



Direct

Washington State School Directors' Association

FEBRUARY 2015

No Child Left Behind is top concern in member survey

School board members cited the federal law known as No Child Left Behind as the major challenge facing their districts in WSSDA's latest survey of school directors in Washington state. Closing the achievement gap, poverty, education reform mandates and facilities issues rounded out the top five choices.

Loss of a waiver under NCLB, also known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, required districts across the state last summer to send letters to parents saying their schools were failing. That and a resolution campaign calling for changes to NCLB, signed by more than 160 boards in the state, may have been on the minds of directors as they filled out the survey.

The online survey, taken last fall, is done every two years. In 2014, 332 school directors responded, or 25 percent of possible respondents. That easily exceeded the 281 who responded in 2012.

Not surprisingly, the survey indicated that directors have continued to adopt new technology. More than three-quarters of respondents said they had a smart phone, up sharply from just over half two years ago. At the same time, the share of directors who use Facebook remained about the same at two-thirds. About 20 percent of survey participants have a Twitter account, but only one in six of those follow @WSSDA.

SURVEY, CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

OUR KIDS OUR FUTURE

Answering the Governor's call for STEM diversity at Foster High School

Last month Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and national leader Rev. Jesse Jackson came together on the Microsoft campus to declare that the future of our economy relies on preparing more students—especially minorities and women—for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) jobs.

Together Foster High School in Tukwila and the Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR) are preparing to meet that challenge! For the past 15 years, NWABR has hosted a Student Bio Expo that pairs professional scientific mentors with high-school students who sign up to complete a self-selected, school-year-long project that is presented at a judged symposium

in May.

This year, a special relationship between NWABR and Foster High will ensure that every student in that school's anatomy class will be able to participate with even greater access to a core group of dedicated mentors, the majority of whom work at Adaptive Biotechnologies.

There are 42 Foster High participants in total, representing a vast diversity unheard of in today's state and national STEM fields. (The National Science Board recently released a report showing that historically under-represented minorities such as African

STEM, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Foster High School program pairs professional scientific mentors with students working on year-long projects. The effort is a partnership with the Northwest Association for Biomedical Research.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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NIEUWENHUIS: WSSDA's voice is loud and clear in D.C.

WSSDA wants reauthorization this year



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Alan Burke

The legislative session: It ain't over until it's over

The first month of the legislative session can perhaps best be characterized as an avalanche. Not literally of course, but figuratively in terms of the sheer number of ideas, topics, and certainly bills that get introduced in Olympia. When all is said and done, there will be perhaps 3,000 in all, with several hundred bills that focus on educational programs, practices, policies and finances.

Of course, only about 300 bills will make it to the Governor's desk by the end of session. Nevertheless, we are following developments in the education arena closely because one never knows which ideas and which bills will be there at the end.

Why so many bills? Several reasons. First, the core of legislative business of the session will occur late. That is, the biennial budget, which sets financial limits and resources from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017, will not be negotiated until the last few weeks of session. The session is scheduled to end on April 26, but could run late if special session or sessions become necessary... which is likely.

Just as in collective bargaining, when more often than not deals are made close to a deadline, legislators frequently do not get in the mood to finish their work until the political pressure to act gets intense. And this session, with McCleary, paramount duty, lots of public sector needs, and some sort of new tax measure likely, finding the necessary votes for a go-home budget may take until summer to accomplish.

Second, in the world of education there are lots of needs out in the field. Programs that strive to support kids like funding student mental health specialists, general school safety, social-emotional health, more counseling, evening and weekend access to school facilities and programs, anti-bullying, discipline alternatives to suspension, cultural awareness, civics education, financial education, concussion and cardiac health awareness training, high school and beyond plans, special programs for homeless students, student data use enhancements, etc. all are important.

Most often they are connected to the all-important topic of student and school safety. But they all cost money and, in most cases, are outside of the legislative definition of basic education. So, all of these ideas have or will be introduced through bill sponsorship by a legislator or multiple legislators, most will get a hearing in the Senate or House Education committees, and some may be included in final budget negotiations. In the end, few will make the final cut.

Third, legislators are responsive to their constituents and, in many cases, agree with the intent of a "fix-it" bill and are happy to sponsor a bill and try their hardest to push it through. Such is the legislative process--as frustrating and time consuming as that can be.

At WSSDA, Deb Merle leads the team that analyzes all of these bills and works behind the scenes to determine which ones have "legs." Bills with bipartisan sponsorship are particularly noteworthy, especially if companion bills are introduced in the Senate and the House. We watch these carefully, but we also keep an eye (and an ear) on just about every trend, rumor, or coalition proposal that emerges in Olympia in order to get a line on which bills are likely to survive and which ones are likely to die. (Nothing is actually dead until the final gavel drops at the end of the last special session. Bills or ideas can always be revived if they are "necessary to implement a budget" or NTIB.)

For those of you with a keen interest in the happenings in Olympia, we hold weekly Legislative Update calls for WSSDA Legislative Reps and others at 12:30 p.m. on Fridays. During the 30 to 45 minute call, Deb and I review the newly introduced bills, existing bills that have been updated or revised, and go over the bills scheduled for a hearing in the upcoming week. Every Friday morning a new Bill Watch List is posted on the WSSDA website under the Legislative Reports and Updates tab. We use that on the call to give an overview of the bills we think are hot, and answer questions about bills of interest to those on the phone.

Yes, every day in Olympia is a new day—and things change rapidly. It takes lots of time and effort to keep up—and that's just what we will be doing each and every day through the session.

Stay tuned.



“Because the survey was taken online, it may overstate the use of technology by all school directors,” cautioned Michael Wilson, WSSDA’s Director of Communications. He also noted that participants were somewhat disproportionately female and from the west side of the state. In terms of age and tenure, however, the sample pretty much represented the makeup of Washington’s 1,477 school directors.

The survey also asked directors whether they were aware of WSSDA’s services and products and to rate their quality.

“Awareness of our primary products and services remained pretty high,” said Wilson. “Most directors know about eClippings, legislative updates, model policies and annual conference, for example. They use them and give them relatively high scores for satisfaction.”

For example, most of the products had a satisfaction rate near or above 80 percent. By comparison, the satisfaction rate average for major online retailers is about 78 percent. At the same time, social media, which included Facebook and Twitter, rated somewhat lower. That is also consistent with industry averages, where social media rates about 67 percent. The average for websites is even lower, at about 62 percent.

“Effective social media remains a challenge for most organizations and it is no different for us,” Wilson said. “We will work on it in 2015.”

The 2014 ratings were very similar to those from the 2012 survey. Very few members rated WSSDA in the lowest categories and nine out of ten said WSSDA has contributed to their understanding of the education system.

Participants also had a lot to say in open ended questions. Overall, they provided more than 20 pages of comments. Board members from larger districts asked for more attention from the organization, many participants complained about too much mandatory testing and some suggested WSSDA should be a more visible advocate and focus on fewer issues.

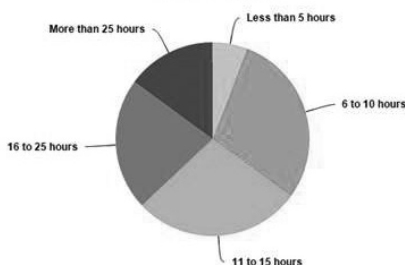
Survey follow-up includes communicating the results to members, doing additional analysis, using the input for strategic planning and updating members on the use of the survey results. More details on the survey data are available at <http://bit.ly/161bZ8i>.

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.
- Two-thirds 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.”

On average, how many hours do you devote each month to school board work?



Based on results from 2014 Member Survey.



PRESIDENT
Chris Nieuwenhuis

WSSDA's voice is loud and clear in D.C.

Twenty-five directors from Washington just returned from a successful advocacy trip to Washington DC. The timing for the visit was the best it has ever been. Our own Senator Murray is heading up the work that needs to take place to repair ESEA.

Our message was loud and clear: Students, teachers, administrators and school directors need reauthorization passed this year!

The law as it stands now is punitive and full of unintended consequences that continue to hurt our most vulnerable kids and confuse the public.

We focused on the need to change the role of the Department of Education from an enforcer of impossible mandates to a support system that will allow states and local boards to determine what the best direction is for their schools. We also asked that school choice be removed from ESEA.

We talked about our concern for school choice becoming a sticking point in reauthorization. We requested that ESEA be about delivering the best possible education for all kids, not about opting out. WSSDA members voiced concern about using testing in a retributive manner, instead of using it as a way to learn about our students and how to best serve them.

We met with both of our Senators and nine out of ten representatives. I would like to thank Martha Rice and the FRN Coordinating members for arranging our appointments and ensuring that we're all on the same message.

These issues are included in more detail in the article on page 6.

Everyone reported that the meetings were well received and this is the year that we have the best chance at reauthorization. We were fortunate to have many veteran FRN members on the trip, which is a big bonus when talking with legislators. They remember us and I believe this helps them to understand our passion for wanting to do what is best for all of our kids.

Americans and Hispanics account for only 10 percent of the country's STEM workforce; women account for just 28 percent.) In the Foster group, 98 percent are a non-white minority; almost 75 percent are female; more than half are current or recent English Language Learners (ELL); and most will be the first in their families to attend college.

For the first time in the Expo's history, these Foster students kicked off their project with a special working breakfast with their mentors on Jan. 12 at the Adaptive Biotechnologies building in Seattle. The mentors/mentees met, began planning their Expo projects, and toured the research facilities.

The breakfast was the first step for students to form a close relationship with a practicing scientist, who will be available throughout the coming months to inspire and guide them in rigorous research to support their Expo projects. By visiting the mentors' workplace, students got a sense of what real-world scientists do on a daily basis and begin to envision themselves in similar careers.

"It's really about making it personal for this group of students," said Tim Renz, Foster High's anatomy teacher. "They might believe that a STEM career is out of their reach, but when they begin to see what's possible, when they experience success, when they have a mentor to inspire and model for them, when they see that science is actually interesting and about more than just being a doctor—that's the catalyst for students to change their future."

One of the most appealing parts of the Student Bio Expo is that the teens get to choose both the topic of their scientific research as well as the medium in which they present it, according to Renz. Especially for ELL and minority students, this makes the work highly approachable because it is relevant and relatable to their skills/passions. For instance, one student selected to research breast cancer while his mother underwent treatment; others have chosen to represent their findings in artistic forms like music or sculpture. The research is "hard-core" and industry-based, he said, but the process is creative.

"I'm excited to give Foster High School students an opportunity to visualize



themselves as a future STEM scientist," said Dr. Marissa Vignali, senior project manager at Adaptive Biotechnologies. "Adaptive's research touches all aspects of STEM: we work with biology, technology, math, and robotics, so students will be able to explore all these areas as they are mentored by our scientists. In my experience, it's very rewarding to help students see how what they're learning in the classroom can be applied in the real world."

The overall mission of the Student Bio Expo is to promote an understanding of bioscience research among high school students. By connecting students, teachers, scientists, and the general public, it strengthens the local life sciences community. The Expo has been a forerunner in supporting the concepts and skills embedded in the Next Generation Science Standards for more than a decade. In

addition to Foster High School, students from 18 other local high schools have signed up to participate this year. The 2015 Expo will be May 27 at Shoreline Community College.

Adaptive Biotechnologies is a Seattle-based forerunner of immune-based discoveries and diagnostics to advance science and improve patient care worldwide. The company has enthusiastically stepped up to mentor 85 percent of the Foster High students because it is dedicated to encouraging the next generation of scientists in Washington state.

Our Kids 
Our Future

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

Workshops encourage participation in school board elections

WSSDA has conducted candidate workshops throughout the state for many years. These help school board candidates understand the process and what it means to be a school director. This year, we are expanding the approach in a series of 14 sessions across the state.

The ethnic caucus meetings at our 2014 Annual Conference addressed how WSSDA can encourage balanced representation so that school directors reflect their districts' student populations. Three needs emerged from those meetings:

1. Mentoring of potential school directors at all stages: interested in serving, filing for office, and serving on a board
2. Intentional one-on-one identification, outreach and encouragement of qualified candidates
3. Reducing the fears and uncertainty about the process, thereby lowering the barriers to entry for school board service

Based on this member feedback, Candidate Workshops have been rebranded "Become a School Director" workshops and have been scheduled for March and April, well before the May 12th filing week.

The workshops will provide information to citizens who have an interest in board service, but may need more information or encouragement. They will provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of a school director, as well as walking them through the process of filing.

We will seek "mentor school directors" in each workshop location to offer help and encouragement, especially to potential candidates in demographic groups that are traditionally underrepresented on school boards.

Fourteen workshops will be held throughout the state. Sitting school directors are encouraged to attend to provide encouragement, mentoring and wisdom. All workshops are 6:30-8:30 p.m. Online registration at www.wssda.org/Events/Workshops.aspx is recommended

Questions? Contact Colleen Miller, c.miller@wssda.org or Tricia Lubach, t.lubach@wssda.org.

Become a School Board Member Workshops

WESTERN WASHINGTON

Facilitated by Colleen Miller, Director, Leadership Development Services, WSSDA

Tuesday, March 24

Sequim School District Board Room
503 North Sequim Ave.
Sequim, WA 98382

Wednesday, March 25

Olympia School District Board Room
1113 Legion Way SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Thursday, March 26

Seattle Public Schools Auditorium
2445 3rd Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98124-1165

Tuesday, April 14

Marysville School District Board Room
4220 80th Street NE
Marysville, WA 98270-3498

Wednesday, April 15

NW Career and Tech Lecture Hall
2205 West Campus Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Tuesday, April 21

Kelso School District Board Room
601 Crawford St.
Kelso 98626

Wednesday, April 22

Tacoma School District Auditorium (4th Floor)
601 South 8th Street
Tacoma, WA 98405

EASTERN WASHINGTON

Facilitated by Tricia Lubach, Training Specialist, Leadership Development Services, WSSDA

Wednesday, March 11

(co-facilitated by Colleen and Tricia)
Cle Elum-Roslyn School District
Walter Strom Middle School Library
2694 Washington 903
Cle Elum 98922

Wednesday, March 18

Omak School District Board Room
619 W. Bartlett Ave.
Omak, WA 98841

Thursday, March 19

NC ESD 171
430 Olds Station Road
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Tuesday, March 24

ESD 105, Kittitas Room
33 South Second Ave.
Yakima, WA 98902

Thursday, March 26

Pasco School District Board Room
1215 W. Lewis Street
Pasco, WA 99301

Tuesday, April 21

Spokane School District Support Services Center
Conference Room 106
2815 E Garland Avenue
Spokane, WA 99207

Thursday, April 23

Chewelah School District
Gess Elementary School Library
405 E Lincoln
Chewelah 99109

AGENDA

How to run for office

- Navigate the process of filing
- Public disclosure procedures
- Campaign limitations

Responsibilities of a school board member

- Time requirements
- Role and responsibilities
- Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA)
- Working as a team

WSSDA wants ESEA reauthorization this year

The following brief outlines WSSDA's position on reauthorization of ESEA and includes the key points that school directors made to members of the state's Congressional delegation during their recent visit to Washington, D.C.

As passionate education advocates (representing more than a million school children in Washington), we know first-hand the negative and taxing effect that the current No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law is having on our students, teachers, and communities.

NCLB had good intentions, lofty and appropriate goals, as well as bipartisan support when it was passed. But more than a decade later, the unintended consequences of the punitive nature of this law now undermine the good work happening in many local districts across the nation.

We have studied NCLB and closely reviewed the discussion draft offered by Senator Alexander. We feel strongly that there is room for compromise and that nothing being debated is worthy of a partisan blockade, from either side. We need reauthorization this year and we're depending on leadership in Congress to

find compromise in the Legislature and push for passage. Everyone in education – students, teachers, school directors and stakeholders – need reauthorization passed this year.

Four major elements

1. Rein in the Department of Education – the Department of Education should not be a policy-creating entity. Change the role, and the semantics of their interaction and role in education. Structure the reauthorization such that the Department of Education becomes an enabler for education, rather than an enforcer, a rule-maker, and a prosecutor.
2. Take School Choice out of ESEA – don't kill the reauthorization effort because of the divide around school choice. Rather than incorporating school choice directly in ESEA, put a placeholder into the law for "alternatives" in education, and then work through that law independently of ESEA. Make ESEA focus on enabling the delivery of education in our country, for everyone, and about leadership and accountability - not about opting out.

3. Streamline Annual Testing – we can support annual testing, if we let districts focus on the best testing methods and weed out what clearly does not work in our local districts and states. We want accountability, we want to know when students are excelling and when they're struggling, and we want that knowledge as soon as possible.

4. Make ESEA more data-centric and data-intelligent – we live in a data-rich world, and can use data to be more effective in moving education ahead. With multiple measures, and the capacity to react to kids' needs in near real-time, we can greatly compress and manage how a child's education needs are identified and augmented. Importantly, we must structure ESEA so data is used as an enabler for teachers and students, not a cacophony of more ways to imply someone (student, teacher, or school) is failing.

The effects of NCLB are not annual, not trivial, and not sustainable – they are cumulative, they are troublesome, and they're preventing kids, communities, and educators from doing their best work.



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2015
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www.nsba.org/conference

WASA Small Schools Conference set for Yakima

The 2015 WASA Small Schools Conference is just around the corner. Set for March 23-24 at the Yakima Convention Center, this year's theme is Place, Promise and Possibility.

Just before the opening of the conference, WASA Small Schools Committee and the WSSDA Small Schools Task Force will hold a joint meeting. This meeting occurs each year on the day before the conference begins.

The conference will use a combination of general sessions, district success showcases, and facilitated workgroups, to help participants identify and collaborate

on common problems. Participants will work with colleagues to dig deeper into reducing teacher isolation, building professional capital, improving student engagement, and supporting the implementation of the Common Core.

Attendees will identify common needs and priorities, share promising practices, and develop plans to connect and collaborate.

Dr. Dennis Shirley will kick the conference off with an interactive keynote on research on the power of networks. He will explain how the principles of the fourth way and professional capital have guided the development

of the Northwest Rural Innovation and Student Engagement (NW RISE) Network. The goal is to catalyze conversation about how small schools in Washington can work together to reduce the isolation of their teachers and support improved student engagement and achievement.

Representatives from Education Northwest and the NW RISE Network will highlight the project as a case study. Network participants will highlight early lessons learned about the power of networks in driving school improvement by connecting professionals with each other.

SPRING REGIONAL MEETINGS

March 28

DIRECTOR AREA 4

North Kitsap

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

📍 District Administration Building
18360 Caldart Avenue NE
Poulsbo, WA 98370

March 30

DIRECTOR AREA 3

Peninsula

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

📍 Peninsula School
District Boardroom
14015 62nd Ave NW
Gig Harbor, WA 98332

March 31

DIRECTOR AREA 5

Hoquiam

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

📍 Hoquiam High School
Student Center
501 W Emerson Ave
Hoquiam, WA 98550

April 1

DIRECTOR AREA 6

Ridgefield

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

📍 Ridgefield High School
Room 311
2724 S Hillhurst Rd
Ridgefield, WA 98642

April 2

DIRECTOR AREA 9

West Valley

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

📍 West Valley High School
Community Room
8301 E Buckeye Ave
Spokane Valley, WA 99212

April 14

DIRECTOR AREA 8

Wapato

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

📍 Wapato High School
1202 S Camas Ave
Wapato, WA 98951

April 29

DIRECTOR AREA 2

Tahoma

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

📍 Tahoma Jr. High
25600 Southeast Summit
Landsburg Road
Ravensdale, WA 98051

April 30

DIRECTOR AREA 1

Monroe

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

📍 Monroe High School
Performing Arts Center
17001 Tester Rd
Monroe, WA 98272

May 5

DIRECTOR AREA 7

Quincy

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

📍 Quincy District
Transportation Building
721 F Street Southeast
Quincy, WA 98848

May 6

DIRECTOR AREA 10

Freeman

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

📍 Freeman K-8
Multi-Purpose Room
14917 S Jackson Rd
Rockford, WA 99030

May 7

DIRECTOR AREA 11

Walla Walla

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

📍 Walla Walla District
Administration Board Room
364 S Park St
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Register online at
[www.wssda.org/events/
regionalmeetings](http://www.wssda.org/events/regionalmeetings)



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.

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Chris Nieuwenhuis, President 509.290.1824
Chris Nation, President-Elect 425.322.6630
Joanne Greer, Vice President 509.991.5634
Mari Taylor, Immediate Past President 425.314.1131
Alan Burke, Ed.D., Executive Director 360.252.3001
Michael Wilson, Communications Director 360.252.3013

WSSDA DIRECTORY

General Information 360.493.9231
Association Services 360.252.3002
Leadership Development Services 360.252.3009
Governmental Relations 360.252.3010
Communications 360.252.3013
Policy and Legal Services 360.252.3018
Toll Free (In-State) 800.562.8927
E-Mail mail@wssda.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

- 1-2** Legislative Conference
- 1** Board of Directors' Meeting
- 7** Resolutions Committee Meeting
- 11** Become a School Board Member Workshop Cle Elum
- 12** Executive Committee Meeting
- 18** Become a School Board Member Workshop Omak
- 19** Become a School Board Member Workshop Wenatchee
- 22** WSSDA Small Schools Task Force and WASA Small School Committee Joint Meeting

- 23** WASA Small Schools Conference
- 24** Become a School Board Member Workshop Yakima
- 24** Become a School Board Member Workshop Sequim
- 25** Executive Committee Meeting
- 25** Become a School Board Member Workshop Olympia
- 26** Become a School Board Member Workshop Pasco
- 26** Become a School Board Member Workshop Seattle

- 26** Executive Committee Meeting
- 28** Spring Regional Meeting North Kitsap
- 30** Spring Regional Meeting Peninsula
- 31** Spring Regional Meeting Hoquiam

April

- 1** Spring Regional Meeting Ridgefield
- 2** Spring Regional Meeting West Valley
- 24, 25** Board of Directors' Meeting

See page 7 for the full Spring Regional Meeting schedule