



Direct

Washington State School Directors' Association

October 2012

2012 Legislative Assembly draws record crowd

Nearly 200 people representing more than 100 school districts in the state attended WSSDA's 2012 Legislative Assembly at SeaTac in September. The registration total is about 40 percent higher than the number who attended last year's assembly and it is the highest in available records.

"We worked hard to put together a strong program," said Rick Jansons, the chair of the legislative committee and a school director from Richland. "That and the intensity of the political discussion surrounding education issues really attracted interest."

Jansons thanked all of the districts for taking the time to attend and have their voices heard at the assembly.

The Pre-Assembly, held on September 21, was highlighted by sessions with gubernatorial candidates Attorney General Rob McKenna and former Congressman Jay Inslee. It also included a legislative panel on funding issues, address by Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn and a presentation on Common Core Standards by Alan Burke, deputy superintendent of OSPI.

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Students at Big Picture High School value taking their education into their own hands.

Students find their passion in real-world learning experiences

This month's feature, Big Picture Middle and High School, was one stop on our Innovative Schools tour. Look for Aviation High School and Mount View Elementary to be featured in upcoming editions.

Big Picture High School's Principal Jeff Petty is quick to point out that their school facilities aren't state-of-the-art. But that doesn't seem to matter to the students and staff. The aging campus with cement walls and worn outdoor corridors is not dampening anyone's dreams.

"While it would be nice to be in a new facility, it's definitely not about that for us," Petty said. The focus at Big Picture

is to get students out in real-world situations to work one-on-one with adult mentors. At this school, building meaningful relationships is more important than building expensive labs.

Big Picture High School in the Highline School District is part of Big Picture Learning, a non-profit organization with more than 60 schools across 15 states. Big Picture Learning's theory that students learn better when they are engaged in something that they are passionate about, has steadily gained

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WSSDA webinar earns positive feedback



Big Picture High School started out eight years ago with only 34 students. Allowing students to take charge of what they really want to learn about is the key to students' success.

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momentum in America's public education system since being founded in 1995.

"Why would you sit in classrooms all day and talk about things that students need to know, when almost all of those things that they hope to do are happening within a five, ten, fifteen mile radius from our school," Petty explained.

On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, the school is a hub for students to meet with advisors, connect with adult mentors and work on academic exhibitions. Tuesdays and Thursdays, students are typically off campus at internships out in the community.

Big Picture Middle School is slightly different in that the students aren't involved in off-site internships. Instead, students experience real-world learning through organized field trips and interactions with adult mentors on campus.

In order to find real-world internships, high school students work closely with staff to identify what they are most passionate about and then develop an individual learning plan.

"They are trying to figure out where their passion lies," said Highline School Board Member, Susan Goding. She told us of one student who called up George Schwarz, conductor laureate with the Seattle Symphony, and said, "I want to

be your intern." Sure enough, he took her on. "People just love this place once they get involved." Goding said.

Other examples of student internships include, veterinary studies, architectural 3D drawings, middle and elementary school teaching, website design and database development.

The students that spoke to the group are genuinely happy to be there. Many of the students told how they had transferred from a more traditional school setting.

"I came here because I got in the wrong crowd at another school. But when I got here I actually focused," explained Erik, a junior in the program.

Another student said, "I wanted to quit school. I had no hope of going on to a higher education. Being here gave me more motivation to pursue getting a higher degree."

Starting out with just 34 ninth graders eight years ago, the school has grown steadily to a current enrollment of 116. Giving students the opportunity to lead their own education is the key to Big Picture's success.

Most importantly, Big Picture understands the need to provide a place for students to find their passion in life and establish a path to success in the real world.

Big Picture Middle and High School

116

Current high school enrollment

40

Inaugural class of middle school students in 2011

2

STEM Implementation Grants from Paul G. Allen Family Foundation

90

Percentage of on-time graduates in Big Picture Schools across America

Innovative schools tour

Attendees of the 2012 Legislative Assembly had a unique opportunity to tour three outstanding schools in the Highline School District.

The tour was a popular event for WSSDA members. It was filled to capacity.

Aviation High School, Big Picture Middle and High Schools, and Mount View Elementary School opened their doors and answered questions about their truly innovative programs.

Both Aviation High School and Big Picture High School are officially recognized by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) Innovative Schools program. The program celebrates Washington's most inventive and exciting schools.

Mount View Elementary School is at the forefront of bilingual education. It is one of the first schools in the Highline School District to offer Spanish dual language programs.

Improving public education: It's more than schools

My personal and professional development often depends on finding good books since time is an issue. Frequently, they challenge me to consider the important and emerging issues out there. Like many of you who also do this, the books tend to be related to education.

This summer, I read a book that has caused me to think differently about a couple of issues we are confronting in Washington state: the dropout rate and opportunities for students to have relevant, hands-on engagement in their education.

The book is *The Coming Jobs War: What Every Leader Must Know about Job Creation*. It was written by Jim Clifton, the CEO of Gallup Polls. Gallup conducts the World Poll, which is designed to give the world's seven billion citizens a voice in key, global issues.

When asked the question, "What do you most want?" The most common response from around the world was the same. Everyone wants a good job. While the definition of "good" will vary from country to country, respondents universally indicated they wanted a job that would allow them to adequately provide for their family's needs and was meaningful to them.

The following quote on the dropout problem really caught my attention. It came from a chapter titled *K-12 Schools: Where Entrepreneurs are Created*.

"This is not a *public schools* problem. This needs to be burned deeply into your neurons. It is a *whole city* problem. Fixing the schools is about taking your whole city to war against the dropout problem — one student at a time, one school at a time, one city at a time."

Students come into our care for six to seven hours each day. We know that they bring with them all the economic, social and cultural challenges they face during the other 17-18 hours of their day. Clifton recognized that this is too broad of an issue for schools to handle on their own. It requires action from all the sectors of a city. This includes housing authorities, transportation, health and social service providers, businesses, philanthropies, civic leaders, government and the media — in addition to schools.

All of these areas and their resources need to work together



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mary Fertakis

to address a problem that is crippling to individuals, our communities, and our country. He also recognizes that all of these sectors have a common stake in finding solutions.

"Student graduation is one of the most definitive predictors of your city's future innovation, entrepreneurship and subsequent job and GDP growth. If your city doesn't fix graduation rates and youth economic energy *now*, jobs that are perfect for it will move..."

Schools can have a great impact by providing opportunities for students to make connections between what they are learning, their personal interests, and what they might want to do as part of a career path, which makes education relevant to them.

There is variety to it all. Some career paths require a four-year college degree, or more. Others require a two-year certification process that can be completed, in part, in high school, through skill centers, community colleges and vocational and technical colleges.

All of these options will provide students with good, wage-earning jobs.

There is a lot of work to be done. We need to provide good guidance counseling for college and career pathway options for all our students. We need excellent CTE programs, either in our buildings or in collaboration with skill centers, community colleges or vocational and technical colleges. And we need to engage our local businesses and industries, civic groups and philanthropies in partnerships that provide apprenticeship, internship and other learning opportunities.

It is true hero work to invest the time it takes to engage an entire community, but it will go a long way in encouraging students to stay in school and graduate.

Take your leadership to the next level

Leadership WSSDA is our association's premier leadership development opportunity. This program for veteran school directors has been reconstituted for 2013.

We have adjusted the programming and schedule and as a result, WSSDA is offering the program to members for the sharply reduced tuition fee of \$700.

Leadership WSSDA develops leaders through rigorous advanced leadership training. It cultivates association leadership and provides essential training for leadership success.

The program is designed for veteran school directors. All members who have served on their local school boards for

at least three years are encouraged to participate.

More information, including a draft schedule of session dates is available on the WSSDA website at www.wssda.org. Contact WSSDA's Director of Leadership Development Services at P.Gore@wssda.org, for more information.

Step up to service and enhance your leadership skills

Your chance to serve on the WSSDA board or a committee is fast approaching. To be considered for one of these positions, you must first be nominated for election during your director area caucus meeting at this November's WSSDA Annual Conference.

Serving on the board or a committee is an opportunity to influence policy decisions at the state level and, at the same time, enhance your leadership skills. Don't hesitate to let your fellow board members know you are interested!

To help you with the additional commitments, WSSDA covers mileage and expenses for committee meetings, as well as event fees, hotel, mileage and expenses for board work.

Positions up for election are posted on the WSSDA Website. They were also listed in September's issue of the WSSDA Direct. The positions include seats on the WSSDA board of directors, legislative committee, nominating committee, resolutions committee, and

interscholastic activities committee.

There are also several appointed committees and task forces you may be interested in: the annual conference planning committee, federal relations network, task force on small schools issues, or the school trust lands advisory task force.

For an opportunity to influence the direction of our association, submit a completed [WSSDA Interest Form](#) available for download from our website.

Medical marijuana and schools: What's legal and what's not?

More and more students and staff are asking school administrators to use medical marijuana/cannabis at school. Washington's medical marijuana statute does not require schools to administer marijuana or allow its use and passage of the marijuana legalization initiative in November would not change this.

Under Washington's medical cannabis statute, [RCW 69.51A](#), medical cannabis use is authorized for "qualifying patients" with terminal or debilitating medical conditions. Their health care professional must believe the patient may benefit from the use of cannabis. Under the law, qualified patients cannot be arrested, prosecuted or subject to other criminal sanctions or civil consequences just because of their medical use of cannabis. However, they may still be prosecuted for offenses such as driving under the influence of marijuana.

Currently, a few healthcare providers nationwide are prescribing medical marijuana to treat various conditions. These include chronic renal failure, cancer, glaucoma, multiple sclerosis and HIV. In children, it is used to treat epilepsy and other neurological disorders. In the medical cannabis statute, the definition of "qualifying patient" does not specify a minimum age. As a result, it includes children. Some organizations provide "qualified patients" with medical marijuana "ID cards." Washington has no authorized ID card for medical marijuana users at this time.

However, Washington's medical cannabis statute, [RCW 69.51A.060](#), clearly states that use or display of medical cannabis where the public can see it is a Class 3 civil infraction. Moreover, the law does not require school officials to accommodate the use of it in the workplace, in any school bus, or on any school grounds.

So, if accommodation is not required, may a district choose to accommodate? The answer is no. By doing so, the district risks losing all of its federal grant funding. Under federal law,



FROM POLICY AND LEGAL

Heidi Maynard

districts that receive federal funds like Title I are required to have Drug-Free Workplace policies in place.

Marijuana is still an illegal Schedule 1 drug under federal drug laws. Therefore, a district that allows marijuana on school grounds puts its Title I and any other federal funding at risk. Any school nurse or other staff person who administers medical marijuana, even to a "qualified patient" under Washington law, would risk criminal prosecution under federal law. The same would be true of staff members and students who possessed marijuana at school.

I-502, the ballot initiative that seeks to regulate marijuana in Washington, will be decided by voters in November. Its passage would have no effect on the current state of medical marijuana in schools as far as students are concerned. It would allow limited possession of marijuana only by persons aged twenty-one and over.

In short, current state law does not require school districts to accommodate medical marijuana use in schools and federal law prohibits it. WSSDA will continue to monitor any developments in this area of law, so stay tuned.

The content of this column is for informational purposes only and should not be taken as legal advice. Please consult with an attorney prior to acting on any information in this column.



WSSDA is going green for Delegate Assembly!

We will no longer print and mail the Delegate Assembly Handbook. Instead, look for the handbook to be posted on the WSSDA website three weeks prior to the annual conference. You will receive an email notification once it is available for download.



Redrawing the link between democracy and education

It is easy to forget the intimate connection between schools and democracy in today's highly charged political debate over public education.

Research clearly supports the importance of a good civics or social studies program. It directly affects a student's eventual likelihood of voting, volunteering and leading in their communities. However, civic education just doesn't get as much press as issues involving charter schools, teacher testing and international economic competitiveness.

But that doesn't make it any less important.

Tarsi Dunlop lays out the subject on the Learning First Alliance Blog at www.learningfirst.org. When you read something that is so right on, you just have to share it! It says it all for me.

"The civic purpose of public education seeks to empower our nation's children, and future leaders, with a deep seated understanding of citizenship, civic duty and societal needs," Dunlop wrote. "It aims to provide the very tools needed for future generations to participate in the debates surrounding not just education policy, but other critical issues we as a nation — and member of the global community — face in the twenty first century."

Dunlop describes how a Chicago high school created a four-year course of study that culminates with a simulation in which students form committees and pass laws. They challenge constitutional issues and then decide them in mock Supreme Court hearings.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jonelle Adams

The challenges and opportunities of civic education are discussed in depth in a recent report from the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*.

The report doesn't just document how such an education helps produce better, more involved adult citizens, it draws a link between early civic education and higher graduation rates, among other benefits.

Success depends heavily on how the civic learning experience is designed. The report details the proven practices behind successful programs across the country, and makes sensible recommendations for local, state and federal policy makers.

Whether your interest as a school director tends toward the overarching, like an informed and involved citizenry, or the more immediate, like making sure our kids can get good jobs, you will find the report both interesting and practical.

2012 Legislative Assembly in pictures



For more pictures from the Legislative Assembly, visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/87697009@N07/>

WSSDA webinar attracts participants, praise and feedback

More than 60 school directors and administrators from around the state joined WSSDA in August for the first in a series of webinars WSSDA is planning for the next year. Participants gave the session, *Preparing your board for TPEP*, high marks.

“We’ve made webinars one of our priorities for the next year,” said WSSDA Executive Director Jonelle Adams, who was the primary presenter. “We want them to be interesting, topical and relevant.”

More than a third of participants completed a survey on the webinar’s quality, with every one saying he or she was satisfied or very satisfied with the session. Participants said they appreciated the lunch hour scheduling and level of detail, found the technology easy to use and looked forward to more webinars in the future. They also complimented WSSDA’s Phil Gore, who moderated the session.

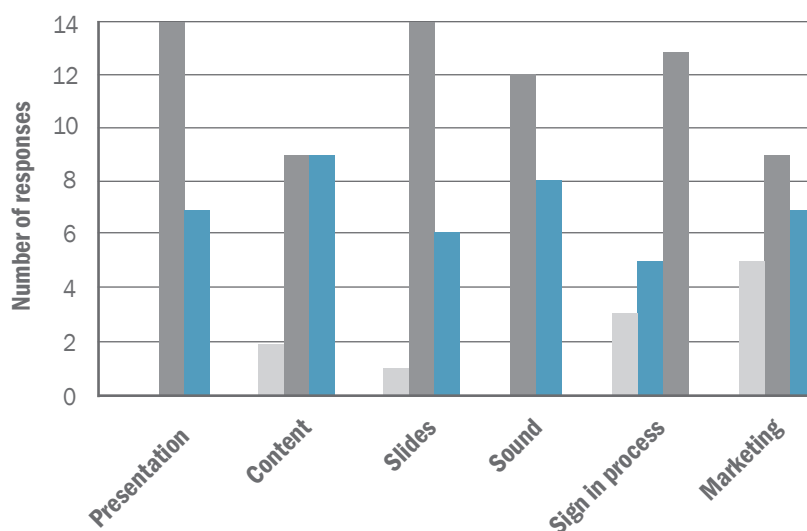
“We had a lot of things to test in this first one, including new webinar software and some advance marketing tactics,” said WSSDA Communications Director Michael Wilson. “We are now ready to select additional topics based on our members’ feedback and set up a schedule.”

Participants asked for follow-up webinars on teacher-principal evaluation, as well as sessions on legislative topics, effective board members, Common Core Standards, open public meetings and other areas. One participant suggested the association try out an evening webinar and several said they wished they had the PowerPoint slides in advance.

The TPEP webinar, PowerPoint slides and additional TPEP resources are available at <http://www.wssda.org/Events/Webinars.aspx>.

TPEP webinar: Attendee satisfaction

■ Neutral ■ Satisfactory ■ Very satisfactory



Key issues on tap for annual conference

WSSDA’s Annual Conference, November 14–17 in Spokane, will feature a full agenda with a broad range of topics and high-caliber presenters.

The program is filled with many break out sessions and workshops designed to address key issues facing Washington’s school directors. Here are a few hot topics you’ll find on the schedule:

Thursday

- A Whole Child Approach to Education and the P-3 Alignment
- The Adams Story: One School’s Transformation towards Greater Student Achievement in Yakima
- 21st Century Tools for Teaching and Learning (hands on iPad demonstration)
- STEM Education: Bridging the Education and Economy Divide

Friday

- What do Leaders Need to Know to Effectively Evaluate Teaching?
- Hot Topics in School Safety (HIB, cyberbullying, sexting and digital safety)
- The Revised Achievement Index and its Potential Role in Statewide Accountability
- Rethinking the K-12 Academic Calendar Year: An Overdue Innovation

Saturday

- What’s so Common about the Common Core State Standards and Assessments?
- Using Online Curriculum to Achieve Student Success
- Community Engagement: A Powerful Approach to Partnering for Success

For more details about these and other sessions, visit [SCHED](#). Sign up to personalize your conference schedule from your own computer or mobile device. Print out your plans to keep them handy or use your mobile device to view your schedule on the go.

What do you think?

WSSDA's member survey moves online for the first time October 1, giving you the most convenient opportunity ever to tell the association how it is doing and what you want it to emphasize.

"We kept this survey as short as possible to make it quick and easy for members to complete," said WSSDA Communications Director Michael Wilson. "We test piloted it with board members and they each completed it in 10-15 minutes."

The survey will be open for two weeks. Email is being used to alert all school directors and provide them with a link to the survey.

Past association surveys were done by telephone by an outside firm. The WSSDA board agreed earlier this year that an online survey with strong participation would provide important feedback, be more convenient for members and save considerable money.

The survey measures use and satisfaction with various association products and services, including written items, workshops and events. It also asks a number of questions about the challenges school directors face, both as educational leaders and as members of a school board.

Why do school board members run for office? How much time do they spend on this volunteer work? What are the biggest difficulties they face in serving? For the first time, the survey will explore what members believe it takes to be effective.

"The answers should be interesting for all of our members," said Will Clark, the association's research analyst. "We enjoyed preparing the survey, testing it and then making changes based on member feedback. We are hoping for very strong participation."

The survey also explores how members communicate and use technology, including social media. The association hopes to use the information to improve both its products and its communications with school directors.

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The formal assembly held the following day focused on more than 60 proposed positions on education issues. The positions were developed by school boards from across the state, as well as the association's Legislative Committee.

The proposal that garnered the longest discussion involved charter schools. In the event the legislature takes up legislation to authorize charter schools, the position would require

any charter school in the state to be under the governance of a locally elected school board. It was passed.

Delegates supported legislation that would remove state-mandated assessments as a graduation requirement. They also backed legislation to give OSPI responsibility to set minimum graduation requirements. The State Board of Education currently sets minimum graduation requirements.

In addition to the new proposals, which are approved for a year, delegates voted five others to standing

legislative positions of the association. They ordered the district's top 10 priorities, and once tallied, that info will provide a full ranking of all standing legislative positions and new position statements.

A full list of legislative positions will soon be available online at www.wssda.org. A notice will also be included in eClippings when that posting is made.

Next year's legislative assembly will be held September 20-21 in the SeaTac area.

FALL REGIONAL MEETINGS AND TPEP WORKSHOPS

*Locations with TPEP workshops are indicated with an asterisk.

October 1, DA 7*

Brewster
Brewster High School
502 South 7th Street
Brewster, WA 98812
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

October 2, DA 7*

Quincy
Quincy School District
Transportation Building
721 F Street SE
Quincy, WA 98848
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

October 3, DA 8

Yakima
Stanton Academy
802 River Road
Yakima, WA 98902
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

October 4, DA 11*

Kennewick
Kennewick
School District
Administration Building
1000 W. 4th Avenue
Kennewick, WA 99336
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

October 6, DA 4*

South Kitsap
South Kitsap High School
425 Mitchell Avenue
Port Orchard, WA 98366
11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

October 8, DA 1*

Stanwood/Camano
Administration and
Resource Center
26920 Pioneer Hwy.
Stanwood, WA 98292
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

October 9, DA 10*

St. John/Endicott
St. John School
301 W. Nob Hill Rd.
St. John, WA 99171
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

October 16, DA 3

Tacoma
Central Administration
Building
Auditorium (fourth floor)
601 South 8th Street
Tacoma, WA 98405
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

October 17, DA 6*

Evergreen
Clark County Skills Center
Main Meeting Room
12200 NE 28th Street
Vancouver, WA 98682
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

October 29, DA 2

Auburn
Administration Building
Boardroom
915 4th Street NE
Auburn, WA 98002
6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.



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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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

- 1** Fall Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop
Director Area 7, Brewster
- 2** Fall Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop
Director Area 7, Quincy
- 3** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 8, Yakima
- 4** Fall Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop
Director Area 11, Kennewick
- 6** Fall Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop
Director Area 4, South Kitsap
- 8** Fall Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop
Director Area 1, Stanwood/Camano

- 9** Fall Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop
Director Area 10, St. John/Endicott
- 16** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 3, Tacoma
- 17** Fall Regional Meeting and TPEP Workshop
Director Area 6, Evergreen
- 27** WSSDA Legislative Committee Meeting
- 29** Fall Regional Meeting
Director Area 2, Auburn

November

- 8** Professional Education Standards Board
- 14-17** WSSDA Annual Conference
Spokane

March

- 10-11** WSSDA/WASA/WASBO Legislative Conference