



Direct

Washington State School Directors' Association

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014

Congratulations!

We are pleased to announce the winners of the 2014 Boards of Distinction and Boards of the Year. See page 5 for details.

2015 Legislative priorities unveiled

BY DEB MERLE

Stable funding, capital construction, learning environments, and state mandates top the list of WSSDA's 2015 Legislative Priorities.

The state's duty to amply fund K-12 education will loom large this session, as the legislature struggles to meet that obligation without harming other programs students need to be successful in school and in life. Specific reforms like, full-day kindergarten and class size reduction can only happen with additional classrooms in most districts and new schools in some.

Of course, what goes on in the classroom matters most for student success. Eighty hours for teacher professional development and support for the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Project means more interesting lessons and more engaged students. Funding the actual costs of materials, supplies and operations enhances the learning experience for every student in Washington.

PRIORITIES, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Social media, ed funding and large crowd mark 2014 Annual Conference

For the second straight year, more than 1,000 people from across Washington flocked to WSSDA's annual conference in November.

The throng included 710 school directors and 184 superintendents, significantly more in each case than the number who attended last year in Bellevue. All told, 208 of the state's 295 school districts were represented.

A number of boards brought student representatives. And at the end, three of the 34 students that attended went on stage to close a keynote presentation by author and educator Angela Maiers.

"We would not be so amazing if it wasn't for you," student representative Daphne Gallegos, Pasco High School class of

2015, told the crowd.

School board members came for keynote speakers, networking, socializing, breakout sessions on various education topics and, for the first time, serious social media conversations.

"Going into it, we thought it would be great if a couple hundred people downloaded the new conference app and we had that many comments on the social media side," said WSSDA's Connie Lauderdale, who played a major role in putting the conference together. "By the end, there were more than 660 app downloads and nearly 780 comments."

Opening the conference, Governor Jay

CONFERENCE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Angela Maiers, keynote speaker for the closing general session, invited student representatives from Pasco High School on stage to address the crowd.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

BURKE: Landmark agreement to ready kids for career and life

TAYLOR: Don't label early learning as educational reform

Up your game with Leadership WSSDA



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Alan Burke

Landmark agreement to help kids get ready for both a career and life

Everyone agrees that one of the main goals of an educational system is to prepare students for career and life. Following that line of thinking, those of us in K-12 ought to be focused on early learning and higher education with just about as much energy as we give the public schools.

The importance of the product we receive from parents and early learning providers and give to higher education are all part of the P-20 system. It should be as seamless as it is effective. So, what are educators in Washington doing to make P-20 a reality? Lots.

For the past several years Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the College of Presidents, which represents the interests of the six public baccalaureates in the state, have been building a plan that will make the mandatory federal exams that are administered to high school students count for entrance into credit bearing college courses.

That plan was announced in September. It will allow any junior who scores a three or four on the upcoming Smarter Balanced (SBAC) math and/or English/ language arts (ELA) test to bypass the exam that has been used for years by colleges to determine placement into credit bearing courses. This is a big deal. It marks, for the first time, a policy change where colleges accept high school exam scores for placement. In the past, scores for the WASL or the HSPE have not been considered placement exams; the SBAC — designed specifically to measure career and college readiness — will serve that purpose.

Of course, the SBAC exam will be much more difficult than the old WASL or HSPE. As a result, fewer students are likely to reach the college ready score of three or four the first time they take the exam. Anticipating this, high school and community college math teachers have set up 15 sites this school year where pilots of a senior year math course are occurring. That course, when completed successfully — probably “B” or better — will allow students to bypass the normal community college math placement exam. A similar course for ELA will be piloted this winter and spring.

This also is a big deal. It shows that K-12 and higher ed folks can get together and start to fix a major problem: too many students entering the community college system enrolling in remedial courses. Remediation is expensive, results in students earning no college credit, and causes many to give up hope and drop out — this time with debt.

Other similar practices such as transcript-based placement, remediation done within credit bearing courses, a re-look at appropriate math skills necessary for certain degree programs, and special mentoring opportunities are also occurring throughout the state. All this is to create meaningful and realistic pathways for students to enter, and complete, degree and certificate programs in our higher education system.

So, the concept of P-20 is alive and well in Washington. Certainly more needs to be done to remove barriers for our students. For K-12 educators, the realization is that high school graduation is a necessary, but not sufficient, component of our educational system. The goal needs to be preparation for career and life.

Schools are often obliged to comply with specific legislative requirements, without enough money to do so. For example, all services specified in students’ Individual Education Plans must be provided. But costs vary from one student to the next and the state does not provide the funding for all the required services.

Speaking of mandates, schools could use a break from new ones — funded or not. Reforms take time. We need to give them a chance to take hold, figure out which ones work, and make changes along the way to ensure that we’re supporting success for every student in Washington.

Visit www.wssda.org, to read the 2015 Legislative Priorities in full.

DEB MERLE is WSSDA's Director of Government Relations.

Ladies and gentlemen, mark your calendars!

Registration opens January 15 for the 2015 WSSDA/WASA/WASBO Legislative Conference and Day on the Hill in Olympia. This year the event takes place on March 1 and 2, a perfect time for school board directors and superintendents from around the state to talk with legislators about education policy and budget proposals.

The conference begins Sunday afternoon with a slate of state legislators and policy makers to give us the latest on hot topics and pending legislation. After that, caucuses meet to plan for their appointments on the hill the next day. A hosted reception for conference attendees, legislators and invited guests rounds out the day.

On Monday, several hundred school board directors and district superintendents descend on the Capitol campus for prearranged meetings with legislators. You do not want to miss this!!





IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Mari Taylor

Don't label early learning as just another educational reform

With one foot in K-12 and one foot in early learning, I have a unique perspective on public education. I've witnessed many well-intentioned reforms parade across the stage of American education.

Some show great promise and produce less than spectacular results. Some bring a measure of success. And some even undermine the very children we are trying so hard to support. Early learning might look like another promising reform to many education leaders. But early learning is not education reform. Quality early learning is a critical, misplaced piece of our public education puzzle. Not a reform, not a luxury nor a bonus.

We are at a critical juncture. It is imperative that we equip our educators to provide quality public education to all children, regardless of their background or their zip code. With income inequality at its highest level in history and more than 20% of America's children living in poverty, the urgency of our task is clear.

Children who arrive at kindergarten ready to learn have a much greater chance of success. Our best chance to change the trajectory for those in need is long before they walk through the doors of our kindergartens.

Closing the opportunity gap requires intentional, integrated and collaborative work that includes the early learning community. We must scaffold the gaps between early learning and K-12 to develop seamless relationships among our education communities.

Leadership is critical in building this bridge. Quality early learning cannot be simply an extension of academic standards and practices down into the lives of our youngest children. We have great potential for improving our teaching and learning for older students by extending upward the research-based developmental approaches used in existing quality, early learning.

We know that a quality teacher is the most significant in-school factor affecting student learning. All around our state are

hard-working, innovative and passionate people who have committed themselves to the well-being of all children. But even the most stellar teacher will have a tough time compensating for out-of-school factors behind more than 80 percent of student learning. Common sense and compelling research tell us that children of families who are struggling are likely to struggle as well.

As educators, we are constrained in our efforts to affect these out-of-school factors. Family income, chronic stress, poor housing conditions, access to medical and dental care, violence, unemployment, mental health, all weigh more heavily on a child's success than the brightest and most innovative teaching strategies. Quality early learning can mitigate many of the impacts of the out-of-school factors responsible for the opportunity gap.

Family engagement through early learning pays large dividends. Not only do we see improved outcomes for children, but benefits often extend to families through improved employment rates, higher incomes, increased education levels, fewer births and enhanced resiliency. Family outcomes not only support the child's educational success, but also decrease long-term social costs. Of course, family engagement does not end with preschool. As children move through the K-12 system, engaged and empowered parents will continue to foster and enhance student learning.

Early learning also promotes child development. The practice of scaffolding children's learning in a developmentally focused approach has a lot to offer our K-3 pedagogy. Utilizing best practices, research-based strategies and focusing on the whole child allow us to provide

the support each child needs to succeed. Imposing academic standards without acknowledging children's development only frustrates the teaching and learning process. It often diminishes our ability to move forward. This is as true for a two-year-old as it is for an 8-year-old.

Public education faces many barriers to moving toward a more developmentally-based approach. Extraordinary pressure to achieve and urgency to show results, high-stakes testing, mandated reforms, funding constraints and political duress all stand in our way. Even if each raft of reforms was implemented with the utmost fidelity, we would have no meaningful way to measure impacts. This high-demand, show-me-the-money climate fundamentally conflicts with the commitment to major systemic change that a developmental approach will require.

We can bridge these gaps by connecting the early learning community with K-12 and improving the quality of education for children all along their education journey. Each system has much to offer. Accessing these resources requires developing relationships, building common language, sharing resources and experiences and perhaps most critically, legitimizing and acknowledging the contributions of each of our colleagues and systems.

Through collaboration, we can build bridges that support K-12 and early learning as aligned and complementary systems. Doing so will bring together an achievement focus and a developmental focus to ensure equity and opportunity for all children. Through the power of public education, we can change children's lives and build stronger families, stronger communities and, ultimately, a stronger nation.

We are at a critical juncture. It is imperative that we equip our educators to provide quality public education to all children, regardless of their background or their zip code.

Up your game with Leadership WSSDA

WSSDA Leadership graduates have great things to say about how the experience challenged their thoughts and stretched their abilities.

Leadership WSSDA 2015 kicks off on February 20 and applications are now being accepted. This premier program is for school directors seeking to improve their expertise and leadership capacity within the educational system and in their personal and professional lives.

Many education leaders have come out of this program, including seven WSSDA presidents, numerous WSSDA board and committee members, state board members, and even a handful of legislators.


The Leadership WSSDA program has been updated in a variety of ways this year to focus on providing the time and framework to deeply examine today's most important education issues with other experienced leaders. Participants will meet five times throughout the year, with meetings held throughout the state to make them convenient for all participants.


If you would like to become more of a capable, ethical and skilled leader, please consider this opportunity. School directors with at least three years of board service tend to experience the greatest benefit. We actively seek diversity among the participants and speakers, with an ongoing theme of cultural competency and inclusion running through all of our sessions.


For more information, including the class schedule, check out WSSDA's website or contact Tricia Lubach at T.Lubach@wssda.org or Connie Lauderdale at C.Lauderdale@wssda.org. Applications are due by January 16.


DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT...

"The field trips to different regions of the state provided a powerful learning experience by seeing education in action. The project work allowed us to make a difference on an issue that is deeply important to us individually and as a team. Participating in this program has been an excellent investment of my time and will have positive benefits for my district." MARY FERTAKIS, TUKWILA SCHOOL DISTRICT

 "Leadership WSSDA is enlightening both professionally and personally. From the readings to the discussions to the presenters, all combine for a very powerful and thought-provoking experience." 2011 GRADUATE

 "I have taken numerous leadership trainings as a manager at HP, as an officer in the U.S. Navy, and in my masters' programs. All of them have been outstanding, but L-WSSDA tops them all." 2006 GRADUATE

 "I was pleasantly surprised at the breadth and depth of discussions during Leadership WSSDA. This program challenged me in many ways, especially my thinking. I know I am a more effective school board member as a result of participating in this program." 2010 GRADUATE

 "In all my years on my school board, this is by far the best training. Make space for 10 days in the coming year. You will be glad you did." 2010 GRADUATE

Insee called for continued focus on graduation rates as a way to fight poverty, give all kids a better life and strengthen the nation. He said the legislature would face difficult decisions in finding the resources to better fund schools. Although there would be cuts to lower state priorities, it wouldn't be enough.

Available per capita for schools in Washington, he said, is below that in Mississippi. He likened the state's funding approach to one appropriate in the time of the Model-T.

Before the session is over, he warned, you will hear some "silly and dangerous" rhetoric in Olympia. He called upon the crowd to "be part of an army" to force the legislature to do something.

The conference theme, "Inspire. Celebrate. Lead," was referenced throughout the event by keynoteers and others, and the pre-conference activities seemed to be big hits as well.

A busload of school directors visited Spokane Valley Tech to get a hands-on view of a new skills center that has reached out to connect closely with the local business community. Early bird sessions for new board members, prospective board chairs and one covering school finance and collective bargaining drew strong turnouts and enthusiastic social media chatter.

All told, there were more than 60 breakout sessions, many a bit shorter in length as a result of feedback from last year's attendees. The topics ranged from new approaches to student discipline to the dos and do nots of school elections.

Handouts from many of the presentations are available on the WSSDA website at www.wssda.org/Events/AnnualConference/ConferenceHandouts.

Three boards were honored as boards of the year: Everett, Union Gap and University Place. (See story, page 5). In addition, Rep. Kathy Haigh was recognized as a Hero of Education and the Washington School Boards' Educational Foundation gave a special award to the Ferndale School Board for the district's work on cultural diversity.

The conference also featured elections to the WSSDA Board of Directors and committees. (See results, page 6). Issaquah School Director Marnie Maraldo was elected to represent Director Area II and former president Debra Long of Central Valley School District was elected to represent Director Area IX.

WSSDA's new officers, elected earlier this year by mail-in ballot were also sworn in by outgoing president Mari Taylor. Chris Nieuwenhuis of Riverside is the new president, Chris Nation of Marysville is president-elect and Joanne Greer of Deer Park is vice president.

Program honors boards who exhibit exemplary commitment to kids

Three school districts were awarded top honors at the WSSDA Annual Conference in November. Everett School District, Union Gap School District and University Place School District received Boards of the Year awards based on the size of their district enrollment.

In addition to the Boards of the Year, seventeen Washington school boards were named as Boards of Distinction.

These boards govern the school districts of Bellingham, Clover Park, Everett, Ferndale, Issaquah, Kent, Lake Stevens, Pasco, Pullman, Puyallup, Riverview, Sunnyside, Tacoma, Tumwater, Union Gap, University Place and West Valley (Spokane).

“Their work shows how much of a difference an outstanding board can make in student learning,” said Mari Taylor, WSSDA’s Immediate Past President. “We applaud their commitment to their students and communities.”

The Sunnyside school board also received a Special Merit award for earning Board of Distinction recognition for five consecutive years.

The annual Boards of Distinction program honors 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, and help close the opportunity gap.

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

- Promoting healthy relationships by inspiring and empowering others.
- Setting and communicating high expectations for student learning, with clear goals and plans.
- Creating conditions for student and staff success.
- Holding schools and the district accountable for student learning expectations.
- Engaging the local community and representing the values and expectations it holds for schools.

Applications are evaluated by an independent review panel.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Show us what you're made of!

It's never too early to consider applying for Boards of Distinction. Applications for the 2015 program will be accepted starting in September. Now is the perfect time to review applications from past award recipients and think about how you can best fill out your board's application. Visit www.wssda.org/services/leadership-development.boardsofdistinction for more details.



(From left to right) Union Gap School District's Superintendent Kurt Hilyard, and school board members, Carrie Greenough, Margarita Soto, Dianna Grunlose, Louise Sisk. Not present, Ronald Jennings.



(From left to right) University Place School Board Members Rick Maloney, Christine Kilduff and Mary Lu Dickinson. Not present, Michael Ehart and Annie Fitzsimmons.



(From left to right) Everett School Board Members Traci Mitchell, Carol Andrews, Superintendent Dr. Gary Cohn, Pam LeSesne, Caroline Mason and Ted Wenta.

Elections results

Officers

President	Chris Nieuwenhuis, Riverside
President-elect	Chris Nation, Marysville
Vice-president	Joanne Greer, Deer Park

Board of Directors

DA 2	Marnie Maraldo, Issaquah
DA 2	Carol Van Noy, Riverview
DA 4	Cindy Kelly, Port Angeles
DA 6	Patty Wood, Kelso
DA 9	Debbie Long, Central Valley
DA 11	Larry Ayre, Finley

Legislative Committee

DA 1	Nancy Truitt Pierce, Monroe
DA 2	Danny Edwards, Riverview Geoffrey McAnnalloy, Federal Way
DA 2	My-Linh Thai, Bellevue
DA 3	Pat Donovan, Puyallup
DA 4	Sarah Methner, Port Angeles
DA 5	Neal Kirby, Centralia
DA 6	Edri Geiger, Vancouver
DA 7	Alex Ybarra, Quincy
DA 7	Joette Berry, Grand Coulee
DA 8	Martha Rice, Yakima
DA 9	Bob Douthitt, Spokane
DA 9	Tim Wynecoop, Wellpinit
DA 10	John Zingg, Freemont
DA 11	Steve Christensen, Pasco

Interscholastic Activities Committee

DA 1	Damian Greene, South Whidbey
DA 2	Lori Oviatt, Riverview
DA 3	Debbie Winskill, Tacoma
DA 5	Kim Ashmore, Centralia
DA 7	Roger Perleberg, Cashmere
DA 9	Deana Brower, Spokane
DA 11	Ron Mabry, Kennewick

Nominating Committee

DA 1	Roger Myers, Stanwood/Camano
DA 2	Mary Jane Glaser, Tahoma
DA 5	Carl Jonsson, Elma
DA 6	Monte Anderson, Battle Ground
DA 7	OPEN
DA 9	Keith Clark, Central Valley
DA 11	Doug Case, College Place

Resolutions Committee

DA 1	Ken Christoferson, Stanwood-Camano
DA 2	Chris Marks, Bellevue
DA 4	Bruce Richards, Central Kitsap
DA 5	Cheryl Williams, Shelton
DA 6	Mavis Nickels, Battle Ground
DA 10	Susan Weed, Pullman

IN MEMORIAM

Elaine Porter-Cole



Elaine Porter-Cole devoted her life to supporting the success of every student and staff member she came into contact with. She made a lasting impact on so many in her 40-year career through her work as a teacher, principal, superintendent, and WSSDA consultant. She will be deeply missed by her family, colleagues, and those whose futures she made brighter.

Bob Craves



In early November Bob Craves, a co-founder of Costco Wholesale and a long time educational benefactor, passed away after a short illness.

In his later years, Bob was the driving force behind the College Success Foundation (CSF), a public/private sponsorship of scholarships for low income students who maintain a reasonable GPA, stay out of trouble, and graduate from high school.

Remarkably, for students on free and reduced lunch from the Class of 2018 (this year's freshmen), fully 89% signed up for a CSF scholarship. Thus we have 36,000 youngsters now beginning high school with hope and a clear pathway to an affordable college education.

Bob will be missed by all in the education and philanthropy fields. He was a high energy individual who parlayed success in business into helping students in need. His legacy lives on in the CSF — but he also leaves big shoes to fill.



Follow us on Twitter
www.twitter.com/wssda

Battle Ground Aspire program benefits highly capable students

Three third grade boys focused on the monitor of the Chromebook computer in front of them. One boy placed his hands on the keyboard and deftly typed a few words. Together, the third graders worked to revise “The Animal Defense Convention,” a script jointly written by third and fourth graders in Captain Strong Primary’s Aspire magnet program for highly capable students. Upon the script’s completion, the students would present it as part of a Readers Theater project to their parents and other students.

The BGPS Aspire Program provides accelerated learning opportunities in an intellectually stimulating environment that strives to explore academic subjects at an advanced level to meet students’ learning needs. Highly capable students are identified as the top 3 to 5 percent of the student population based on testing that looks for kids who intuitively jump to the correct answer with very little instruction.

Battle Ground Public Schools offers Aspire Program testing to students once each year. For the first time, the testing will be available to all grades (K-12). This year’s deadline to nominate students for the testing is approaching: Nov. 18 for kindergartners and Dec. 5 for first through 12th graders. The testing takes place in December for kindergartners and January and February for other grades. Parents can nominate their children for testing, and teachers can recommend students for testing; however, parents must give their

permission to have their children tested.

The BGPS Aspire Program is critical to the well-being of highly capable students. “The myth is that the gifted students can take care of themselves because they are smart,” said Jill Smith, Battle Ground Public Schools’ executive director of federal programs and instructional support services. “They have needs. They can get bored and frustrated. Most of them come into class already knowing 40 percent of the content at their grade level.” Some students can be gifted and still have learning or other disabilities. Many have alternative learning styles that are not met in a regular classroom experience.

State law requires districts to provide highly capable services, and BGPS receives state funding to provide some of these services to the top 2.78 percent of students. Other funds that pay for highly capable services come from levy dollars, grants, and state-provided basic education funds. BGPS currently has 617 students enrolled in its Aspire Program.

BGPS has two Aspire Program options. The magnet option for third through eighth graders brings Aspire students from all over the district to Captain Strong Primary and Chief Umtuch Middle schools, where the students are in classes comprised of highly capable students at the same grade level and with teachers who specialize in the education of gifted students. The cluster option is available for kindergarten

through 12th grade at every school, where groups of highly capable students are placed in regular classrooms, also with trained teachers.

About half of the students who test into Aspire choose the magnet option, and the other half stay in the cluster option at their home school. It’s also possible for a student to be gifted in one area of learning, such as math, but not another. These students usually choose the cluster option where it is easier for the teacher to provide learning opportunities specific to students’ needs in one subject area.

The benefits of the Aspire Program are many. Not only are students grouped with like-minded peers, but their learning is accelerated and individualized. The acceleration often occurs because teachers can eliminate concepts the students already know and avoid unnecessary repetition, providing more time to introduce other concepts and add levels of complexity to what students are taught.

More information, including the Aspire assessment process, program options, and nomination materials, are on the district website at <http://www.battlegroundps.org/district/aspire-advanced-placement>.



This story and many more can be found at www.ourkidswa.org. Send stories of your school district's successes to M.Wilson@wssda.org.





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

January

- 9 Legislative Committee Meeting
- 23-24 Board of Directors' Meeting

2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Quotable moments

“We have to confront the opportunity gap. We must accept and believe that when it comes to graduating our kids, all means all.”

GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE

March

- 1-2 Legislative Conference
- 7 Resolutions Committee Meeting

“A community is known by the schools it keeps!”

GENE SHARRATT, KEYNOTE SPEAKER

“You can be comfortable or you can be brave. You cannot be both.”

ANGELA MAIERS, KEYNOTE SPEAKER

April

- 24-25 Board of Directors' Meeting

“Happier people are more productive, sociable, energetic, cooperative, creative, resilient, successful and engaged. So what does the science tell us? It tells us that happiness is in the mind.”

SCOTT CRABTREE, KEYNOTE SPEAKER

“We have been squeezing that toothpaste for three or four years. Last year, we squeezed the toothpaste dry.”

GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE, COMMENTING ON JUST USING BUDGET CUTS TO FIND MORE MONEY FOR EDUCATION

