



Direct

Washington State School Directors' Association

AUGUST 2013

Hot topics on tap for Legislative Assembly

All school directors are encouraged to attend the 2013 Legislative Assembly and help set WSSDA's priorities for the 2014 legislative session.

The event is scheduled September 20-21 at the Seattle Airport Marriott near SeaTac. To take advantage of lower conference and hotel room rates, attendees should register no later than September 6.

The Legislative Assembly includes presentations on hot topics, a networking reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres, and the main event — voting on 69 proposals that will guide WSSDA staff on legislative issues for the upcoming session.

Like last year, WSSDA will offer an Innovative Schools tour on Friday morning, with the Tukwila School District serving as our featured district. The tour

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Attendees of the 2012 Legislative Assembly review the proposal guide to determine whether to pass or not pass proposals for WSSDA's 2014 legislative agenda.



Ferndale School District was the 2012 Board of the Year winner for districts with enrollment between 1,001-9000 students.

BOARDS OF DISTINCTION

You asked. We listened. Member feedback prompts program changes

This year's Boards of Distinction program incorporates a number of changes based on feedback from the 2012 WSSDA member survey.

The 2013 application includes objective, performance-based criteria and revisions to the submission documentation, and limits narratives to three main points.

The program now offers three awards: Boards of the Year, Boards of Distinction and the special merit award, Five-Year Board of Distinction.

The awards honor school boards for demonstrating an understanding of their leadership roles and follow through on their responsibilities. The awards also credit boards who

emphasize educational excellence and equity for all students.

The *Boards of the Year* award is given to one district in each of three district size categories. This prestigious award goes only to the highest rated boards from among all applicants. Board of the Year winners will be also be reported in the WSSDA Direct.

The *Boards of Distinction* award is presented to each board that shows it is making progress toward meeting the Washington School Board Standards.

New this year, a special merit award called the *Five-Year Board of Distinction* is given to boards that have received a Board

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



PRESIDENT
Debbie Long

Communicating results through a district report card

Recently OSPI mailed test results to your district office. So what do you do with them? How do you inform your community that your school district is making a difference?

One way to publicize your results is through a district report card. The district report card can be an interactive tool to provide current and historical data to parents, educators, lawmakers, community member and researchers.

On the report card you should be able to locate information on proficiency test results, graduation rates, financial data and demographics. This data should help inform and guide parental involvement, plan and evaluate school improvement initiatives and help school board directors make decisions.

But it is more than a historical view. Our district report card enables me to talk candidly to my constituents. We recognize what we are doing right and where we need to improve. It guides our district and helps shape our future.

The report card is color coded to communicate whether we are on target, making progress or behind in meeting our strategic goals. It is a relatively simple and open way to show how we are doing.

Specifically, at Central Valley we measure our success through student achievement via test scores, student engagement in school and a successful school experience. If you would like an example, ours can be found at www.cvsd.org. A number of other districts in the state take a similar approach.

No matter how you choose to do it, I encourage you to share your district results with your community.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

of Distinction award for five consecutive years. These boards have demonstrated they are committed to meeting a range of standards year in and year out.

One board member stated, "It is really beneficial to have the board come together to work on one project. This experience has been advantageous and allowed us to gain a wealth of knowledge from each board member and WSSDA."

Each year, the application for the Boards of Distinction program focuses on different benchmarks within the five Washington School Board Standards. Completing the application requires boards to review and document how their actions align with these standards. This process provides boards with a way to identify areas of success and communicate their commitment to continuous improvement and accountability.

"We have found that our participation in this program keeps us focused on our primary mission and vision," said one past honoree. "It also provides a great opportunity for refresher training for veteran board members and educational training for newly appointed members."

For complete details and to download an application, visit www.wssda.org, click on the *Services* tab and then select *Boards of Distinction Awards* under *Leadership Development*. Applications are due September 26, 2013.

Save money with BuyBoard

Your school district has a new opportunity to save money on its purchases. WSSDA has partnered with NSBA and BuyBoard, a national online purchasing cooperative that serves school districts, municipalities, colleges and other public entities. The BuyBoard Cooperative obtains competitive bids on thousands of products. This provides instant access to volume discounts.

BuyBoard products offer a broad range of supplies that range from pens and paper to school busses and swimming pools.

Membership is free in the cooperative, which was designed to comply with laws and regulations governing public purchases. The cooperative began in Texas and has expanded across the nation. Schools in 10 states are now saving money through BuyBoard.

"It really is a simple way to save money," said Harry Frost, WSSDA's Director of Finance. "The online system works well and provides school districts the opportunity to make purchases from an approved list of vendors. Users can easily search for items, prices, and vendors. An automated request-for-quote function for larger volume purchases is simple and efficient. The cooperative is even set up to give local firms a chance to be a supplier."

It's easy to become a member of the BuyBoard Cooperative. There are no minimum purchase requirements or membership fees. Your school board simply needs to pass a resolution to join the cooperative and then fill out the agreement form for approval. Upon approval, BuyBoard provides login information and users can begin purchasing. Visit our website for more information and to become a member.





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jonelle Adams

Evaluation best practices

How a school board evaluates its superintendent depends on the district, its relationship with the superintendent and its community stakeholders. But few would deny that superintendent performance is critical to any district's success. How boards approach the evaluation can have dramatic effects on student achievement and other district outcomes.

Your WSSDA Board of Directors decided it was important to get out ahead of this issue.

We began to partner with WASA and designed a first-of-its-kind test of five different approaches. The goal is to develop and field test options for local school boards. Each model is based on national research and vetted by the Superintendent Evaluation Steering Committee.

Two of the pilots are well underway, and the other three are getting started this month. After the next year of testing, we will likely find the need for adjustments and plan to make the results available. You can expect progress reports along the way and a final report of the evaluation initiative in the summer of 2015. Best and promising practices are available on the WSSDA website and you can always contact us for assistance.

One size does not fit all when it comes to local schools, their boards and their superintendents. Your WSSDA Board of Directors wanted to make sure that when it comes to one of your most important responsibilities, you have a choice.

There are four elements common to all the models. Evaluation needs to be:

1. **Ongoing and integrated into the board's work.** Evaluation must be a year-long process that is built into board meetings and includes regular dialogue and interim reports.
2. **Based on factors that matter to**

schools and students. Evaluation must cover professional and continuous improvement and accountability for student growth. It must be aligned with the contract, job description and district goals.

3. **Fair and built upon trust.** Trust facilitates growth and development through constructive feedback that helps improve performance. The evaluation must be built on mutually agreed upon district goals and performance standards.

4. **Documented by performance-based evidence.** This includes multiple measures and sources of information.

The five pilots are diverse, both geographically and in application. They cover all parts of the state and are based on one or more of the following: Superintendent standards, district outcomes, 360 feedback evaluation, five step cycle and continuous quality improvement. More details are available on the WSSDA website.

Each of the five workgroups or pilot participants will work with the same project components. These include a comprehensive job description, a criteria-based framework for evaluation, and concrete evidence such as student achievement, goal attainment, improvement metrics and work products. They will be guided by a step-by-step process and timeline, and final report.

Our Director of Leadership Development Services, Phil Gore, is leading this effort. Phil has immersed himself in superintendent evaluation and related research. Phil is working on his doctorate degree through the University of Washington and will be using some of the pilot group research in his dissertation work. For more information or guidance, please contact Phil at p.gore@wssda.org.

Research helps validate Board Self-Assessment

BY PHIL GORE

Recent research in Montana demonstrated a connection between the way school boards assess their performance with the WSSDA Self-Assessment and student achievement.

Ivan Lorentzen, a 20-year school board member in Kalispell, completed research for his dissertation, using the Washington School Board Standards. He found that board member perspectives of their performance against each of the five standards correlated with Montana student achievement data.

The benchmark with the strongest correlation was Standard Four, Benchmark B — Evaluating the superintendent on clear and focused expectations. The second strongest correlation was with Standard Two, Benchmark C — Adopting a collaboratively developed district plan focused on learning and achievement outcomes for all students. The third highest correlation was with Standard Four, Benchmark A — Committing to continuous improvement in student achievement at each school and throughout the district.

The research is exciting for the members and staff at WSSDA. It helps to validate the Washington School Board Standards and the WSSDA Board Self-Assessment. It shows that what schools boards do makes a difference and that school boards are able to accurately assess their performance.

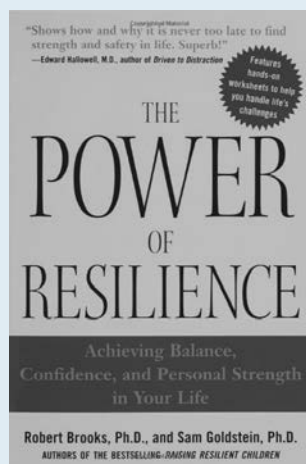
PHIL GORE is WSSDA's Director of Leadership Services

SUMMER READING LIST

Annual conference keynote speakers author noteworthy books

Looking for a worthwhile book to read during the tail end of summer? We have some great suggestions.

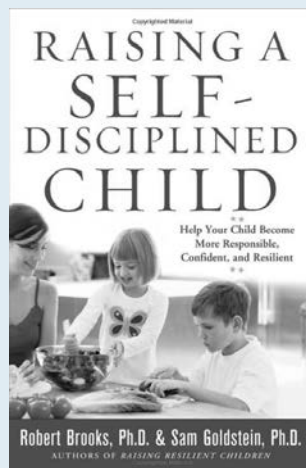
Robert Brooks and Ronald Ferguson, both keynote speakers at the 2013 WSSDA Annual Conference, have authored several terrific books worth putting on your summer reading list.



The Power of Resilience: Achieving Balance, Confidence, and Personal Strength in Your Life, by Robert Brooks is full of useful strategies for building and nurturing resilience in children and adults. Other topics covered in the book include rewriting negative scripts, developing empathy and communicating effectively.

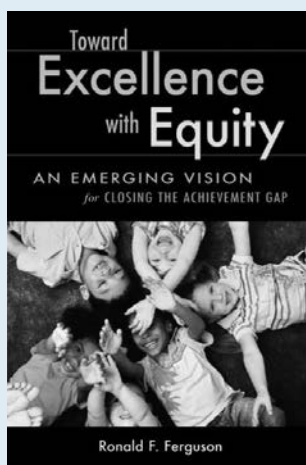
Raising a Self-Disciplined Child, also by Brooks, offers ways to teach children of any age the value of self-control, self-reliance, and self-assurance—important skills that will last a lifetime.

In addition to the opening keynote speech, Brooks will speak at a special preconference reception. Attendees of the reception will be entered in a drawing to win a free copy of *Raising a Self-Disciplined Child*.



Toward Excellence with Equity: An Emerging Vision for Closing the Achievement Gap, by Ronald Ferguson, explores how rates of progress in narrowing gaps have varied over the recent decades, the roles played by various school policies and practices, and the importance of lifestyles and informal social processes that play out between children and their parents and peers.

Dr. Ferguson is co-lead of the Harvard-based Pathways to Prosperity Project. He will discuss a collaborative approach to the education and training of the next generation during his keynote presentation.



Rotating banners on the home page have been successful at getting users to key web pages and timely information.

WSSDA website shows sharp uptick in traffic

WSSDA's website showed dramatic growth in its second year by virtually every major measure. Visits to the site rose to more than 392,000 from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013, a 74 percent increase from the prior year. The current website was launched in July of 2011. The number of page views increased by more than 31 percent to more than 781,000.

The most impressive gain, however, may have been the 231 percent increase in document downloads. Users obtained more than 100,000 documents in the recent 12-month period.

"Directors told us they wanted more online products and we've put a lot of emphasis on it. We've gotten very active in letting school directors and the broader public know they are available," said Michael Wilson, WSSDA's Communication Director. "That effort has clearly paid off."

WSSDA staff have increased the number of product links on the main webpage, added more links to the popular eClippings service, begun using Twitter to broadcast links and used more email blasts to directors on important issues and products. News items on the main page are updated nearly every day to capture the rapid changes in Washington's schools.

"It's all having an effect," said Communications Specialist Gini Niles. "The moment a link is distributed, we see a bump in the number of people downloading reports or registering for conferences and webinars."

Wilson, Niles and WSSDA IT manager Robert Martin are heading up an effort to refresh the website and hope to have the changes in place by early fall.

"Right now, we are looking at installing a better search engine and revamping the main page and its organization," Wilson said. "Directors have said it is hard to find some materials and that the drop-down menu system is too complicated. We want to simplify the choices."

If you have suggestions for improving the website, please contact Wilson at m.wilson@wssda.org or 360.252.3013.

The linchpin of democracy

Hard to believe, but America once had a democracy without a public education system. Thankfully, that did not last very long.

At the founding of the Republic, schooling was limited and typically provided by ethnic and religious groups that educated their own people, often in their native languages. The birth of our nation set in motion forces which ultimately produced a system of universal education that would become the envy of the world. Achieving such a lofty goal was not what led reformers to press for creation of “common schools” in the 1800s, however. Their primary motivation was much more practical; they realized that winning freedom could be easier than keeping it, since an uneducated citizenry is fodder for anarchy or tyranny. “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be,” Thomas Jefferson aptly observed.

Still, creating a publicly funded system of education in the first century of the nation’s history was hardly a given. Many of the groups that operated schools were opposed to government involvement in what they considered to be their vital role in society. These were powerful interests and their protests often fell on receptive ears, since many Americans were distrustful of intervention in their lives by any legislature, governor or other public official.

Two compelling arguments helped to overcome these fears: First, all Americans should receive an education – not just those fortunate enough to belong to the right group or able to afford tuition. And, second, the new schools would be owned and operated by each community; they were not outposts of a government located in a distant capital. To underscore this point, laws creating common schools typically provided for them to be governed

by local citizens – those who serve on school boards. The message was clear: these schools belong to the people, and the officials who oversee them are neighbors who can be held accountable for their performance.

Much has changed in the intervening years, of course. The education system has grown in scope, now ranging from early learning programs through comprehensive high schools. Demands have expanded, too. During most of their existence, public schools could (and were expected to) sort students — providing a more rigorous education to the college-bound, more limited instruction to those destined for work involving physical labor. Today, of course, the workforce has few unskilled jobs, and we no longer have the luxury of educating only a few people very well. In view of dramatic changes in the economy and challenges to America’s competitive position, public schools now must ensure that all students learn at high levels. Here’s the good news: Most schools are meeting or exceeding those expectations, achieving results that once would have been considered impossible.

Creativity and innovation have stimulated this record of success, not burdensome government regulations, paperwork and mandates for ever more testing. Despite the vastly different environment in which the education system now operates, a lesson learned nearly two centuries ago still applies: Schools are community assets, and their leadership is best entrusted to elected school boards who are directly accountable to the people they serve.

Thomas Gentzel is the Executive Director for the National School Boards Association. This article is reprinted with permission of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. Reprinted with permission from American School Board Journal, January 2013. Copyright 2013 National School Boards Association. All rights reserved.



2013 Fall Regional Meetings

October 1
DIRECTOR AREA 7
Wenatchee

October 3
DIRECTOR AREA 1
Mount Vernon

October 7
DIRECTOR AREA 9
East Valley

October 8
DIRECTOR AREA 10
Pullman

October 9
DIRECTOR AREA 8
Sunnyside

October 10
DIRECTOR AREA 11
Waitsburg

October 12
DIRECTOR AREA 4
Crescent

October 15
DIRECTOR AREA 3
Clover Park

October 23
DIRECTOR AREA 6
Washougal

October 29
DIRECTOR AREA 2
Seattle

October 30
DIRECTOR AREA 5
Olympia

Visit www.wssda.org to register.

Meet the officer candidates up for election

The candidates are set for this year's officer elections, including a highly competitive field for vice president.

"We have four very strong candidates for WSSDA officer positions this year," said Nominating Committee Chair and WSSDA Past President, Mary Fertakis.

Directors can get to know each of the candidates by viewing their speeches, bios and statements online at www.wssda.org. These board members have volunteered to represent all WSSDA members at the local, state and national levels.

Chris Nieuwenhuis of Riverside is running unopposed for president-elect. The person in this position automatically becomes president the following year. Nieuwenhuis is currently vice president on the WSSDA Board of Directors.

Marnie Maraldo of Issaquah, Harium Martin Morris of Seattle and Chris Nation of Marysville are running to succeed Nieuwenhuis as vice president.

The vice president position alternates between directors from the east and west sides of the Cascades. This year it is open to a member from the west side.



From left: President-elect candidate Chris Nieuwenhuis and Vice President candidates (in alphabetical order) Marnie Maraldo, Harium Martin-Morris, and Chris Nation.

The electronic elections process also offers a period during which alternative candidates can be nominated by any director. That period began July 26 and ends August 10.

A smooth elections process requires WSSDA to have the most current email address for all directors. If a director is new to WSSDA or has changed an email address since last June, he or she should send an updated email address, along with name and district, to mail@wssda.org.

Voting will open August 26 and will continue through September 27.

Members who voted electronically last year found the process quick and easy. Watch for an email titled "Official WSSDA Officer Voting Instructions" on August 26.

The message will contain a link to the elections website. All you need to do is log in using the user name and password provided, then select your candidate preferences.

The most important part of the voting process is knowing who to choose. Take a few minutes to view the candidate pages at www.wssda.org. Click the *About Us* tab, and *WSSDA Elections* under the *Officers/Board of Directors* link.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

is sponsored by D.A. Davidson. Space is limited to 60 participants and there is no cost to attend. We also will be offering a complimentary informational lunch on Friday to those who have never attended a Legislative Assembly. The luncheon will feature WSSDA Legislative Chair Danny Edwards (Riverview) and Vice Chair Tony Ghazel (Orcas Island).

For those seeking to hone their advocacy skills, WSSDA is offering a four-hour legislative training for seasoned school directors. The cost is \$45 and is Thursday, September 19th from 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Participation is limited to 40 members and district staff.

Those new to the legislative process will have an opportunity to attend the Legislative Boot camp at Annual Conference in

November.

Many school directors think that only Legislative Representatives can attend or vote at the Legislative Assembly. While the board's Legislative Representative usually serves as the voting delegate, voting credentials may be shared among attending directors at each board's discretion.

"We hope that every district sends at least one representative to the Assembly this year," said Chairman Edwards. "The legislative agenda is set by those who attend. It's important to participate so your district's voice is heard and you have a say in our agenda."

Attendees have an opportunity to debate and amend the proposals. Each district receives one vote per proposal, although delegates may request a "weighted" vote which allocates a

different number of votes per district based on student FTE.

Districts also vote for their Top 10 proposals at the end of the Assembly, which assists the board in determining priorities for the 2014 session.

Register now on our website at www.wssda.org/events/legislativeassembly.

Pre-assembly agenda

While the agenda won't be finalized until the end of the month, here's a sneak peak at the preliminary agenda lined up for the 2013 Legislative Assembly:

- Governor Jay Inslee (invited)
- Legislative panel on accountability
- The "Business" of Reform, with business leaders
- Closing the Achievement Gap
- State of Education Address by Washington State Superintendent Randy Dorn (invited)

OUR KIDS, OUR FUTURE

Wenatchee kids team with New York filmmaker to end bullying

Students in three Wenatchee classrooms got a crash course in filmmaking as part of an anti-bullying campaign.

The campaign is funded by local entrepreneur Nancy Tedeschi, Lisa Bradshaw (through her nonprofit organization called The Don't Wait Project), and the Wenatchee School District. Students are given full reign in creating anti-bullying films for public service announcements that will be aired on northwest television stations and YouTube.

Tedeschi hired New York filmmaker Mike Feurstein to work with the students, who wrote their own script, acted, and filmed the PSA's with Feurstein's help.

Coordinating the project for the school district was Ron Brown, Director of Technology and Assessment. "Bullying is the root of a lot of other issues," said Brown. "If it isn't dealt with, we might see things later like expulsions, suspensions and fights. We want to give kids coping skills and be more proactive to the problem that has been around forever."

WINNING ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION: How do you make a bully not be a bully anymore?

"Tell the bully to stop and be nice to people and respect them and listen to others."

GISELLE CHICAS, COLUMBIA ELEMENTARY

"The way to unmake a bully is by making friends with him and convincing him to stop. When he does, he'll do the same, it'll cut the chain."

DIANA RIOS, PIONEER MIDDLE SCHOOL

"Treat others how you want to be treated. You never know what a person goes through so don't bully."

YVETTE RAMOS, WESTSIDE HIGH

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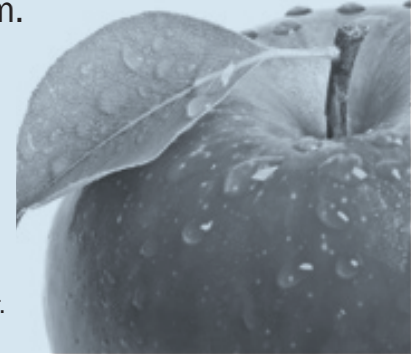
LEARN AND LEVERAGE CONFERENCE For Washington Public Schools Foundations

September 10, 2013

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Learn new and effective ways to help school foundations help our public schools.

Visit www.wssda.org to register.



Follow us on Twitter

www.twitter.com/wssda

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It's her future.
It's your choice.

**WSSDA**

Washington State
School Directors' Association

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Communications 360.252.3013
Policy and Legal Services 360.252.3018
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E-Mail mail@wssda.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August

- 14** WSSDA Webinar:
How to use policy
in your district
- 23-25** Board of Directors'
Retreat

September

- 10** Learn and Leverage
for Washington Public
Schools Foundations
- 17** WSSDA Webinar
- 19-21** Legislative Assembly
- 19** Board of Directors'
Meeting
- 19** Legislative
Committee Meeting
- 20** Resolution
Committee Meeting

October

- 1** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 7
Wenatchee
- 3** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 1
Mount Vernon
- 7** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 9
East Valley
- 8** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 10
Pullman
- 9** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 8
Sunnyside
- 10** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 11
Waitsburg
- 12** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 4
Crescent
- 15** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 3
Clover Park

- 16** WSSDA Webinar:
Sexual offenders
in school – What
districts need to know
- 23** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 6
Washougal
- 26** Legislative
Committee Meeting
- 29** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 2
Seattle
- 30** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 5
Olympia

November

- 21-24** WSSDA Annual
Conference