

SDHSAA

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has helped too, he said. "There's no doubt we're trying," Weber said. Wayne Carney, the association's executive director since 2001, said packets were hand-delivered to all legislators a decade ago. But the practice was stopped after a senator told him that most legislators threw the packet in the trash because it was optional additional reading. Carney said he told the association staff this summer that they should stop and visit with legislators as they travel throughout South Dakota. Carney said he met with Sen. Corey Brown, R-Gettysburg, as the first stop in July. Brown was prime sponsor of SB 90, the open-meeting and open-record legislation. Carney said Brown asked if there was anything they as legislators could do for the association. "That was different," Carney said. In his 14 years as

executive director Carney said he's had a standing offer to have legislators visit the SDHSAA office in Pierre. "Very seldom does anybody stop," Carney said. Carney said he next approached Rep. Susan Wismer, D-Britton. She is the Democratic candidate for governor. While she couldn't meet with Carney while he was in the vicinity of Britton, Wismer later stopped at the SDHSAA offices without an appointment. "We just had a really, really nice discussion for about a half hour," he said. Carney said he plans to meet next with Sen. Deb Soholt, R-Sioux Falls. He said SDHSAA staff were challenged to visit with at least two legislators apiece. Weaver will visit with Sen. Larry Tidemann, R-Brookings, according to Carney. Tidemann is chairman of the Legislature's Government Operations and Audit Committee. The new law requires the association to report at least annually to GOAC or at the chairman's request. Carney asked the eight directors, who represent

school districts, school boards and athletic directors, to contact legislators in their areas and offer to sit down for a cup of coffee. "If somebody would have called and said we can't find your audit, we would have taken them right to it," Carney said. "Nobody called." Director Todd Trask, who serves on the Wall school board, said the association should follow the advice he's given to his children. "When you start assuming, that's when things start to go horribly wrong," Trask said. "You can't ever assume. Just get out and front of it and present." Director Jason Uttermark, the principal at Aberdeen Central High School, spoke strongly in favor of reaching out to legislators. "They want to meet us as bad as we want to talk to them a lot of times," he said. Uttermark is an advocate for changing some of the association's practices so the member schools and the public can better follow and participate in the issues. "Our best public relations tool we have is to do a good job so people aren't

complaining to them," Uttermark said. "They (legislators) are going to be responsive to their voters, not necessarily to us." One of the new directors is Sandy Klatt, a Brandon Valley school board member. She asked her school district's administration for suggestions she could call as she campaigned for election. The directors are selected to specific spots by the schools in the association. Klatt said she reached 140 superintendents or athletic directors — and many had the same basic message when she looked back through the 38 pages of notes. "The vast majority of them told me, 'I had never been contacted by anyone,'" Klatt said. Weaver said it was "kind of the ostrich mentality" that led to the blow-up in the past year. Several directors said the Legislature could put the association under the state Department of Education. But, as Uttermark pointed out, that isn't a popular option. "I couldn't find one person who thought that would be a

good idea," Uttermark said. Carney said "it would be nice" if the message came "loud and strong" from leadership groups in K-12 education in South Dakota that SDHSAA isn't part of state government. He said the schools could be the association's strongest partner in delivering a positive message about the association. The directors, in an attempt to head off the Legislature, voted last winter to voluntarily follow the open-meeting laws. That didn't deter the legislators, who passed the final version of the Brown bill by tallies of 62-6 in the House and 34-1 in the Senate. One of the past complaints was the association wouldn't share information given to the directors. State law requires that it be made available at least 24 hours prior to the meeting or when the directors receive it, whichever comes later. Another of the new directors, Steve Morford of Spearfish High School, said he'd like to get the meeting packet of agenda information more than 24 hours before

the meeting. The packet for today's business meeting is about 140 pages. Several other directors, including Weber and Uttermark, agreed. Uttermark suggested the most important items should be on the agenda early in the meeting. Whalen said three days prior to the meeting would be a good time to get the agenda and information items distributed to the board and available to the schools and the public. Weber also said he'd like to go to a system of first and second readings. The discussion Wednesday came in a strategy session by the board with executive staff. It marked the first time the meeting was live-streamed on the Internet (www.sdhsaa.com <<http://www.sdhsaa.com>>). The business meeting today (Thursday) is at 8:30 a.m. CDT. It will be live-streamed. At this point there aren't plans to put any of the audio in an archive for listening at later times. The Legislature carries all of its meetings on the Internet and there are permanent archives of the audio.

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