



2012 MEMBER SURVEY

Student achievement, poverty and education reform are tough tests

School directors across the state believe "closing the student achievement gap" is the biggest of a number of major challenges facing their districts, according to WSSDA's recent member survey.

Some respondents linked the challenge directly to what turned out to be the runner-up challenge, "poverty or other socio-economic issues."

"Discussion about public education is not complete without a discussion around child poverty," one school director observed.

Education reform mandates, declining student enrollment and special education filled out the top five challenges.

"This feedback on our members' biggest challenges and greatest needs is important for us to know," said WSSDA Executive Director Jonelle Adams. "It tells us a lot about how we can help them."

School directors east of the mountains agreed with those on the west on the top five challenges, which also included, education reform

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

What it's like to be a school director

- Eight out of ten directors said they ran for office to give back to their community or help kids get a good education.
- On average, nearly three quarters of directors devoted 11 or more hours per month to school board work.
- Nine in ten directors said they understand the education system well enough to be effective.
- Three quarters of directors said their experience has been "very positive."

Based on results from the 2012 Member Survey



Vancouver Public Schools Board Member Edri Geiger (far left) testifies before the Senate Education Committee, January 30.

Strong presence needed on the hill

The annual Legislative Conference/Day on the Hill is just around the corner and organizers are hoping at least one representative from each school district attends.

"It is critical legislators hear that we expect them to meet McCleary and fund basic education to help our students succeed," said Debbie Long, WSSDA's President.

The event is timed to coincide with important deadlines for policy and budget bills. Meetings with legislators in all 49 districts in both the House and Senate are being organized now.

Registration is available online at a cost of \$195 through February 27 and \$250 after. Many hotels in the area are holding rooms through the first or second week of February. Visit www.wssda.org to register.

It's time to contact your legislator

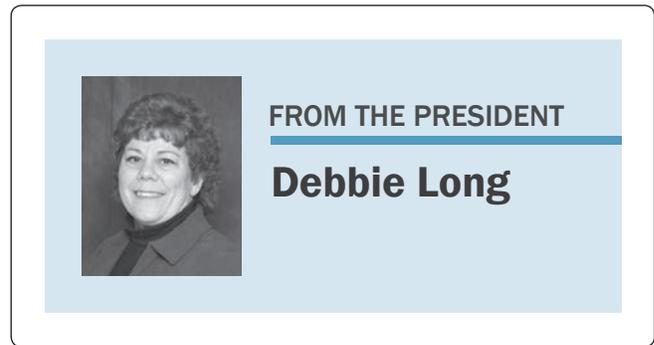
A couple weeks ago Washington state began its 2013 legislative session. Our legislators are faced with very tough decisions regarding the budget.

There has never been a more important time to advocate for our children and staff. A year ago the state Supreme Court made it clear in the McCleary decision that the state is constitutionally required to fully fund basic K-12 education and that it has failed to do so. More recently, the court said firmly that the legislature was not moving fast enough.

This is a very important window of opportunity for advocacy. That means stepping up now to build relationships between you, your community, and your legislators.

First and foremost advocacy begins at home. When you were elected, your community believed that you would do everything under your power to enrich the lives of our children by providing them a solid education. Your relationship with your community has enabled you to pass your bonds and levies. None of this would be possible unless your community trusted you.

In their own elections, your legislators were empowered to advocate for all of us. We must build a relationship with them and encourage them to step up to the plate and help our children succeed. This means giving them opportunities and



providing a solid funding for public education. This is not just the state's paramount duty. These children are our future. They depend on us, and we on them.

Even in these early days of the session, legislators are making it clear that your voice matters in the school funding debate. Several have told us to swamp them with emails, telephone calls and visits. Please take the time to help and encourage others on your board and community to do the same.

We cannot take a back seat approach and hope they will advocate for our children. Our voice must be heard and it is our responsibility to stand up for public education.

Take the lead for continuous improvement

School districts set goals for improving student achievement. As leaders in your community, you can take the lead in continual improvement by setting goals for your board. Here are the steps to create continuing improvement for your board.

The first step is to complete an assessment. The WSSDA Online Board Self-Assessment and the report of the results are available free to every school board in Washington state. This assessment measures how your board uses practices that support increased student achievement.

Your results are displayed in colorful charts and a resource guide helps boards make sense of the findings. A link to your electronic assessment was sent to board chairs and presidents earlier this month. You can contact me, Colleen Miller, Assistant Director of Membership Development, for the link.

Here are the steps to implement continual improvement.

1. Each board member takes the survey. Set a timeline for completion and have your board

president contact Colleen Miller with this information. I will check for completions and send the report to you at your specified time.

2. Review the results and discuss the findings as a board. School boards report that these discussions are a valued part of the process.
3. As a board, identify an area for improvement.
4. Establish a baseline that you will improve upon. Increase the frequency of how your board puts a practice in action over the next year.
5. Set a goal for improvement. The goal is specific, measurable, relevant, and achievable and has a timeline for completion.

SAMPLE GOAL

During the 2012-2013 school year, each board director attends two PTO meetings to share the vision, mission and goals for the district for 2012-2015.

Standard 2

Set and communicate high expectations for student learning with clear goals and plans for meeting

those expectations by articulating the conviction that all students can learn and that student learning can improve regardless of existing circumstances or resources.

Standard 4

Hold school district accountable for meeting student learning expectations by committing to continuous improvement in student achievement at each school and throughout the district.

Once you have a goal and a starting point to improve upon, it's time to work toward that goal. The board can take the WSSDA assessment again in a year to use as a comparison.

The Online Board Self-Assessment stores your results each year and provides a multi-year report of your results. Each year's results provide a baseline to improve upon. The longitudinal report shows your gains over a period of years.

Continual improvement in a school district can be evident from the classroom to the boardroom. Join other Washington state school boards in taking the lead!

Cost cutting keeps WSSDA dues unchanged for second year

Aggressive cost cutting in 2012 has allowed WSSDA's Board of Directors to hold dues flat for the second year in a row.

"We tightened our belts quite a bit," said WSSDA President Debbie Long. "Budgets are difficult for all of our districts and it was important for us to help hold down costs while still providing high quality services and products. It's been a challenge."

The association cut expenses from \$2.8 million in 2011 to \$2.5 million last year. That total was eight percent less than five years ago. In 2007, WSSDA expenses totaled \$2.7 million.

Board members reviewed the association's budget in January during its annual look at performance during the prior year. The review covered dozens of individual measures for work in leadership development, advocacy, policy, and communications.

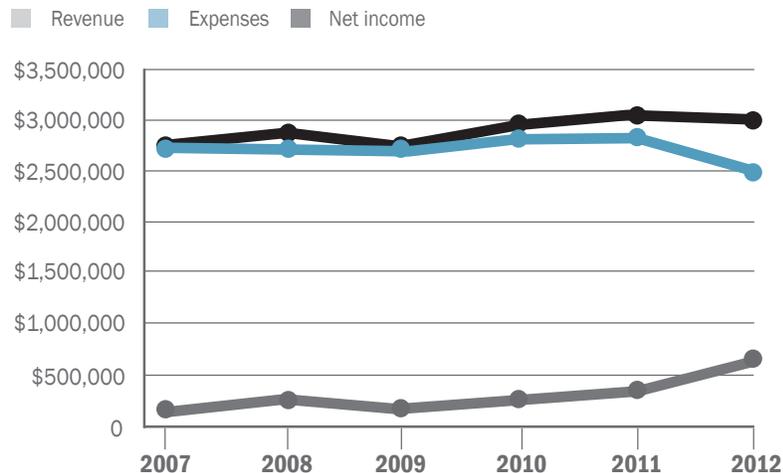
Also in 2012, the association:

- Provided leadership development services to nearly 90 local school boards.
- Saw a 63 percent increase in registrations for its Legislative Assembly.
- Enjoyed a strong increase, nearly across the board, in the use of its publications and services.

On the budget side, total salaries and benefits were trimmed by \$84,000, or six percent. This was a result of both permanent staff reductions and temporary vacancies. Maintenance and operations costs were reduced by 20 percent. WSSDA also reduced costs for travel, printing and board of directors' expense.

Board members acknowledged that given the budget reduction, it will be a challenge in 2013 to maintain the quantity and quality of services.

Total revenue and expenses



WSSDA's Executive Director, Jonelle Adams presents the Board of Distinction certificate to members of the Kent School District School Board. The board members were also given crowns made by students from a Kent kindergarten classroom for School Board Recognition Month.

Student achievement

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mandates, declining student enrollment and special education. They did differ slightly, however, on the order.

While "closing the achievement gap" was top in the west, eastern Washington school directors pegged "education reform mandates" by a slight margin. Both sides agreed on the significance of poverty. Declining student enrollment was seen as a somewhat more significant issue in west and special education in the east.

When it comes to important information, school directors cited the need for data on budgets and factors behind student achievement, as well as understanding how to interpret achievement data. Information on state education reforms and superintendent evaluation also ranked high.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jonelle Adams

Making the most out of each WSSDA dollar

Every year staff spends a considerable amount of effort analyzing the value WSSDA brings to the table for school board members, public schools and students. Much of this analysis is evident in this issue of the WSSDA Direct.

The article on cost cutting at the association is only one part of a long conversation we had at our January board meeting on how WSSDA is doing, performance-wise. The piece on our recent member survey focuses on what school directors say are their biggest challenges, but the survey also involved extensive data gathering on satisfaction with, and use of, our products and services.

And then there is the legislature; the session is off and running. That always means finding a compelling, yet honest way to tell the story of WSSDA's contributions as a trusted, respected advocate for public education and student achievement. This is particularly so in 2013 with so many newly-elected members.

The state Legislature created our association in the late 1940s to help support local school boards, particularly in creating consistent and effective policy. More than six decades and a few political battles later, that is still our number one job. WSSDA was created as a self-governing state agency, giving all school directors an opportunity to set the direction of the association on education policy and issues, and ensuring that the association is responsive to its members.

From time to time, outside parties have been asked to value the work done by WSSDA. Each time they found that operating the association as a state agency, with the directors of all school districts as members, was the most cost-effective approach.

During the past year, WSSDA responded to well over 2,000 requests for assistance with policy and legal questions. The equivalent cost to districts of using private attorneys for this guidance would be about \$500,000. Similarly, the market cost of eClippings and the Direct would be well over \$100,000. We, of course, provide these services and many others with a much lower price tag.

We want to keep those costs low and quality high. Since 2007, we reduced WSSDA's expenses by \$222,000, or 8.3 percent. Adjusting for inflation, expenses actually fell about 15 percent. Cost reductions can be taken only so far, of course. There is a line between lean and skinny, so we do have to make investments. But your WSSDA board makes sure those investments are well-considered.

We are committed to being your best and most cost-effective source for education-related policy, consulting, advocacy, professional development and communications-related resources.

Let me know how we can continue to support you!



SCHOOL SAFETY

Tips from the trenches

BY STEPHEN SROKA

During the last few months, I have had the chance to talk with several speakers who strongly affected their audiences. I started to think about the remarkable leaders with whom I have worked over the years and how they have made huge differences with their incredible wisdom, insights, and actions. I contacted some of them and asked them to comment on working in education in these difficult times. I asked them to share some take-away messages, so that, if they were speaking, what would they want their audience to remember?

School safety was a front page story following the tragic shooting deaths of 28 people, including 20 children, at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn. Students need a safe school to learn.

SCHOOL SAFETY TIPS

Most of the "tips from the trenches" regarding school safety were written before the Connecticut shootings.

From Joseph Bergant II

Superintendent of Chardon Schools in Ohio, where in February 2012 a 17-year-old student opened fire in the high school cafeteria, killing three and wounding three others:

- "Be prepared and practice school safety

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

plans. You never know when you may need them."

- "Cell phones were effective in dealing with the safety evacuation plans, especially students notifying parents with texts."
- "Stress the positive, not the perpetrator. Emphasize safety, learning, and services available. And don't forget to take care of your staff, too."
- "Use one spokesperson to avoid mixed messages."
- "It takes a community to respond to school violence. Schools cannot do it alone. 'One Heartbeat' became the city's mantra."

From Ken Trump

Author, speaker and national consultant and president of National School Safety and Security Services:

- "The first and best line of defense in school safety is a well-trained, highly-alert staff and student body."
- "The fourth 'R' in education today is 'relationships:' Adults having solid professional relationships with kids and school leaders having strong relationships with their public safety, mental health, and other community partners."
- "School crisis teams must plan, prepare, and practice. Dusty crisis plans on shelves are not worth the paper they are written upon."

From Mark Behrens

Director of the Safety, Security and Emergency Procedures Branch of the Hawaii Department of Education in Honolulu:

- "Schools are part of the community, a very important part of the community. Therefore for schools to be as safe as they can be we need to involve the community ... parents, first responders, neighborhood boards, churches, etc. This is the best way we can assure schools are places of honor, dignity, and respect and prepared for both natural and man-made incidents."
- "Schools need to create a climate of safety and respect filled with opportunities for adults and students to have meaningful relationships and open communication."

To read the full article, visit www.wssda.org, and click on the link, *Tips from the Trenches* in WSSDA News. This article is used by permission from Stephen Sroka, the author/editor. It is the first of a four-part series. The other articles can be found at <http://www.wholechildeducation.org/blog/tips-from-the-trenches-administration>. Sroka is an adjunct assistant professor at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland. He has worked in schools for more than 30 years.

ARTICLE SUMMARY

School boards, Common Core and English Language Learners

Linguistic and cultural diversity is found in schools throughout the country — urban or rural, small or large. Students who are English Language Learners are the fastest growing population in the K-12 system.

The implementation of Common Core Standards for education raises expectations for higher-order thinking. Students with limited English language skills will face not only the challenge of both understanding grade level content but of doing so in a new language.

In the August issue of the *State Education Standard*, Margo Gottlieb, discusses how state and local school boards can help “jumpstart” actions to help English language learners succeed in school and life.

1. Forge partnerships with those who work with English Language Learners.
2. Oversee common core implementation to make sure there is support for these students.
3. Help bust myths like English Language Learners can't fully participate in general education classes.
4. Understand how language development affects academic achievement for these students.

The full text of this article, “Implementing the Common Core State Standards in Districts with English Language Learners,” is available from the National Association of State Boards of Education. www.nasbe.org. The article was also reprinted by School Information and Research Service (SIRS) in the fall 2012, issue of *Leadership Information*.

EXCERPT FROM THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE

“For far too long, English language learners have not fully participated in general education classes. ELLs can and must participate in grade-level content, whether in their home language or in English appropriate for their level of English language proficiency.”

Schools face concerns over enactment of I-502

In October's WSSDA Direct, we profiled marijuana in schools. Since the enactment of I-502 in December, we've heard from districts concerned that students will now have greater access to marijuana. Some districts have even seen student marijuana possession spike in the past two months. If your district has experienced a similar trend, please let us know. We would like to be able to track this information for future use if necessary.

In other news, WIAA released a memo to its member schools January 4, 2013. It stated that I-502 has removed marijuana from the list of controlled substances under state law. This is not the case. Under I-502, RCW 69.50.101 still defines "controlled substance" as a "drug, substance or immediate precursor included in Schedules I through V as set for in federal or state laws, or federal or board rules."

As marijuana remains a Schedule I controlled substance under federal law, it is still included on Washington's list of controlled substances. What's more, under the state Constitution, the legislature cannot make any changes to I-502 for two years without a 2/3 majority vote. There is no need to change related WIAA, district or WSSDA model policies at this time. For WSSDA, this includes:

- Model Policy and Procedure 2121, Substance Abuse
- Model Policy and Procedure 4200, Safe and Orderly Learning Environment
- Model Policy and Procedure 5006, Certification Revocation
- Model Policy and Procedure 5201, Drug Free Schools, Community and Workplace
- Model Policy and Procedure 5202, Federal Motor Carrier



FROM POLICY AND LEGAL

Heidi Maynard

Safety Administration Mandated Drug and Alcohol Testing Program.

Most districts understand the prohibitions under federal and state law, and district policy. Students and teachers cannot be under the influence of, use, sell, deliver, manufacture or transfer marijuana and marijuana-infused products and paraphernalia on school property. They also prohibit these on school provided transportation, and at any school-sponsored event, including any athletic event and field trip.

Districts are less clear about whether they need to accommodate medical marijuana "qualified" students and employees who use it off-site and then come to school under the influence. Washington courts have not specifically addressed this off-site use of medical marijuana in regard to schools.

However, the Washington Supreme Court did address the issue of employee off-site use in *Roe v. Teletech Customer Management*, 257 P.3d 586 (Wa. 2011). The court decided the law did not require this accommodation. Districts are advised to consult with their school district when confronted with a similar situation involving students or employees.

Finally, the federal government

appears to be in no hurry to change its stance on marijuana. As *The Seattle Times* reported on January 23, 2013, U.S. Attorney General Holder was non-committal after Governor Inslee tried to determine whether the Department of Justice would crack down on Washington's decriminalization of marijuana. Two days later, on January 24, 2013, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia rejected an argument by marijuana advocates that marijuana should be moved to a less restrictive schedule. The court held that the DEA acted within its authority in declining to reclassify the drug.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

This column presents general information about the Revised Code of Washington, the Washington Administrative Code and/or other legal authority which should not be construed as legal advice. You should seek professional counsel before acting upon any information or comments in this column. No information is to be considered to represent the position of WSSDA on any specific legal matter.



Dates set for spring regional meetings

WSSDA has scheduled eleven regional meetings for Director Areas across Washington.

Beginning in March, the regional meetings provide a great opportunity to network and share information with school directors from around each region and to hear presentations on current issues from education leaders.

Satisfaction rates for the regional meetings held this past fall, averaged well over 80 percent based on responses from the member survey and session evaluations.

Meetings will cover a variety of topics, including legislative initiative updates and association updates

from WSSDA officers and staff. Detailed agendas will be made available prior to the events.

Dr. Jonelle Adams, WSSDA's Executive Director will lead Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project (TPEP) workshops prior to each regional meeting.

The TPEP workshops will cover the latest rules from OSPI and policy changes required for 2013–2014. School directors will learn about the impacts these new requirements will have on budget, staff development, data collection and contract negotiations.

Please register separately for the meeting and the TPEP workshop. Online registration is now open.

March 4

DIRECTOR AREA 3

Bethel
Bethel Learning Center
21818 38th Avenue East
Spanaway, WA 98338
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

March 7

DIRECTOR AREA 1

Marysville
Marysville School District
Service Center
4220 80th St. NE
Marysville, WA 98270
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

March 13

DIRECTOR AREA 5

North Thurston
MEETING
Chinook Middle School
Cafeteria
4301 6th Ave. NE
Lacey, WA 98516
WORKSHOP
WSSDA Conference Center
221 College St. NE
Olympia, WA 98516
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

March 16

DIRECTOR AREA 4

Sequim
Sequim Middle School
301 West Hendrickson Road
Sequim, WA 98392
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. TPEP
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Meeting

March 27

DIRECTOR AREA 6

Kelso
Kelso High School
1904 Allen St.
Kelso, WA 98626
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

April 29

DIRECTOR AREA 2

Bellevue
Wilburton Instructional
Service Center (WISC)
Building 1
12241 Main Street
Bellevue, WA 98005
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

April 29

DIRECTOR AREA 8

Toppenish
Toppenish High School
141 Ward Road
Toppenish, WA 98948
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

April 30

DIRECTOR AREA 7

Soap Lake
Soap Lake High School Library
527 2nd Avenue SW
Soap Lake, WA 98851
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

May 1

DIRECTOR AREA 10

Colfax
Colfax School District
1110 N. Morton Street
Colfax, WA 99111
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

May 2

DIRECTOR AREA 11

Walla Walla
Walla Walla Public Schools
364 South Park Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

May 9

DIRECTOR AREA 9

Spokane
Shadle Park High School
4327 No. Ash St.
Spokane, WA 99205
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting



WSSDA Direct is published monthly by the Washington State School Directors' Association to provide information of interest to school directors and the education community. The views expressed in opinion articles appearing in WSSDA Direct are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent WSSDA policies or positions. If you have a disability and need this publication in an alternate format, please contact the WSSDA Communications Department.

Debbie Long, President509.993.1019
Mari Taylor, President-elect425.314.1131
Chris Nieuwenhuis, Vice President509.290.1824
Dr. Jonelle Adams, Executive Director360.252.3001
Michael Wilson, Communications Director360.252.3013

WSSDA DIRECTORY

General Information360.493.9231
Association Services360.252.3002
Leadership Development Services360.252.3009
Governmental Relations360.252.3010
Communications360.252.3013
Policy and Legal Services360.252.3018
Toll Free (In-State)800.562.8927
E-Mailmail@wssda.org

221 College Street N.E.
Olympia, WA 98516-5313

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

- 11-12** WASA Small Schools Conference
- 21-23** AASA National Conference on Education

March

- 4** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Bethel
- 7** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Marysville
- 9-10** Board of Directors' Meeting
- 10** Legislative Committee Meeting
- 10** Resolutions Committee
- 10-11** WSSDA/WASA/WASBO Legislative Conference
- 13** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, North Thurston
- 16** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Sequim
- 27** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Kelso

April

- 13-15** NSBA Annual Conference
- 26-27** Board of Directors' Meeting
- 29** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Bellevue
- 29** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Toppenish
- 30** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Soap Lake

May

- 1** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Colfax
- 2** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Walla Walla
- 3** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Spokane

June

- 21-22** Legislative Committee Meeting
- 21-22** Board of Directors' Meeting