



2015 Annual Report

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Using the power of public education to change lives

*"...The variety of our skin tones
can confuse, bemuse, delight,
brown and pink and beige and purple,
tan and blue and white*

*... I note the obvious differences
between each sort and type
but we are more alike, my friends
than we are unlike."*

-Maya Angelou

I share these words because it seems fitting for the work of WSSDA this past year, as well as our work moving forward. Equity has become a front burner issue among the WSSDA board. Our leadership development team has taken on this challenge with a strength and stamina that will move Washington to the forefront of making a difference for all kids.

In 2015, along with the Puget Sound Educational Service District, WSSDA helped facilitate two equity convenings with the goal of learning with teams from around the state. The greatest opportunity to learn came from a group of students who shared their struggles in schools. Their stories were sometimes difficult to hear, but they were all hopeful and were looking to the adults in the room to give them the opportunities that they desperately want and deserve.

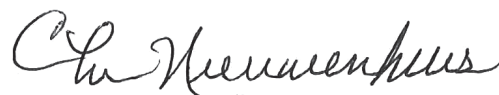
2015 was also the year that our big push to repair the No Child Left Behind legislation finally paid off.

NCLB was tying the hands of local school boards to do the work they know needed to be accomplished within their own districts. We will no longer be forced to send out "failure letters" to parents explaining how our schools are failing, even though our kids are thriving. While the new law known as the Every Student Succeeds Act is still a work in progress, it is a major step in reining in the U.S. Department of Education's power over local boards. Thanks goes to our own Senator Patty Murray for her tireless efforts to reach across the aisle and work in a bipartisan manner to repair this faulty legislation.

Of course, we still have the McCleary case hanging in the balance. This past legislative session didn't show any real progress toward a solution, only another plan to make a plan! It is imperative that each of us stays diligent and continues to work with our local legislators to get this problem solved with a sustainable plan.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president in 2015. The year flew by and I can only hope that I made a small impact on the education of ALL of our kids.

Lastly, I would like to thank you for your commitment to a quality education for all of Washington's children. We can and do make a difference!



Chris Nieuwenhuis
WSSDA President, 2015

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2015: A strong year for WSSDA

As 2015 closed out, WSSDA remained in a good financial position. This allowed us to keep dues at 2011 rates. Member services like policy reviews, leadership development workshops, board self-assessment, and BoardDocs, our official online board information and support program, remain popular items.

Our policy and legal services department, particularly, enjoyed increasing membership and interest from the field.

Attendance at both spring and fall regional meetings was strong, with evaluations that showed consistently positive reactions from participants. McCleary, assessment reform, ESEA reauthorization, construction issues and meaningful professional development for teachers and board members dominated agendas.

As in the past, we enjoyed perspectives from representatives of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education at each of the 11 regional meetings. Personally, I attended most of the fall meetings and completed a tour of small districts in Southeast Washington. I always find it illuminating and rewarding to visit schools and board members on their home turf.

On the communications front, eClippings, our daily listing of key education articles from newspapers and other information sources, continued to be hugely popular, with subscriptions moving past 3,000. It is rare to find anyone in the Washington education policy world that does not rely on eClippings as their daily news source. And, importantly, Our Kids, Our Future, with its wonderful series of video clips and written pieces showing the good things occurring in schools, enjoyed positive and increasing viewership.

All in all, 2015 was a good year at WSSDA. For me, watching carefully as our 1,477 members do their everyday work supporting kids and staff in their local communities, I was more than impressed. Our system of local control works—in 295 different ways across the state.

The contributions of citizen board members who give up their time and energy to make schools successful is heartwarming—and crucial to the future of public education. Thanks to board members for what they do each and every day.



Alan Burke
WSSDA Executive Director, 2015

A LOOK BACK AT 2015

WSSDA's top accomplishments



Finally, Congress gets rid of No Child Left Behind

The long-awaited reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was completed in mid-December when President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act. It marked the culmination of an eight-year campaign by WSSDA, NSBA and almost every educational policy organization to update and improve the law that directs the federal role in K-12 education. New regulations will demand that states set up individual accountability measures and assure that low performing schools are assisted. However, the new procedures are far less prescriptive than what states have endured under the current version of ESEA. The effort benefited from the many WSSDA members active in the Federal Relations Network who have long advocated for reauthorization. The change also reflected the wishes of 170 boards in Washington state that passed resolutions calling for changes.



Careful budgeting allows board to keep dues unchanged for 5th straight year

Careful budgeting in 2015 allowed WSSDA to keep its dues flat for the fifth straight year. The conservative spending also allowed the association to continue to make investments in its policy services and reduce long-term debt. Revenue of about \$3.3 million covered expenses of \$2.9 million. Tight control of spending allowed the board in January 2016 to set aside an additional \$200,000 in a dedicated fund to help pay costs at the aging WSSDA headquarters and give the association room to continue to keep dues steady. During the year, mortgage debt dropped by \$80,000.



Annual Conference draws throng to Bellevue

Attendance at WSSDA's annual conference was the highest in more than 10 years as well over 1,000 came to Bellevue. This included a pre-conference record of 322 registrants. The strong pre-conference program, sponsorships and increased focus on education law-related sessions all contributed to the success. Conference ratings were strong for a fifth year running, with 93 percent of participants rating the event as good or excellent. Sessions on finance and collective bargaining, balanced governance, community engagement and the new director boot camp each scored higher than 95 percent. On the flip side, participants let organizers know they want all keynoters to cover subjects relevant to the work of school directors and lower survey participation rates are likely to lead to some changes in how the evaluations are conducted.

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University Place, West Valley and Issaquah named as School Boards of the Year

The University Place, West Valley (Spokane) and Issaquah School Boards were named the 2015 school *Boards of the Year*. The three boards were chosen from a field of 15. Six other school boards were earlier named *Boards of Distinction*. They come from districts in Auburn, Ferndale, Kent, Puyallup, Riverview and South Kitsap. The West Valley, Auburn, Kent and Puyallup boards also earned special awards for attaining Board of Distinction honors five times. The school boards who are recognized as a Board of Distinction each hold high expectations for academic achievement, college and career readiness, and productive citizenry. But what really set these boards and school districts apart was their unified approach to vision, resource alignment and monitoring of progress.



Equity activities take center stage

School directors ramped up attention to equity issues in K-12 education. WSSDA partnered with the Puget Sound Educational Service District for an initial session in April. That event attracted more than 200 directors and other education professionals. A follow-up convening in November brought even more participants. An equity and access caucus created in 2014, met three times. Finally, the November annual conference featured an equity strand to help directors explore equity issues and educational barriers. Meanwhile, leaders joined with AWSP and WASA to organize a statewide equity conference for May 2016, as well as a third PSESD/WSSDA convening in the spring.



A solid year for education legislation in Washington

It took a record number of days to finish, but the 2015 Legislature did accomplish some pretty big things for education. A hefty investment in early childhood education will help more of our littlest learners prepare for kindergarten, and a substantial tuition reduction will make higher education accessible for more high school graduates. Still, the legislature failed to cure the Supreme Court's contempt order in the McCleary case because it did not agree to a plan to fully fund basic education without benefit of local taxes. The court followed up that inaction by imposing a \$100,000 per day fine on the legislature. Lawmakers made great strides in funding for all-day kindergarten, K-3 class size reduction, and operating costs, but were unable to clear the last and highest hurdle – employee compensation.

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Policy & Legal Services expands reach across state

The continued popularity and value of WSSDA's two flagship policy services, Policy & Legal News and Model Policy Online resulted in 272 out of 295 school districts subscribing to one or both services and helped drive up [web](#) traffic. The busy year also saw six new policies, five new procedures, revisions to 70 current policies and procedures and a series review of the personnel policies. Committee work was again on time and on budget. The 2015 Delegate Assembly ran smoothly and efficiently. WSSDA contracted with 14 school districts for policy manual review services and contracted with school law firms in Seattle and Spokane to build a policy consulting cadre.



Strong member engagement in 2015 Legislative Assembly

In September, 168 school leaders representing 82 districts attended WSSDA's annual Legislative Assembly. The assembly approved 39 new positions, added nine Standing Legislative Positions, amended six, and eliminated seven. Then, the districts in attendance voted for their top 10 legislative priorities. A "short list" of [top priorities](#) for the 2016 Legislative Session was adopted by the Legislative Committee and WSSDA Board of Directors.



WSSDA Web improved to work better on smartphones and tablets

WSSDA upgraded its [website](#) in November to be friendlier to those using their smartphones and tablets. The board of directors asked for the change after reviewing data showing that the proportion of those users was increasing. With that change came some slight adjustments to the look and feel of the site and the development of a prototype [WSSDA App](#), set to launch in 2016. Overall, the WSSDA website is visited about 1,000 times each day, with documents downloaded about 2,000 times per week. The most popular pages in 2015 were eClippings, policy resources, annual conference and superintendent searches. In addition to those who view eClippings and Legislative Updates on line, the two publications have more than 3,200 subscribers.



Our Kids, Our Future continues growth in second year

The [Our Kids, Our Future website](#) showed continued growth in its second year with nearly 16,500 visits from people who viewed the stories more than 35,500 times. Districts from across the state - large and small - provided nearly 900 articles and videos detailing successful classrooms, programs and students. Top stories during the year ranged from a video debunking myths about public education to Blaine's "cycle of inquiry" intended to improve teaching practices. Other most-viewed pieces covered Wenatchee's GLAD program, Puyallup's enrichment for homeschoolers and the BEATS program in Bellingham.



Regional Meetings draw strong crowds, good reviews

Fall and Spring Regional Meetings drew strong participation in 2015. Nearly 350 attended the fall session and about 325 showed for the spring events. During the spring, nearly 40 percent of districts were represented, with sessions at Wapato (48%), Walla Walla (41%) and Quincy (41%) leading the way in Director Area participation. In terms of total attendees, the largest crowds came to Ridgefield, 50; Selah, 49; Edmonds, 47; Colville, 45; and Wapato, 43. The evaluations for most meetings were good to excellent. The most consistent message was that members like hearing from legislators, OSPI on legislative updates and WSSDA's executive director. They also consistently asked for more networking opportunities.



WSSDA sets new lineup of consultants

The association reset its team of consultants in 2015, starting with a request for qualifications to establish its lineup for 2015-16. Eleven experienced and highly qualified consultants were selected with skill sets that include change management, adult learning, strategic planning, governance, superintendent evaluation and broad understanding of contemporary issues in public education.





FINANCIAL REPORT

Strong financial growth in 2015

The financial report is a condensed summary of the Statement of Net Position and Statement of Activities as of December 31, 2015. WSSDA ended the 2015 fiscal year with revenues exceeding expenses.

STATEMENT OF NET POSITION

The condensed Statement of Net Position provides a broad overview of the association's finances and serves as a useful indicator of WSSDA's financial position at December 31, 2015, as compared to the previous year end.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

The Statement of Activities focuses on revenue and expense activity for the year. As of December 31, 2015, revenues of \$3,335,574 exceeded expenses of \$2,854,598 adding to the fund balance \$480,976.

The Statement of Net Position and the Statement of Activities correspond with each other with a total ending fund balance (net position) of \$3,878,997.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Mortgage debt decreased by \$80,000.
- The Annual Conference in Seattle provided revenue of \$607,920 with an expense of \$525,895.
- No annual dues increase in 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
- An operating surplus allowed WSSDA to set aside funds for facility costs.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Net Position

	Governmental Activities		
	December 31, 2015	December 31, 2014	Amount Increase (Decrease)
ASSETS			
Cash and Investments	\$2,916,565	\$2,544,855	\$371,710
Other Current Assets	225,032	120,400	104,632
Capital Assets (Net of Depreciation)	1,190,564	1,206,706	(16,142)
TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,332,161	\$3,871,961	\$460,200
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities	\$152,105	\$104,401	\$47,704
Long-Term Liabilities	301,059	369,539	(68,480)
TOTAL LIABILITIES	453,164	473,940	(20,776)
NET POSITION			
Net Investment in Capital Assets	1,010,564	946,706	63,858
Restricted	284,602	284,602	0
Unrestricted	2,583,831	2,166,713	417,118
TOTAL NET POSITION	3,878,997	3,398,021	480,976
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET POSITION	\$4,332,161	\$3,871,961	\$460,200

FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Activities

EXPENSES

Governmental Activities

	2015
Current by Program	
Association Services:	\$922,299
Less Capital Asset Outlays	(22,163)
Less Principal Payment on Mortgage	(80,000)
Plus Disposals (net book value)	—
Plus Depreciation Expense	38,305
Increase in Compensated Absences Liability	11,520
Total Association Services	869,961
Policy and Legal Services	559,649
Government Relations	360,365
Leadership Development	339,058
Annual Conference	525,895
Communications and Marketing	199,670
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,854,598

REVENUES

Program Revenues

Charges for Services:	
Association Services	1,744,589
Policy and Legal Services	773,999
Government Relations	76,541
Leadership Development Services	74,084
Annual Conference	607,920
Communications and Marketing	35,621
TOTAL PROGRAM REVENUES	3,312,754

Other Revenues

Interest Income	15,920
Other Income	6,900
TOTAL OTHER REVENUES	22,820

TOTAL REVENUES **3,335,574**

Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenses (Change in Net Position)	480,976
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Net Position, Beginning	3,398,021
NET POSITION, ENDING	\$3,878,997



OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WSSDA Leadership

2015 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Chris Nieuwenhuis

Deer Park
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PRESIDENT-ELECT

Chris Nation

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VICE PRESIDENT

Joanne Greer

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IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Mari Taylor

Lake Stevens
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2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DIRECTOR AREA 1

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DIRECTOR AREA 2

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DIRECTOR AREA 2

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DIRECTOR AREA 8

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DIRECTOR AREA 9

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DIRECTOR AREA 10

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DIRECTOR AREA 11

Larry Ayre

Finley School
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About WSSDA

MISSION

The Washington State School Directors' Association provides leadership and advocacy, and empowers its members with knowledge and skills to govern with excellence

VISION

All Washington School Directors effectively govern to ensure all students' success.

BELIEFS

- Public education is vital to our country's democratic way of life and local school boards are vital to the success of public education.
- Quality schools require ethical, effective governance and transformational leadership in order to maximize student learning.
- School directors are the Association's primary customers. They are best served through an innovative, professional and flexible organization which provides exceptional training and services in advocacy, governance and leadership.
- The Association is uniquely positioned and empowered by statute to provide training and services that are consistent with the roles and responsibilities of school directors.
- High functioning local school boards have a positive impact on the learning and development for each student.



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