



direct

Washington State School Directors' Association

DECEMBER 2015

PACKED HOUSE FOR WSSDA 2015

Boundless enthusiasm marks 2015 Annual Conference

More than 1,000 people descended on Bellevue last month for WSSDA's 2015 Annual Conference, marking the third straight year the event attracted four-figure crowds.

The conference included about 80 workshops on top of a strong cast of keynote speakers. Preliminary data suggested the throng rated the conference highly. They scored the breakout sessions at about 3.7 on a 1-4 scale, with four being excellent. Ninety-seven percent rated it good or excellent.

"For us, it's a year-round effort to put together the best conference we can," said Colleen Miller, WSSDA's Director of Leadership Development. "We may pause a bit in December to debrief and consider what we could do better next year, but by January we will already be planning for November in Spokane."

This year's event piloted a VIP program aimed at crediting the school directors for the training they received. More than 300 participated. (See page 3)

The conference also premiered an upbeat video highlighting the efforts of more than 20 districts, [Debunking the Myths in](#)



Keynote closing speaker Jeff Utrecht fired up over teaching technology

[Public Education](#). The video can be viewed at the www.OurKidswa.com website.

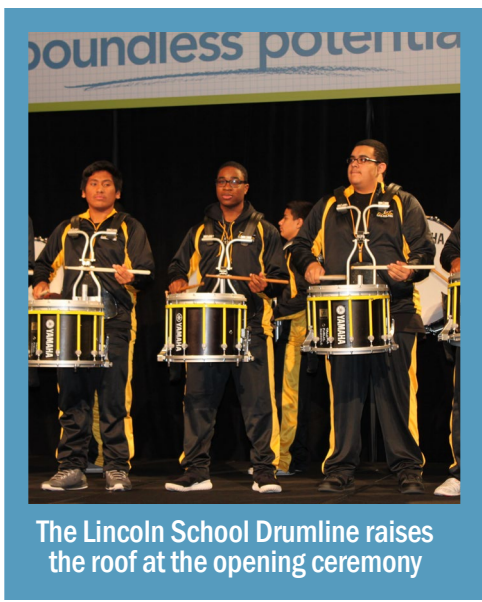
Each of the keynoters reflected the conference theme - Boundless Potential.

Susan Ershler described the challenges of climbing corporate and geologic mountain tops. "Surround yourself with leaders who won't let you quit," she told the crowd.

Pedro Noguero, a nationally renowned expert on equity issues, discussed the differences between equality and equity, and the role schools and school boards can play in helping all kids.

"Instead of focusing on the achievement gap, let's focus on the opportunity gap," he urged, later he reminded the audience that "school boards are the foundation of our democracy."

Tech expert Jeff Utecht urged the crowd to embrace technology and social media in their schools. "Social media empowers



The Lincoln School Drumline raises the roof at the opening ceremony



Members of the Todd Beamer High School dance team performing

CONFERENCE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

BURKE: Great year for WSSDA

ANNUAL CONFERENCE: What social media is saying (BACK PG.)

REGISTRATION: 2016 Legislative Conference



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Alan Burke

For WSSDA, the year couldn't have ended any better.

First, the WSSDA Annual Conference in Bellevue was a rousing success, with near-record numbers of attendees who let us know their positive feelings through consistently high ratings in conference evaluations. Our keynoters were well received; Pedro Noguera, particularly, was a hit with his multiple presentations on equity and access for all students. The breakouts offered provided just about everyone with a set of experiences and lessons that could be taken back to local districts for discussion.

Thanks to the conference committee for planning an outstanding agenda, and to the WSSDA staff for yeoman work in prepping for the four-day event. We'll see you in Spokane next November for the 2016 AC.

Second, the long-awaited reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was completed via President Obama's signature on the 2015 version of ESEA, the so-called Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) December 10th. ESSA marks 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.

Notably, ESSA significantly reduces the US Department of Education oversight on K-12 matters, including accountability for school performance and sanctions for low performing systems. To be

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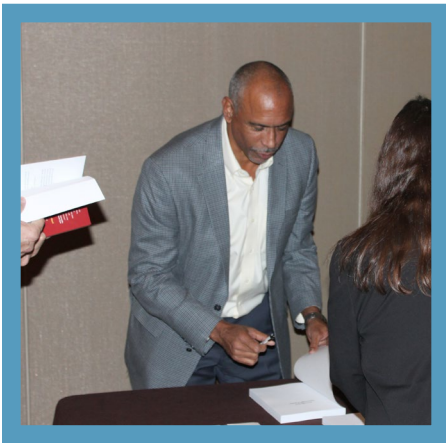
sure, the new regulations demand that states set up individual accountability measures and assure that low performing schools are assisted, but the new procedures are far less prescriptive than what states have endured under the current version of ESEA, or No Child Left Behind. In Washington, the 20% Title I set asides for privately-sourced supplementary educational services are a thing of the past, as is the requirement to send out those nasty school failure letters in August. Good riddance!

Thanks is in order to our entire 12-person congressional delegation who voted in favor of ESSA, with particular kudos to Senator Patty Murray who led work on writing the bipartisan bill through her position as ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, and Representative Cathy McMorris-Rodgers, fourth in Republican House leadership, who helped get the bill through that body.

Finally, thanks loads to the many WSSDA members active in the Federal Relations Network (FRN) who have strongly advocated for reauthorization for many years. Thanks also to the 170 boards and ESDs that passed resolutions calling for changes. As the saying goes, the journey of 1000 miles begins with one step. That first step took place in 2007 when NCLB first came up for renewal, and it ended with the President's signature. A long journey indeed — but certainly a worthwhile adventure.

Happy New Year!





Dr. Pedro Noguera signing books

students,” Utecht said. “Facebook brought down Egypt. In the work world, no one asks you to check your phone at the door.”

The power of social media was also on display in other ways during the conference. Use of a conference app for smartphones continued to grow. This year there were nearly

700 active users. Attendees used the app to view the conference schedule, request meetings, to view attendee profiles and find social networks, among other things.

The event also spawned the most active tweeting in the history of the conference, with dozens of tweets sent during keynote sessions, workshops and student entertainment.

A short video clip of the Todd Beamer High School dance team on the WSSDA Facebook page reached nearly 7,000

people, with nearly 3,000 views. This was far and away the most popular item ever posted at www.facebook.com/wssda.

The conference marked the end of Chris Nieuwenhuis’ term as WSSDA President as the Riverside school director handed over the reins to Chris Nation of Marysville. New President-Elect Joanne Greer of Deer Park and new Vice President Marnie Maraldo of Issaquah also took office. Claire Wilson of Federal Way and Brenda Rogers of Bethel joined the WSSDA Board of Directors.



Anacortes high school student Alexis Hanesworth reciting original poems



Phil Gore with speaker Susan Ershler at her book signing

WSSDA VIPs Step Up their Leadership

More than 300 school directors took their leadership potential to the next level by becoming WSSDA VIPs during the Annual Conference last month.

The VIP certificates were earned in one of three tracks designed to expand targeted knowledge and skills.

In the Foundations of Leadership track, 112 school directors covered the basics of boardmanship. At the Advanced Leadership level, 184 directors honed their leadership abilities. An additional 71 participated in the Equity and Access track, earning their credentials while exploring what it means to provide an equitable education to all students.

WSSDA VIPs earned their credentials by attending specific early bird, general and breakout sessions throughout the conference centered around one of the three areas of learning. Those who tracked their attendance on the conference app qualified for VIP status upon earning at least 10 credits. Certificates of completion were sent to the school districts of all VIPs for recognition of their accomplishments.

WSSDA will continue to roll out the VIP credentialing program at other events to offer members additional opportunities to learn and grow. Keep an eye out for future opportunities so you too can become a WSSDA VIP.



Chris Nieuwenhuis passes the reins to Chris Nation

Equity from the boardroom to the classroom

EXPLORATION TO ACTION

WSSDA, WASA and AWSP are partnering to help members reach the goal of developing organizational leadership for equity and access.

May 24th and 25th 2016, we are offering a two day conference featuring Dr. Pedro Noguera as the keynote speaker. District Leadership teams will explore and develop equity plans to guide achievement for every student.

School board directors are important members of a District Leadership team along with your superintendent, administrators, teacher-leaders and community leaders.

Throughout the two days, you will be listening, discussing and working together. You will leave with actionable steps for your district to move forward so every student reaches their potential.

Registration opens in January and we will send all directors the link to that registration.



Dr. Pedro Noguera

MAY 24TH & 25TH 2016
CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, SEATAC, WA

For questions, please contact Colleen Miller, Director of Leadership Development
c.miller@wssda.org or 360-252-3006



Elections Results



Officers

President Chris Nation, Marysville
President-elect Joanne Greer, Deer Park
Vice-president Marnie Maraldo, Issaquah

Board of Directors

DA 2 Claire Wilson, Federal Way
DA 3 Brenda Rogers, Bethel
DA 5 Chuck Namit, North Thurston
DA 7 Aurora Flores, Manson
DA 10 Harmon Smith, LaCrosse Joint

Legislative Committee

DA 1 Tony Ghazel, Orcas Island
DA 2 My-Linh Thai, Bellevue
DA 2 Angelica Alvarez, Highline
DA 3 Debbie Winskill, Tacoma
DA 4 Carolyn Perkins, Bremerton
DA 5 Kim Reykdal, Tumwater
DA 6 Mavis Nickels, Battle Ground
DA 6 Dan Mitchell, Stevenson-Carson
DA 7 Carrie Sorenson, Cascade
DA 8 Michelle Perry, Sunnyside
DA 9 Dan Hansen, West Valley
DA 10 Scott Carruth, Ritzville
DA 11 Brian Brooks, Kennewick

Interscholastic Activities Committee

DA 2 Michael Spears, Highline
DA 4 J. David Rubie, Bremerton
DA 6 Connie Hennessey, Camas
DA 8 Chad Christopheron, Naches Valley
DA 10 Karl Johanson, Pullman

Nominating Committee

DA 1 Darcy Cheesman, Monroe
DA 2 Lynn Desmarais, Renton
DA 4 Chris Lemke, North Kitsap
DA 6 Monte Anderson, Battle Ground
DA 7 Jennifer Talbot, Wenatchee
DA 8 Sandra Linde, Sunnyside
DA 10 OPEN

Resolutions Committee

DA 2 Agda Burchard, Kent
DA 3 Warren Smith, Bethel
DA 5 Christi Boora, Aberdeen
DA 6 Doug Quinn, Camas
DA 7 Kevin Donovan, Moses Lake
DA 8 Heather Hazlett, Ellensburg
DA 9 Adam Mortenson, West Valley
DA 11 Ivan Howard, Kiona-Benton

FOUR BOARDS HONORED AS FIVE-TIME WINNERS

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

The University Place, West Valley (Spokane) and Issaquah school boards have been named the 2015 School Boards of the Year.

The awards were presented in Bellevue last month during the association's annual conference. The three boards were chosen from a field of 15 boards who applied.

"Each of these boards was very focused," said Chris Nieuwenhuis, outgoing WSSDA President. "They adopted goals such as increasing graduation rates and reducing achievement gaps, and they used data to develop solutions and monitor results. They have all been successful."

In addition to the above three boards, 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 Boards of Distinction honors five times.

In a separate awards program, the Mount Vernon and Kent School boards were honored for their efforts on behalf of diversity. Those awards were handed out by the Washington School Boards' Educational Foundation.

The annual Boards of Distinction and Boards of the Year program honor school boards that demonstrate effective use of the Washington School Board Standards. The standards, developed and adopted by WSSDA in 2009, promote research-based governance practices that lead to high levels of student and district achievement.



Representatives of the winning West Valley/Spokane (above) and University Place (lower right) boards.

Award applicants submit an essay and supporting evidence to demonstrate how they are putting the standards into practice. This year, applicants addressed the following:

- **Conducting business in a fair, respectful and responsible manner.**
- **Leading the development, articulation and stewardship of a vision of learning.**
- **Providing for the safety and security of students and staff.**
- **Measuring student academic progress and needs based on valid assessments.**
- **Ensuring board and district transparency through an open and accountable process.**

Applications are evaluated by an independent review panel.



Issaquah board members

School directors for each of the boards, with superintendents in parentheses, are:

Auburn: Anne Baunach, Laurie Bishop, Carol Seng, Ryan Van Quill, Ray Vefik, (Alan Spicciati)

Ferndale: Kevin Erickson, Hugh Foulke, Stuart McKay, Andrew McLaurin, Lee Anne Riddle, (Linda Quinn)

Issaquah: Lisa Callan, Brian Deagle, Marnie Maraldo, Anne Moore, Suzanne Weaver, (Ron Thiele)

Kent: Agda Burchard, Karen DeBruler, Russ Hanscom, Debbie Straus, Maya Vengadasalam, (Calvin Watts)

Puyallup: Pat Donovan, Chris Ihrig, Pat Jenkins, Dane Looker, Kathy Yang, (Tim Yeomans)

Riverview: Danny Edwards, Jodi Fletcher, Lori Oviatt, Sabrina Parnell, Carol Van Noy, (Anthony Smith)

South Kitsap: Rebecca Diehl, Keith Garton, Patty Henderson, Chris Lemke, Gregory Wall, (Michelle Reid)

University Place: Mary Lu Dickin-son, Ethelda Burke, Michael Ehart, Annie Fitzsimmons, Rick Maloney, (Patti Banks)

West Valley (Spokane): Bob Dompier, Dan Hansen, Pam McLeod, Adam Mortensen, Bob Wentworth, (Gene Sementi)





Battle Ground Public Schools' team of prevention/intervention specialists work with middle and high school students.

Battle Ground school puts social-emotional learning on par with academics

It would seem that Battle Ground Public Schools is taking a cue from the popular animated movie “Inside Out” in its push to bring social-emotional learning to a level that is equal to academics, but in reality, the concept of social-emotional learning has a history in the world of education that goes back several decades.

Social-emotional learning is a new Battle Ground school district focus prescribed by Superintendent Mark Hottowe. A large part of its impetus is Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education), the \$2.5 million federal grant that Battle Ground is receiving over five years to improve overall school climate and increase awareness of youth mental health issues and access to mental health services.

Social-emotional learning is the process by which children and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions. Experts in social-emotional learning say that risky behaviors such as drug use, violence and bullying can be prevented or reduced when multiyear, integrated efforts

are used to develop students’ social and emotional skills. “The cognitive centers for learning are easily hampered by stress or impaired by substances,” said Sandy Mathewson, the district’s director of social-emotional learning. “If the cognitive centers are impaired, then it’s much harder to learn. Our goal is to create an environment that is conducive to learning.” Research shows this is best achieved through student engagement in positive activities and broad parent and community involvement.

To that end, the school district has hired Sandy Mathewson as the director of social-emotional learning to guide the district in accomplishing three goals over the next five years. Her position is funded in part by the Project AWARE grant.

First, the district is working to improve school climate and safety. It is implementing a district-wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program and installing software for data collection so that staff can make informed decisions.

Second, Battle Ground is working to increase mental health services to students. The district has hired five prevention/intervention specialists to work in the middle and high schools supporting the implementation of

additional mental health and drug prevention services for students.

And third, Battle Ground is partnering with the Educational Service District (ESD) 112 on an effort to build and expand the capacity to increase mental health services in the community. This includes the training of staff, parents and community members in Youth Mental Health First Aid, a course that teaches people the skills to respond to the signs of mental illness and substance use. The effort also is examining how to connect families with community-based mental health services by bringing those providers into schools so that a student’s whole family is supported.

Mathewson, who has worked in prevention and youth services for two decades, has a history of implementing successful support systems. She overcame the challenge of living in an at-risk family to graduate with a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Whitworth University in Spokane. Her first job out of college was with the North Idaho Children’s Home in Lewiston, where she helped teach cooperation and behavioral skills to kids who needed intensive emotional help. “I quickly learned that a relationship

BATTLE GROUND, CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

with a caring adult made a huge difference in a child's ability to turn things around," Mathewson said.

Next, Mathewson moved to Clark County and worked with Battle Ground High School and Amboy Middle School for a short time to build prevention and intervention services for at-risk youth. It didn't take long, however, for the Camas High School principal to recognize her talent and offer Mathewson a full-time position as a prevention/intervention specialist. She worked with the community, parents and law enforcement agencies to prevent and intervene in substance use.

At Camas, Mathewson realized that if she could help kids help themselves, they learned a resiliency that would carry them through most challenges. "If you address the problem, such as alcohol and drug use, and then provide support groups and allow the students to concentrate on school work, they'll have a better chance at educational success," she said. "Our job was to get every kid in the chair every day and ready and able to learn."

After a few years, Mathewson took this knowledge with her to the ESD 112, where she developed a system-wide approach to drug and alcohol education for school districts in southwest Washington and simultaneously earned a master's in education degree in guidance counseling.

As the leader of the ESD 112's Prevention and Youth Services department, Mathewson's team wrote a grant for six school districts in Cowlitz County to implement behavioral and social-emotional supports in the districts. Hottowe, who worked in student support services in Kelso, helped write and implement the grant. It was one of Mathewson's largest grants: \$5.6 million from the U.S. Department of Education. At the end of the grant's four-year implementation, the team had built a system of mental health services that used data to drive decisions and effectively reduced alcohol use among Cowlitz County's 10th graders, among other accomplishments.



This story and many more can be found at www.ourkidswa.org. Be part of Our Kids, Our Future's second anniversary. Send stories of your school district's successes to M.Wilson@wssda.org.

A New Crop of Leadership WSSDA Graduates

Twelve school directors graduated from Leadership WSSDA 2015 during WSSDA's Annual Conference in Bellevue, adding their names to an impressive list of leaders to emerge from the program.

Leadership WSSDA is a year-long premier leadership development program designed to engage higher level thinking around educational leadership. Leadership WSSDA runs every other year, with its next class slated to begin in February 2017.

Classes are held throughout the state and include high level speakers, site visits, hands-on projects and deep discussion of historical and current issues.

Pictured in the photo, from left to right, are:

Colleen Miller, WSSDA; Claire Wilson, Federal Way; Lee Anne Riddle, Ferndale; Ron Dinius, Washougal; Cindy Webster-Martinson, North Kitsap; Trish Hart, Mount Baker; Rocky Simmons, Sunnyside; Christine Johnson, Sedro-Woolley; Alan Burke, WSSDA; Siri Bliesner, Lake Washington; Ryan Brault, Pasco; Tricia Lubach, WSSDA.

Graduates not pictured are: Darren Mattozzi, Harrington; April Schroeder, Enumclaw; Cheryl Williams, Shelton.



Leadership WSSDA graduates talk about the program:

“ – An excellent year of experiences. Organized and well-planned.

– Wonderful people and conversation opportunities

– So wonderful to learn about challenges others have in their districts. Everyone has a 'piece of the puzzle' and can support each other.

– Excellent speakers, great field trips and exposure to many new ideas.

– Adult learning at its best.

– This has been a growing experience for me even after 13 years on my board. I learned new things every time.

– Great for any board director regardless of level of experience.

– The goal was to learn from others; we definitely met this!

– So appreciate the friendships I've made. ”



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.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 2016

- 15-16** WSSDA Board meeting
- 23-27** NSBA – Federal Advocacy Institute, WA DC
- 31** Legislative Conference
South Puget Sound Community College

Social Media Moments FROM #WSSDA2015

- “The world of technology changes every day. Why is education not changing to meet it?” **“How do we make school understand that kids need to learn things the moment they need the information? Our paradigm has changed.”** - Comments from presentation by tech expert Jeff Utecht
- “We will know when we’re doing equity right when their backgrounds don’t predict their outcome”** “Instead of focusing on the achievement gap, let’s focus on the opportunity gap.” **“When we focus on equity we focus on the whole child.”** - Comments from presentation by equity guru Pedro Noguera
- “You can’t lower the mountain to match yourself. You have to elevate yourself to match the mountain.”** - Comments from presentation by mountaineer Susan Ershler
- “We have tons of fun when we are together at #WSSDA2015”** - Comment from a student



Bellevue HS Jazz Combo cooling things down at the Saturday lunch session