



Governor calls for special session to begin May 13

The 63rd Legislature left town after 105 days without passing an operating or capital budget and the revenue plans needed to fund the two-year spending plan.

Lawmakers return May 13 for up to 30 more days of work. In addition to the budget, education-related bills that could be considered include school grading, discipline, and changes in the way Alternative Learning Experience students are counted for funding.

While legislators are back in district, school directors are encouraged to invite them to meet with district leaders to review a comparison of the budget

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STORY INSIDE: Zillah teacher awarded national title



Jeff Charbonneau of Zillah High School was named 2013 National Teacher of the Year. Charbonneau was recognized by President Obama at the White House in April.

FOR STORY, SEE PAGE 5



Judi Lohr, a Cosmopolis School Board Member for 12 years, started the after-school arts program at Cosmopolis Elementary. The program has 36 students.

Cosmopolis after-school program inspiration for art on a shoestring

BY GINI NILES

Opportunities are diminishing in schools across the country for students to participate in high-quality arts instruction and activities. Budget cuts and a shift in curriculum priorities have taken their toll on arts education in public schools.

Recent results from a survey in Washington state show that 33 percent of elementary students receive less than one hour a week of arts instruction, and almost 10 percent receive no formal arts instruction at all.

Cosmopolis School District Board Member, Judi Lohr, got tired of hearing about art programs constantly on the chopping block. "I thought to myself, 'What could I do, in my own little world to make a difference?'"

Lohr had visions of starting a small arts program at Cosmopolis Elementary, a K-6 school of 154 students near Grays Harbor, but the high cost of art supplies always seemed to get in the way.

It wasn't until Cheri Patterson,

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PRESIDENT
Debbie Long

Celebrate Arts Education Month in Washington

Mark your calendars! May is Arts Education Month in the state of Washington. This is the time to celebrate what happens in our schools and recognize the creative endeavors of our students.

So where does art fit into our curriculum?

According to sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz, "Art does not solve problems, but makes us aware of their existence."

I would disagree. Art does solve problems. Look at any one of our tests and you will discover that the arts are associated with gains in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking and verbal skills. According to the Rand Corporation in 2005, arts connect people more deeply to the world and open them up to new ways of seeing.

When you think about the purposes of education, according to Tom Horne, Arizona's former state superintendent of public education, there are three things that come to mind:

1. We are preparing kids for jobs.
2. We are preparing kids to be citizens.
3. We are teaching kids to be human beings who can enjoy the deeper forms of beauty.

Even if it is difficult to measure, the third item on the list is just as important as the other two.

It is time to show the community, the State Board of Education, and our Representatives, how the arts are making a difference in education. While the arts will not show up on a test, the joy they bring to all of us can never be replaced.

Help me celebrate the wonders of what art can do for our children.

Debbie Long

Focus group identifies biggest challenges facing districts today

BY WILL CLARK

Seven school directors from around the state participated in a WSSDA focus group during the 2013 Legislative Conference. Attendees shared several of the biggest issues facing their districts. Top issues included superintendent hiring, underfunding from the state, and a lack of connection between school districts and the State Board of Education (SBE).

The focus group was held to help WSSDA staff better understand the issues that boards are dealing with, along with what future trends should be researched. It served as a follow-up to the recent WSSDA member survey. The results of the 2012 member survey helped WSSDA staff pin down several topics, questions and areas to research. Input from focus group participants added depth and personal experience to the information collected from the survey.

The focus group began with a discussion about superintendents. Attendees generally agreed that hiring the right superintendent is one of the most important things a school board can do for its district. They also agreed that it can be one of their greatest struggles as school directors. As one attendee put it at the beginning of the discussion, for school directors, "picking a superintendent is your number one task."

Attendees also shared the difficulties that their districts have in dealing

with the state. While state education programs can be great for schools, they said, programs can only be effective if they are adequately funded. Attendees likewise described how the continued underfunding of education affects their districts. They expressed frustration with the ever-changing goals, requirements, tests, and directives that are mandated by state authorities.

Several participants shared the perception that the SBE is largely disconnected from school districts at the ground level and that there seems to be no meaningful way to interact with the board to alter or adjust its state policies. Participants wanted to understand more about WSSDA's relationship with the SBE. They also wanted to know more about what the SBE is doing, and to have a clearer channel between the board and individual districts.

Participants shared other issues that affect their districts, including transitional students and ELL policies. These struggles demonstrated the wide diversity of issues confronting school districts across the state. With this in mind, one common request that participants had for WSSDA was for a new online commons, where school directors could interact with each other to share lessons, successes, and best practices.

Will Clark is WSSDA's Research Analyst.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE Breakout Session Proposals

Submit proposals by
Saturday, May 11 for consideration.

Visit www.wssda.org for
more information.





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jonelle Adams

When it comes to WSSDA, Anne is golden

It takes a lot to power an organization like WSSDA. Our strength comes from our membership of locally elected school board members.

Some go far beyond what is expected. They not only serve on their local boards, but they step up to help WSSDA on statewide issues. They serve on the WSSDA Board of Directors or one of its committees. They advocate tirelessly both for WSSDA and public education in the legislature.

They make a big difference. We would not be effective without them.

Anne Golden of the Walla Walla School Board is one such tireless volunteer. Last month, Anne completed her service on the National School Boards Association Board of Directors. That also meant she was concluding a long period of service on our WSSDA Board of Directors, as well.

For those of you who do not know, Anne has been a member of her local school board since 1987. She was WSSDA President in 2003 and rejoined the WSSDA Board of Directors in 2006. She has so many of the traits treasured by all volunteer organizations. She is smart, organized, ethical, gracious, warm and even-tempered, just to name a few.

Anne helped WSSDA step up its game as a champion of public education and local school governance.

Her leadership has been outstanding!

It is a different era today than 20, or even 10, years ago. The pace of change in politics, communications, the economy and technology have all ramped up. Strong leadership is vitally important. Never before has it been more important for new leaders to come forward.

Two such opportunities will open over the coming months. Our nominating committee is seeking candidates for WSSDA president-elect and vice president for 2014. The president-elect position is open to a school director from either side of the state. He or she will become WSSDA president in 2015. The vice president position is open to directors from the west side of the Cascades. This position alternates from east to west each year.

Please consider applying for one of these positions. Or, if you know other WSSDA members who would be great candidates, nominate them. The nominating committee is accepting nominations until May 21. Candidates can apply until June 9.

We have much more information about these positions on our website at www.wssda.org. Select the "About Us" tab and then "WSSDA Elections" on the drop down menu.

If you are considering running for office, check out what some of our past presidents have to say about what they gained from serving. If you haven't yet thought about it, please do. And, if you are not ready to take that step, contact us to learn more about serving on one of WSSDA's important committees.

There are no great organizations without great leaders. Anne Golden has been one. This may be your time to step forward!

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proposals. In particular, directors should show how levy dollars are backfilling state obligations, and how the House and Senate budgets will reduce that reliance.

This is also a great time to ask them to take a quick tour through your schools so they can see what goes on in the classroom and learn about how state legislation will affect school operations.

School directors are also encouraged to return to Olympia after May 13, and be ready to weigh in on funding and policy issues. Visiting teams that include a school director, superintendent, principal, teacher and parent, will cover all the bases and work well.

Please email WSSDA's governmental relations director Marie Sullivan at m.sullivan@wssda.org with your plans.

SPRING REGIONAL MEETINGS

May 1

DIRECTOR AREA 10

Colfax

Colfax School District
1110 N. Morton Street
Colfax, WA 99111

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

May 2

DIRECTOR AREA 11

Walla Walla

Walla Walla Public Schools
364 South Park Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting

May 9

DIRECTOR AREA 9

Spokane

Shadle Park High School
4327 No. Ash St.
Spokane, WA 99205

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. TPEP
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meeting



DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND LEGAL
Heidi Maynard

POLICY AND LEGAL

Tracking expenses for public records requests

WSSDA has revised its policy 6030, Financial Reports, to include a recommendation that districts track expenses involving public records requests in a monthly report and post the reports on their website.

Here's why:

- Districts need to track these expenses in order to better allocate resources to respond to such requests.
- School board directors, district employees, parents, lawmakers and taxpayers deserve full transparency on the cost of abusive requests on their local school district.
- Tracking the information allows data collection so that the full impact of abuse of the current law can be measured statewide.

If your district is wondering what an abusive public records request looks like, just ask Monroe Public Schools or the Richland School District. On January 25, elected officials from several

local government groups, including these districts, testified before a House committee on a bill that would provide some relief from abusive public records requests.

Rick Jansons, school board president of Richland School District, described Richland's struggle with a request from a former administrator.

The requester wanted all e-mails to and from his ex-girlfriend, as well as all the websites she visited. His ex-girlfriend is employed in the district. Plus, he wanted all of his own e-mails for a period of years. As it turned out, the district had around 235,000 of them. To respond, the district had to hire staff and the district's legal and IT departments were crippled in the process.

Nancy Truitt Pierce, school board member from Monroe Public Schools, said her district often receives well-intentioned requests such as lists of former students for a school reunion. But in recent years they have also

received burdensome requests from an attorney who had sued the district.

Instead of filing a discovery request, the attorney filed public records requests which required redaction by the district's attorneys and ultimately cost the district over \$450,000. Meanwhile, noted Truitt Pierce, Monroe can't afford buses for after-school activities for students.

Monroe Public Schools now requires its staff to provide monthly reports to the board tracking public records requests. These monthly reports are then posted on the district's BoardDocs website. According to Truitt Pierce, since the posting online started, the number of public records requests has steadily decreased.

Monroe's report tracks a wide range of information, including, among others:

- Date of request
- Requestor
- Request
- Reported hours spent on request
- Total cost to date
- Attorney's fees
- Amount charged and collected

WSSDA shares Monroe Public School's interest in providing full transparency of school district operations to the public. Those operations include the actual time and cost to respond to public records requests — abusive and otherwise.

WSSDA's policy 6030, Financial Reports, now recommends that district staff prepare, in addition to other financial reports, a "Public Records Request Report," provide it to the board on a monthly basis, and post it on the district website.

The above article is excerpted from a longer piece that will run in the next *Policy and Legal News*, available to subscribers.

MAY 13-17, 2013

Filing period for board candidates

For more information, visit www.wssda.org, and click the **Resources** tab and **For School Board Candidates**. Candidate workshops begin in June.

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

WSSDA is accepting proposals for consideration at the 2013 Legislative Assembly.

ALL SUBMISSIONS DUE BY FRIDAY, MAY 24, 5:00 P.M.

Submit proposals online or by email, fax or mail.

Free school board candidate workshops offered in June

We encourage all school board candidates to attend our free workshop covering the fundamentals of school board service, board/superintendent roles, legal requirements for school boards, and tips for effective leadership. The two-hour workshops, held from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at each location, give participants the opportunity to learn about education reform efforts at the state and national levels. Register online at www.wssda.org.

June 5

Director Area 6, Kelso

Kelso High School (Auditorium)
1904 Allen Street
Kelso, WA 98626

June 10

Director Area 4, Sequim

Sequim School District (Board Room)
503 North Sequim Avenue
Sequim, WA 98382

June 10

Director Area 7, Wenatchee

North Central ESD
(Ponderosa Room)
430 Olds Station Road
Wenatchee, WA 98801-1847

June 11

Director Area 9, Spokane

Support Services Center
2815 E. Garland Avenue
Spokane, WA 99207

June 11

Director Area 1, Mount Vernon

Mount Vernon High School (Auditorium)
314 North 9th Street
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

June 12

Director Area 2, Renton

Renton School District (Board Room)
300 SW 7th Street
Renton, WA 98057

June 12

Director Area 11, Pasco

Pasco School District (Board Room)
1215 W. Lewis Street
Pasco, WA 99301-7104

June 13

Director Area 8, Yakima

ESD 105 (Yakima Room)
33 South 2nd Avenue
Yakima, WA 98902

June 19

Director Area 5, Olympia

WSSDA Conference Center
221 College Street NE
Olympia, WA 98516

Zillah teacher honored as National Teacher of the Year



BY MICHAEL WILSON

Sometimes a great human interest story really does capture the public's imagination. That was the case recently when Zillah High School's Jeff Charbonneau was named national teacher of the year and was whisked off to visit with President Barack Obama.

Charbonneau, who teaches chemistry, physics and engineering, found himself in a host of interviews on the CBS Morning Show, Associated Press, Washington Post and elsewhere.

Charbonneau, or Charb, as he is known by some of his students, graduated from Zillah and came back to teach. He joins nearby Toppenish's Trevor Green as a big-time national award winner. Green was recently named National High School

Principal of the Year.

In late April, Charbonneau's story became the education story across the nation and his home state. It was a compelling one that united editorial writers of the *Yakima Herald-Republic* with those at the *Seattle Times*.

That is an unusual feat. But then, Charbonneau is a pretty unusual person.

The first thing that strikes you is how busy he must be. He packs what amounts to a second job, at least, into helping his school and students.

Charbonneau is founder and director of the acclaimed Zillah Robot Challenge. He has negotiated and put into place partnerships with colleges throughout eastern Washington to allow the school's students to get college credit for courses at his high school — and they do. He handles the computer scoring program at the school's wrestling matches. On top of that, he is the school's yearbook advisor and builds sets for drama productions.

The entire district and community benefit from his superb teaching and hard work, and they recognize it. Just watch the video that came out shortly after his award was announced. He is an important leader in a district that has managed to graduate 96 percent of its students, half of whom come from low-income families.

The second thing you quickly notice about Charbonneau is that he is very articulate.

Good teaching in the STEM fields is about showing students how to break down what seem like scary problems into smaller, simpler pieces that they can succeed at, just like life in general, he told CBS Morning.

Good teaching, he will tell you, hinges on developing a relationship with the students. Students are people. They have issues not related to homework, he observes. When they are upset at school, it is not always about school.

"The concept that we are a nation of failing schools I believe is false," he told the Washington Post. "We are a nation of succeeding schools. There are areas that need improvement, but at the same time, there are many things we are doing right that are not celebrated."

And on CBS Morning, he added, "We are a nation of high quality educators who are doing a phenomenal job. One teacher can make a difference. A whole lot of good teachers can make a tremendous difference."

Charbonneau is a natural spokesman for schools at a time when they need both good ideas and good publicity. That's a great thing for everyone in the education community.

For the next year, he will travel as an ambassador of the teaching profession.

Michael Wilson is WSSDA's Director of Communications and Marketing

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Cosmopolis School District's Superintendent/Principal, came on board in 2011 that Lohr's idea seemed possible. Patterson, a product of Cosmopolis schools herself, was fully supportive of the idea, but there was still a question of how to fund the supplies.

From her own pocket, Lohr scooped up big at a local school surplus sale. With cases of primer, pastels and a husband that was sure she had lost her mind, Lohr finally saw her idea coming to fruition. At last she had the supplies and permission to start her program and the complete freedom to structure it as she saw fit.

Patterson initially asked her to teach the classes during the day, but she was adamant about not taking time away from students who needed to be in front of their teachers. Lohr has a fine arts degree under her belt and is a former teacher's aide and credentialed emergency teacher in California.

With additional funding from the Cosmopolis Lions Club for brushes and paint, next on the list was to gauge student interest and open up the program to registration. "Be careful what you wish for," Patterson told Lohr after discovering how many students had signed up. Out of a student body of 157 students, about 100 kids had registered.

The first day of class, all the students were eager to start painting. Lohr stood firm. "You cannot paint until you learn your colors," she told them. A few dropped out initially because they thought it was boring. She assured the rest it would be the most boring thing they would have to do.

Art theory lessons in the after-school program include college-level concepts like learning about the color wheel, color grid and creating unique color combinations. The students are learning something they are not likely to learn elsewhere.

Lohr doesn't shy away from difficult lessons. Her plan to introduce two-point perspective — a challenging technique for this particular age group — was to simplify the concept enough so they would understand. According to Lohr, they did just beautifully.

This past August, Lohr's students submitted 88 entries at the Grays Harbor County Fair. Of the entries, there were 23 first place awards, 36 second, 27 third and four best-of-section awards given. More recently, five students received awards in the Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival poster contest and one sixth grader won Best of Show.

Many kids came to the program scared about making a mistake. Lohr's number one rule — there are no mistakes in art — quickly put them at ease. "A mistake can be a beautiful accident in art — and it can be painted over if it's really bad." Lohr has seen confidence levels soar. Students were very unsure of their skills in the beginning, but now they aren't as afraid to try new ideas and techniques.

The program now in its second year with 36 students, Lohr has the kids grouped according to their skill level. With the exception of a few parent volunteers, her only other assistant is when her husband comes in to help keep kids on track.

This year, Lohr had the brilliant idea

to ask the older kids to mentor and help with the younger ones. After bribing them with a pizza party, she now has five student volunteers. It's a win-win situation for both sides. The younger kids love it because they look up to the older kids and the older kids love helping the little people, as they say.

The Cosmopolis Elementary arts program is helping to prepare their students to succeed in a 21st-century America that is becoming more and more reliant on technology. America's children need to be innovative, creative and resourceful to compete in a global market and arts education is arguably the best way to foster well-rounded kids.

Many science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) initiatives are integrating arts into their programs. Research suggests that arts instruction can enhance and complement basic reading skills, language development and writing skills. In mathematics, research indicates there is a strong link between a students' involvement in music to high school math proficiency. STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) programs are popping up all over the country as Americans continue to embrace technology.

Despite funding cuts, Cosmopolis School District has not lost sight of the need to keep current with technology. Cosmopolis Elementary has an impressive 1:1 ratio for iPads to students. With grants from the Grays Harbor Community Foundation and Cosmo Specialty Fibers, the school district purchased enough iPads for all of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



students and improved on the infrastructure needed to support the technology.

Students use their iPads to engage in virtually every subject, including reading, writing, math and even art. For one lesson Lohr had her art students choose a famous artist and prepare a written report. They brought in examples of the art on their iPads and presented their findings to the class.

The Grays Harbor Community Foundation and the Cosmopolis Lions Club have funded Lohr's program again this year. She's thankful that they no longer have to paint on variegated cardboard canvases, but Lohr is careful not to get greedy. She asks only for what she needs so she can ask for money again next year.

While fellow Cosmopolis board members love the program and what Lohr brings to the students, they wonder if she'll be able to continue year after year. "As long as I'm still breathing, I'm going to keep doing this," she answers.

Lohr's example of putting together an after-school program on a shoestring budget is encouragement enough that this same thing is possible in other districts. Her message is simple, "All you need to do is find a committed artist. It can be done."

Gini Niles is the Communications Specialist at WSSDA

ANNUAL REPORT

Cost cutting tops list of WSSDA accomplishments for 2012

Keeping a lid on dues through serious cost cutting led the list of WSSDA accomplishments in 2012.

Stable dues were possible because the association reduced spending during the year by \$300,000. Since 2007, WSSDA has reduced its budget by more than 15 percent when adjusted for inflation.

The budget efficiencies and nine other items are briefly discussed in the association's annual report.

Other items included: Online elections, member survey, passage of WSSDA initiated legislation, adoption of a new vision, mission and goals, conference participation, the *New Director News* publication, Superintendent Evaluation Initiative, a clean

state audit and TPEP workshops.

The report is posted online and is available on our website at www.wssda.org. The brief report lists financial activities for both revenues and expenses. It also includes a statement of net assets.

The report also includes a column by Mary Fertakis, President of the 2012 WSSDA Board of Directors, discussing the board's work in detail.

"Many directors contributed their time and expertise to these efforts in 2012," she wrote. "They did an excellent job representing WSSDA and our students."

The annual report also includes a piece by Executive Director Jonelle Adams on the tough issues school boards faced during the year.



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Legislative Assembly
SEPTEMBER 19- 21, 2013

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May

- 1-3** NSBA Education Technology Site Visit: Vancouver Public Schools
- 1** Student Achievement Workshop
Conway School District, Mount Vernon
- 1** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Colfax
- 2** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Walla Walla
- 8** Student Achievement Workshop
Riverside School District, Chattaroy
- 9** Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop, Spokane
- 15** Student Achievement Workshop
Quincy School District, Quincy
- 22** Student Achievement Workshop
Sunnyside School District, Sunnyside
- 29** Student Achievement Workshop
ESD 113, Tumwater

June

- 5** Candidate Workshop, Kelso
- 10** Candidate Workshop, Sequim
- 10** Candidate Workshop, Wenatchee
- 11** Candidate Workshop, Mount Vernon
- 11** Candidate Workshop, Spokane
- 12** Candidate Workshop, Renton
- 12** Candidate Workshop, Pasco
- 13** Candidate Workshop, ESD 105
- 21-22** Legislative Committee Meeting
- 21-22** Board of Directors' Meeting

July

- 19-20** Legislative Committee Meeting
- 21-22** Board of Directors' Meeting

August

- 23-25** Board of Directors' Meeting

September

- 19-21** Legislative Assembly
- 19** Board of Directors' Meeting
- 19** Legislative Committee Meeting