



## UTAH SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

April 2024

Hi Friends! It was so great for our officers along with Richard and Lexi, to meet with you during our Spring Regional Meetings. Thank you for your time there, as well as your input in the form of legislative advocacy goals for the next year. Your efforts are always helpful and appreciated.

Soon after Spring Regional meetings concluded I attended the NCAA Wrestling Championships in Kansas City, MO, where I spent three days with my dad and two of my brothers, watching the culmination of hours, months, and years of work for those nationally ranked athletes. It was inspiring! For my family it was a nostalgic time. We haven't been to a wrestling tournament together since we were kids. My dad was a wrestler in college so, growing up, my brothers and I spent most of our wintertime Saturdays at wrestling meets in places like Vernal, Heber, Payson, Pleasant Grove, Lehi, Cottonwood Heights, Logan, Smithfield, etc. –my brothers on the mats wrestling and myself timing, scoring, or pairing (bracketing before computers were common in wrestling rooms). My dad also idolizes Coach Cael Sanderson.

Cael Sanderson, the Penn State coach, is a product of Utah public schools (Wasatch High School). Over the past 15 years he has created a wrestling dynasty at Penn State. He's the reason Penn State had more wrestlers and more supporters at the meet than any other school represented there. Penn State wrestling culture is classy as well as tough and many times I overheard people in the crowds ask, "What is Cael doing at PSU that is creating such domination?"

If you do any research on Coach Cael's program that includes interviews of his athletes you'll read or hear the words: having fun, values, someone to emulate. His peers who know him well say, "The man emanates excellence, humility, curiosity. He lives it (growth mindset)." If you're interested in learning more about him you can start [here](#).

What can we learn from Coach Cael that we can apply to our own lives as leaders? Here are a few bullet points:

- Have fun.
- Keep things simple.
- Be a good person.
- Live your life such that you inspire others to excel simply by being in your presence.

May we take a page from Coach Cael's book and become the best leaders, within the board room and without, inspiring our students and employees with our work.

Teri Rhodes  
USBA President



April 2024

New Orleans bound! I am so looking forward to seeing all of you at conference and closing out my year.

It's been quite a year, and I have had the best time as President of NSBA! It's been an honor representing local school board members, who work hard to make our public schools the best environment for students to thrive and learn.

As the year progressed, our board embraced the changes of a new CEO, Verjeana McCotter-Jacob, supported internal changes and a new fiscal stability plan. After annual conference in Orlando, a highlight was welcoming our member states to Utah for our Summer Leadership Seminar, for a much needed in-person meeting! We all want to be inspired and lifted up from the sometimes difficult and challenging work we are engaged in, and SLS certainly provided opportunities for growth.

Amidst some of the financial challenges of becoming a smaller association, our board, staff and Verjeana, has worked tirelessly to ensure the highest quality of service for our members, as adjustments were made to ensure NSBA remains the flagship for public school advocacy in our nation. Exploring new partnerships, grants and changing the "old" ways of doing things, has created an energy and environment that will make us stronger and better for the future.

Concluding my term as president was a reflective moment, marked by accomplishments and the anticipation of a new chapter. It has been a privilege working with the NSBA Board of Directors, NSBA officers, Verjeana and staff, through a year of growth, fostering collaboration and supporting impactful governance changes. I have had transformative experiences, which has provided invaluable insight into leadership and decision-making processes.

I am looking forward to transitioning into the role of past president, taking on a role of mentor and advisor and encouraging the momentum which has been built this past year, to keep it going.

I am very Utah proud, thank you for being on this journey with me and for the support!

Kristi Swett  
NSBA President