



## Gearing up for the 2016 Legislative Session

BY DEB MERLE, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

### WSSDA's legislative agenda

On September 19, 168 school leaders representing 82 districts attended WSSDA's annual Legislative Assembly. The Assembly approved 39 new positions, added nine Standing Legislative Positions, amended six, and eliminated seven. Then, the districts voted for their top 10 legislative priorities. Results on that vote will be considered by the WSSDA Legislative Committee in October, and a "short list" of top priorities for 2016 will be adopted by the WSSDA Board of Directors in November.

### Another special session?

The Washington Supreme Court's most recent ruling in *McCleary v. Washington* includes a \$100,000 fine for every day the legislature fails to produce a plan to fully fund the

provisions of HB 2776/2261. Governor Inslee responded by asking legislative leaders to appoint two members per caucus to a McCleary Work Group that will meet between now and November. If the eight legislators come up with a viable plan, the governor will call a special session so that all 147 members may consider it.

One concern about calling a special session is that, once they are in session, any issue may be raised. Given the court's other recent ruling, that public funding for charter schools is unconstitutional, it may be difficult to maintain singular focus on compensation and levy reform, which is at the heart of a *McCleary* solution.

LEGISLATIVE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



## Analyzing student data helps drive better teaching

It's 9:35 a.m. and a small group of teachers at Roosevelt Elementary School huddles over laptops and notebooks.

"How does that work in your class?" asks one, as her colleague pulls out a packet of charts.

These teachers are not in front of a class. No students are popping up with questions. Instead, they're in the middle of their own learning session: about data.

STUDENT DATA, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



## 2015 Small Schools Tour travels to Clark, Cowlitz and Lewis Counties

BY ELISSA DYSON, ONION CREEK SCHOOL BOARD

Six small districts welcomed the Small Schools Visit team of Alan Burke, Michael Wilson and Elissa Dyson in late September. These districts ranged in size from nearly 2000 students to less than 200.

The districts differed in more than size. Once again, the uniqueness of each of our small schools shined. From the rapidly growing and changing neighborhoods of Hockinson, to the bucolic setting of Green Mountain, to the artistic abundance of La Center, we saw students learning in ways distinctive to their communities.

SMALL SCHOOLS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Alan Burke

ELECTION 2015

# Reach out to your new board members

Come November, WSSDA will have lots of new members.

This always happens in odd-year general elections as many current board members decide to retire and even more interested citizens step up to run for open seats. In addition, the very nature of public elections means that some incumbents are sure to lose their seats to newcomers with an interest in educational policy making—and in holding public office.

The facts are out there to see. Statewide, 210 open seats are up for grabs on November 3rd, and 123 incumbents have challengers. All in all, we expect many first-timers to be elected in a few weeks.

We have a plan to meet, greet and train-up these new members.

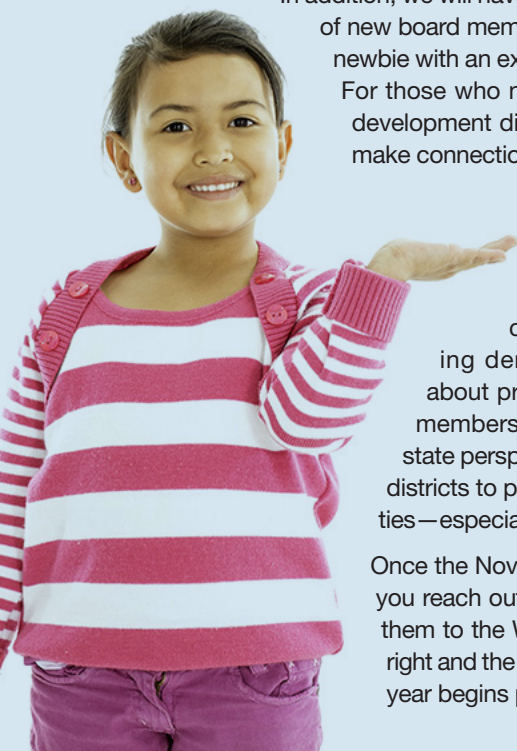
First and foremost, the WSSDA Annual Conference (AC), scheduled November 19 – 21 in Bellevue, is the best opportunity for new members to become oriented to the duties and responsibilities of school directors. In addition to the all-day new board member orientation on Thursday, the conference planning committee has scheduled a “strand” of breakout sessions specifically to deal with the A, B, C’s of boardsmanship.

That detail will be listed in the conference schedule, and, for techies, available in the conference app that can be downloaded onto smart phones or hand held devices.

In addition, we will have a packet of information on the mentoring of new board members for those who would like to pair up a newbie with an experienced director in the district or region. For those who need help in finding a mentor, leadership development director Colleen Miller or I will be happy to make connections.

I certainly don’t need to tell readers of this column that school directorships are at times difficult and time consuming. Navigating local politics is one big challenge. Following the law and governing demand a certain amount of knowledge about proper school district operations. Our new members need training both locally and from the state perspective. WSSDA wants to be a partner with districts to provide leadership development opportunities—especially for new members.

Once the November 3rd election ends, we suggest that you reach out to the newly-elected directors and invite them to the WSSDA Annual Conference. The timing is right and the training will do much to assure that the new year begins productively for each local board.



STUDENT DATA, CONTINUED FROM PG.1

We live in the age of big data from business to health care, and the mining of data for patterns and trends is opening up new avenues for innovation. Education is no exception—and the teachers at Roosevelt are creating new ways to mine data to better serve students. But one of the biggest challenges for teachers in Tacoma and across the country is how to interpret—and put to use—the wealth of test scores, assignment grades and learning standards for each student.

“In Tacoma Public Schools, tracking and analyzing ‘the right data’ are critical elements to improve our instruction,” said Deputy Superintendent Josh Garcia. “We use data to support our students and staff. So for us, being able to use data with precision and in an informed manner helps us relentlessly support every child, every day.”



At Roosevelt, teachers are getting personalized, real-time assistance with understanding data. In 2014, the school received a three-year School Improvement Grant awarded by the Washington State Board of Education and the U.S. Department of Education to schools that show the greatest need and commitment to raise the achievement of struggling students.

With the grant, Roosevelt gives teachers extra time in their schedules to collaborate with each other on data strategies. A data specialist and math and reading instructional coaches—teachers of teachers—also help.

Teachers meet once a week for an extra 70 minutes of planning time with other teachers in their same grade level. During that

**PHOTO: A Roosevelt Elementary School first-grade teacher talking with a student about what learning standards she is exceeding, meeting and still needs to learn.**



time, the data specialist and coaches help them see patterns in students' data and use it to target learning areas that need more attention in the classroom.

"We put together an action plan," said Principal Autumn Foster. "We planned it with the idea that if we could have anything we wanted, what could we have?" A staff survey revealed a clear theme that teachers wanted to use data more.

**Data time**

Roosevelt's two first-grade teachers are gathered around an instructional coach in Roosevelt's professional development center, a classroom set up just for teachers. These teachers have both shown high achievement incorporating lessons from data into their teaching.

Displayed on the wall are spreadsheets created by data specialist Barbara Hess, with the help of math coach Lisa Miller. Hess inputs the data from each assessment into the charts, breaking the data down by grade level and individual class. She color codes each student's progress. If a student hasn't mastered the material, their box in the chart shows up red. If they know it, the box is filled in with white—making it easy to identify which students need help and in exactly which area.

Hess posts the grade-level charts in the professional development center. The first-grader charts have moved from red to a sea of almost all white.

During the extra teacher planning time, Hess and the instructional coaches work with teachers to see how they can adjust teaching techniques to be more effective, based on the data.

"I can't imagine it any other way," said first-grade teacher Adrienne Hanson. "The nice thing about coming together is that we get a chance to collaborate and share ideas."

Hanson has used strategies from the data and collaborative planning time to make tweaks in her classroom, such as building small groups of students who have similar needs. Her students are aware of the new data strategy, too. A copy of the data charts are hanging on the classroom wall. One first-grade girl points to the charts to explain what's going on.

"The red means some are wrong, but then you get better," she said. "We made some mistakes, but we keep at it."



# Hone your skills with WSSDA's VIP Program at Annual Conference

**W**SSDA's Annual Conference is where more than 1,000 school directors, superintendents, student representatives and other education leaders go to learn new skills and increase their understanding of the issues that affect education and their districts. This year, the VIP credentialing program will help you personalize your learning to target exactly the skills or topics that are right for you. And you'll earn credit towards recognition as a WSSDA VIP within three featured tracks. Earn 10 credits within one of the tracks and you will be recognized as proficient in that content area.

Foundations of Boardmanship	Equity and Access	Advanced Leadership
<p>Perfect for school directors who want an overview of the basics, whether newly elected or serving in a first or second year. Selections from this track include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Bird Session: New Director Boot Camp</li> <li>• Early Bird Session: Open Government Training</li> <li>• 10 breakout sessions, including a 100 level series covering many aspects of boardmanship</li> <li>• Director area caucuses and Delegate Assembly</li> <li>• General sessions featuring our three nationally recognized keynote speakers</li> </ul>	<p>Ensuring that all students receive an equitable education and have access to what they need to be successful is at the heart of the work of school directors. The robust selection of trainings within the Equity and Access track include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Bird Session: Engaging Families and Community Members in Highly Diverse Settings</li> <li>• Early Bird Session: Open Government Training</li> <li>• 17 breakout sessions</li> <li>• Equity and Access Caucus</li> <li>• General sessions and breakouts with Dr. Pedro Noguera</li> </ul>	<p>As an experienced school director, you know that there is always more to learn. We've put together a fantastic lineup of opportunities for you to advance your leadership skills and knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Bird Session: Building a Highly-Effective Board through Balanced School Governance</li> <li>• Early Bird Session: School Finance and Collective Bargaining</li> <li>• 27 breakout sessions on a vast array of topics</li> <li>• Director area caucuses and Delegate Assembly</li> <li>• General sessions and breakouts with our three keynote speakers</li> </ul>

**Your ten credits can be earned in a variety of ways**, so choose the combination that works best for you. Early Bird sessions earn six credits, breakout sessions are worth two credits each and general sessions, caucuses and Delegate Assembly each count for one credit. Overachievers even have the opportunity to be recognized as VIPs within two content areas. Log your attendance using our Annual Conference app, making it easy to build your schedule and become a WSSDA VIP.

### Another regular session!

During even numbered years, the theory is that the Legislature focuses on tweaks to the biennial budget passed the year before and emergent policy issues. That's why even numbered years have "short" sessions of only 60 days. However, the list of gnarly education issues for legislators to grapple with when the Legislature convenes on January 11th is daunting. And, while education is the state's paramount duty, it's not the only duty. Social services and public safety also depend on attention from legislators and funding from the state.

### Two studies underway

The Legislature directed two studies of note for school districts and other local jurisdictions.

- A "School Siting Taskforce" is considering Growth Management Act reform to allow school construction outside of urban growth areas. Their recommendations are due to the Legislature this December.
- Public Records Act reform establishing a cost for electronic records to discourage

frivolous requests; report due to the Legislature in April 2016

### Working on relationships with your legislators

Legislators want to get to know you, too. And, it's easier to get on their calendars "in district" before session starts than during session in Olympia. You want them to recognize your name when you contact them during session and you want them to think of you when they have questions about education policy or funding.

- Schedule a one-on-one meeting over coffee.
- Organize a Director Area breakfast and invite all the local state legislators.
- Be prepared to talk about WSSDA's top legislative priorities and your own local issues.
- Have a couple stories ready about how their actions in Olympia impact student success.
- Remember to thank them for the positive things they have done.
- Offer school tours for legislators and their staff – make sure they spend time with kids.
- Invite them to school celebrations – the

bigger the crowd of parents the better.

- Ask them to teach a class in their field of expertise or to talk with students about civics.

### Calling up and being counted

The Governor's Office and the Legislature track calls and emails they receive from the public each week. They continue to tell us that they don't hear directly from constituents about education as often as they hear about social services and public safety issues.

- Call the legislative hotline at 800.562.6000
- Visit the governor's website to send him an e-message: <https://fortress.wa.gov/es/governor/>

Let them know what you think about the pressing issues facing K-12 statewide and about your own local education issues. Call early and often!

### Staying on top of the issues

- Attend Regional Meetings
- Register for the WSSDA Annual Conference in Bellevue, November 19th-22nd
- Sign up for WSSDA eClippings and Legislative Updates



## 2016 Top Ten Legislative Priorities

### 1. Simple Majority for Bonds in November General Elections

WSSDA supports legislation to allow passage of bonds with a simple majority vote in November general elections.

### 2. School Construction (SLP 7.1.16)

WSSDA supports "ample provision" for school construction through state policies that:

- fund school construction needs when districts are determined eligible;
- maintain a reliable system of funding

that supports adequate planning at the local level;

- provide specific sources of revenue to support and enhance state trust revenue;
- give highest priority to projects that address un-housed student needs, either through new construction or remodeling
- allocate square footage to meet current and future program needs with square feet per student at least meeting the national average;
- fund actual construction costs including mandated green building costs;
- fund construction costs resulting from

new legislation and changes in class size or graduation requirements;

- allow limited improvement of not more than 10 percent of the current value of the facility, such as energy retrofits, in existing facilities without requiring a review and/or upgrade of the entire building to meet current codes in other areas; and,
- equalize funding for modernization of existing school facilities in lieu of abandonment and new construction.

### 3. Full Funding of Basic Education (SLP 7.1.12)

WSSDA shall initiate and/or support legislation that fully funds and implements all aspects of Washington's redefined program of Basic Education as outlined in ESHB 2261.

### 4. MSOC Funding (SLP 7.1.2)

WSSDA shall initiate and/or support legislation and appropriations which recognize that school districts' abilities to maintain and enhance quality educational opportunities, for all students are strengthened by





**Legislative Assembly**  
 Seattle Airport Marriott  
 Sept. 18-19  
 2015



**TOP TEN, CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**

ample funding for maintenance, supplies and operating costs (MSOC). WSSDA supports enhanced MSOC funding, recognizing inflationary costs, with a required review by OSPI every four years of actual costs, as submitted by school districts.

**5. Statewide Bargaining for Salaries and Healthcare**

WSSDA supports legislation that transfers authority for bargaining salaries and health-care benefits for school employees from local bargaining units to the state.

**6. Professional Development is a Critical Component of Basic Education**

WSSDA supports legislation and funding for at least 96 hours of professional development including 16 hours of cultural competency and equity education per year for each certificated teacher in Washington as part of Basic Education.

**7. Changing School Bond Approval Requirements**

WSSDA shall initiate and/or support legislation

that would change the bond approval percentage from 60 percent to a simple majority.

**8. Special Education and Special Needs Students (SLP 7.1.6)**

WSSDA shall initiate and/or support legislation which requires full funding for special education programs and services. Such programs and services should maximize assistance to children rather than to their various categorizations and assessments. Any state funding formula shall:

- recognize that costs will vary according to the needs of every child and, therefore, for every district, based upon the I.E.P. of each student;
- provide adequate funding for all of the required services for eligible special education students without imposing an artificial cap;
- exclude students for whom districts do not receive an annual basic education allocation from any special education program enrollment funding caps;
- recognize that any funding formula based upon the assumption that every district has the same budget percentage costs for

special education is inherently flawed and will not work; and,

- support state and federal funding of recognized costs associated with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

**9. Levy Equalization Funding and Formulas**

WSSDA supports maintaining or improving levy equalization for districts that receive Local Effort Assistance. Any change in the levy formula that occurs as a result of levy/compensation reform shall include an equalization factor to mitigate differences in local funding capability. That factor shall assure equity among districts at a rate equivalent to or higher than the current formula.

**10. Attract and Retain High Quality Staff in Hard-to-staff Schools**

WSSDA supports legislation that encourages equity across the state through incentives structured to enhance the ability of small, property-poor, or hard-to-staff districts to attract and retain staff.

# Share Your Solutions through the Magna Awards

**H**as your district recently solved a complex problem? Created a program that raised student achievement? Lowered the dropout rate? Increased parent involvement? Improved professional development?

Chances are other districts are facing problems similar to the ones you have faced. Let them know how you solved them by nominating your district for a 2016 Magna Award.

The Magna Awards is a national recognition program sponsored by American School Board Journal and the National School Boards Association. It honors school leader best practices and innovative district programs that advance student learning.

For more than 20 years, the Magna Awards panel of independent judges has reviewed programs that showcase school district leadership, creativity, and commitment to student achievement.

Washington state districts have done very well in garnering awards. In both 2014 and 2015, Vancouver Public Schools was a winner among schools with more than 20,000 students. West Valley Yakima won honorable mention last year for schools with fewer than 5,000 students. Kent School District was a grand prize winner in 2014. Those award-winning efforts were detailed

in the April 2015 edition of WSSDA Direct.

Magna nominations are judged according to three enrollment categories (under 5,000 enrollment; 5,000-20,000 enrollment; and over 20,000 enrollment), with one Grand Prize Winner in each category. Each Grand Prize Winner receives \$5,000 from Sodexo.

There are five additional winners and five honorable mention winners within each enrollment category. All Magna Winners and Honorable Mention recipients are recognized in a special section published in the conference issue of American School Board Journal. All winners are honored at a luncheon during NSBA's annual conference. Grand Prize winners are featured in a video and introduced at a general session.

Share your district program with school leaders around the country—nominate your programs today.

Nominate your exemplary program [online](https://secure.nsba.org/asbj/magna/). (<https://secure.nsba.org/asbj/magna/>) The nomination period runs through Oct. 31, 2015.

## Greer selected president-elect, Maraldo as vice president

**J**oanne Greer of Deer Park has been selected as the next president-elect of the Washington State School Directors' Association. Marnie Maraldo of Issaquah was elected as the next vice president.

Greer and Maraldo were chosen in a month-long, online election. Nearly 400 school board members voted in the election, or about 25 percent. While down slightly from last year's vote-by-mail approach, it was the largest turnout for any of the association's three online elections (2012, 2013 and 2015).

"Joanne has tremendous experience as a businesswoman and longtime school director," said WSSDA Executive Director Alan Burke. "It's a real bonus that she also honed her skills on the board and legislative committee."

Greer, who is currently WSSDA's vice president, has served on the Deer Park School Board for 18 years and represented her region on the WSSDA Board of Directors. She also served on the legislative committee for about 10 years.

Maraldo has served on the Issaquah board for six years. During that time, she has been active in WSSDA.

"We are thrilled to have Marnie join WSSDA's executive board," said Burke. "She has a breadth of experience, not just at the local level but on the association's board and legislative committee."

Greer and Maraldo will assume office during the closing session of the WSSDA Annual Conference this November and will serve for a year with Chris Nation of Marysville, who is slated to become president.



## Next Steps for Public Records Act Review

According to the 1973 law, a "public record" is "any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics." State law, a strong democracy, and public confidence demands easy access to government records. Over the last decade however, local and state agencies have noted significant growth in the number and complexity of public record requests, increasing the time and cost of compliance enormously in some cases.

The Legislature is reviewing the Public Records Act and asked the State Auditor's office to estimate the cost of providing both paper and electronic records. This fall state and local government agencies will respond to a survey about the nature, volume and the associated costs of public records requests. The Auditor's staff will also look nationally, to identify best practices in records' management and compare what agencies are allowed to recover in other states. The Auditor's report is due to the Legislature in April of 2016, so stay tuned!



SMALL SCHOOLS, CONTINUED FROM PG.1

At the end of the day, we had an interesting discussion with the new superintendent and a board member as we watched the sun sink over the Columbia from the Kalama campus.

The next morning we were joined by Director Area 5 representative, Chuck Namit, for a spectacular drive up to the White Pass School District, where we learned about the historical consolidation of Randle, Packwood and Glenoma schools.

We heard lots more about the challenges of consolidation when we visited with staff and board members of Castle Rock, the district that incorporated the Vader district after its dissolution in 2007.

All in all, another successful and stimulating series of visits to some of the small schools that help create the rich and diverse K-12 education system in Washington.





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**

**October**

- 1** Fall Regional Meeting -DA11
- 5** Fall Regional Meeting - DA8
- 6** Fall Regional Meeting - DA7
- 7** Fall Regional Meeting - DA10
- 8** Executive Committee Meeting
- 14** Fall Regional Meeting - DA5
- 20** Fall Regional Meeting - DA3
- 22** Executive Committee Meeting
- 24** Legislative Committee Meeting
- Fall Regional Meeting - DA4
- 29** Fall Regional Meeting - DA9

**November**

- 1** Board of Directors' Meeting
- 5** Executive Committee Meeting
- 18** Leadership WSSDA
- 19** Annual Conference  
Board of Directors' Meeting  
Executive Committee Meeting  
4th Meeting of the Resolutions Committee  
Nominating Committee Meeting
- 21** Annual Conference  
Director Area Caucus  
WSSDA Delegate Assembly
- 22** Annual Conference  
Board of Directors' Meeting

