might be created by setting new standards, particularly the disruptions that would result from breaking people's interpretations of the trends" (p. 224).

Although NAS did not recommend new standard setting, it did recognize that "at some point the balance of concerns will tip to favor new standard-setting procedures" (p. 240). It would be wise, in our judgment, to begin preparing for "some point" today.

We tend to agree with just about everything in the NAS document, with the exception of its conclusion that issues raised by the standards in place for more than 24 years can "be addressed by revision of the achievement level descriptors." The descriptors are not the principal problem. The misuse of the term "proficient" is. Until that is addressed, in our opinion, one of the charges to NAS – that the achievement levels be "informative to the public" – cannot be met.

### **International Context**

Finally, it seems that during the telephone discussion the central issue in *How High the Bar?* was not addressed. Our report found that if the "NAEP benchmark of Proficient was to be applied to the results of international assessments, the vast majority of students in the vast majority of nations would fail to clear the bar in reading, mathematics, and science."

We reached that conclusion by employing statistical analyses such as equipercentile mapping and statistical moderation employed by NCES itself (e.g., *Mapping State Proficiency Standards onto NAEP Scales*, NCES 2015-06) and by contractors financed by NCES (e.g., *Linking NAEP Achievement Levels to TIMSS*, AIR, 2007; *Linking the 2011 NAEP in Reading to the 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study*, AIR, 2014; and *National Benchmarks for State Achievement Standards*, AIR 2016). Indeed, these are the very approaches cited as valuable in the NAS report (p. 129).

**William Bushaw (4) March 26, 2018**

It is that conclusion that led us to another: “It is time to take seriously the possibility that the NAEP bar for Proficient has been set so mistakenly high that it (a) defeats NAEP’s purpose of providing valuable insights into the performance of American schools; and (b) establishes a standard that defeats the best efforts of educational systems around the world.”

We ask that NAGB and its members take that possibility seriously. We are not opposed to a high bar. We do not want it mislabeled as “proficient.” We also hope NAGB will initiate the research required to confirm or refute our conclusions, while simultaneously opening an ongoing dialogue with the school community.

We apologize for going on at such length. Let us conclude by saying that if we misunderstood anything from the telephone conversation, we will be glad to be corrected. If you have additional questions, we will be pleased to respond. And, as representatives of the Roundtable and the Horace Mann League we stand ready to meet with NAGB if you think that will be useful.

Finally, we are forwarding 30 copies of the full report entitled *How High the Bar?* to your office. We ask that you distribute copies to each member of the National Assessment Governing Board, along with a copy of this letter. And we ask that you confirm you will do so, or that you have done so.

Sincerely,

David C. Berliner Board Member, Horace Mann League Regents’ Professor  
Emeritus Arizona State University

James J. Harvey Board Member, Horace Mann League Executive Director National  
Superintendents Roundtable

c.c.: Peggy G. Carr Acting Commissioner

Martha Bruckner President, Horace Mann League Former Superintendent Council  
Bluffs Schools, Iowa

Jack McKay Executive Director, Horace Mann League Former  
Superintendent Sequim & Selah School Districts, Washington

National Center for Education Statistics

## **Attachment # 3 HML Maverick PR Contract**

### **MaverickPR Mission Statement:**

To serve clients by offering innovative and creative solutions to help them achieve their public relations goals. We strive to exceed expectations of our clients by providing counsel and advice with honesty and integrity.

### **Agency/Client Agreement**

**Client/Organization:** Horace Mann League

**Faculty Adviser:** Karen Weber [kweber@unomaha.edu](mailto:kweber@unomaha.edu) /[karenann.weber@gmail.com](mailto:karenann.weber@gmail.com)  
402.415.5505

**Chief Operating Officer & Account Executive:** Juli Oberlander [joberlander@unomaha.edu](mailto:joberlander@unomaha.edu) 402.616.9495  
**Firm Director:** Abbie Perry [ajperry@unomaha.edu](mailto:ajperry@unomaha.edu) 402.278.1254

**Client:** Dr. Jack McKay [jmckay@hmleague.org](mailto:jmckay@hmleague.org) 360.821.9877  
**Contract Period:** June 1, 2018 to January 1, 2019

MaverickPR, the University of Nebraska at Omaha's student public relations firm, agrees to perform the services specified below in accordance with the terms of this agreement.

## Planning and Execution

1. Please list below the projects, tactics and services you wish for MaverickPR to work on.  
(If any project must be completed by a specific deadline, please specify mm/dd/yy behind that project. If no deadline is given, the project due date is up to the discretion of MaverickPR). **(See proposal)**

1. MaverickPR is not responsible for the distribution of materials or personal fundraising on behalf of the client. (Ex. Posters, solicitation of businesses) unless arrangements are made between [you] the client and firm staff) Initial \_\_\_JM\_\_.

III. MaverickPR's services are here to offer public relations support to our clients. Before the release of any material(s) created and/or service(s) provided by MaverickPR staff, all project(s) must first be approved by [you] the client. Initial \_\_\_\_\_.

**The firm director(s) and faculty adviser must approve all additional project(s) beyond those requested in this contract. Initial \_\_\_JM\_.**

1. Expenses: [You] the client is solely responsible for the purchase or reimbursement of outside/ out-of-pocket expenses relating to the service(s) requested. (Ex. Printing costs, binders, postage and mileage). MaverickPR understands that [you] the client will always be consulted to pre-approve any financial transactions for expenses. Initial \_\_\_JM\_\_.

1. Contract length/Termination: This contract is binding for the length/period stated above. [You] the client has the right to terminate this contract if unsatisfied with the services provided before the contract period is over. Before this happens, [you] the client is expected to consult with the firm director(s) and faculty advisor along with the completion of a written evaluation explaining reasons for termination. MaverickPR also has the right to terminate this contract before the length/period is over if the client is not cooperative and willing to correspond satisfactorily to complete the requested project(s). Initial  JM .

**End of contract period: Clients will be asked to evaluate (via survey) the services and satisfaction of the project(s) provided by MaverickPR. Initial \_\_\_\_\_.**

**1. Fees/Service Charges**

**Research Services: 5 hours X \$15.00 = \$75.00**

**Account Management: 15 hours X \$15.00 = \$225.00**

**Social Media Services: 40 hours X \$15.00 = \$600.00**

**Creative Services: 10 hours X \$25.00 = \$250.00**

**Total Estimated Fee: \$1,150.00**

*Thank you for choosing MaverickPR for your public relations needs.*

*We look forward to working with you!*

**Signatures constitute the entire understanding of this contract between all parties.**

**Client:** \_\_\_\_\_/s/  Jack McKay \_\_\_\_\_

**Firm Director Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty Adviser Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_