



INSPIRATION

How 7th grade science helped save Elaine Scott's life

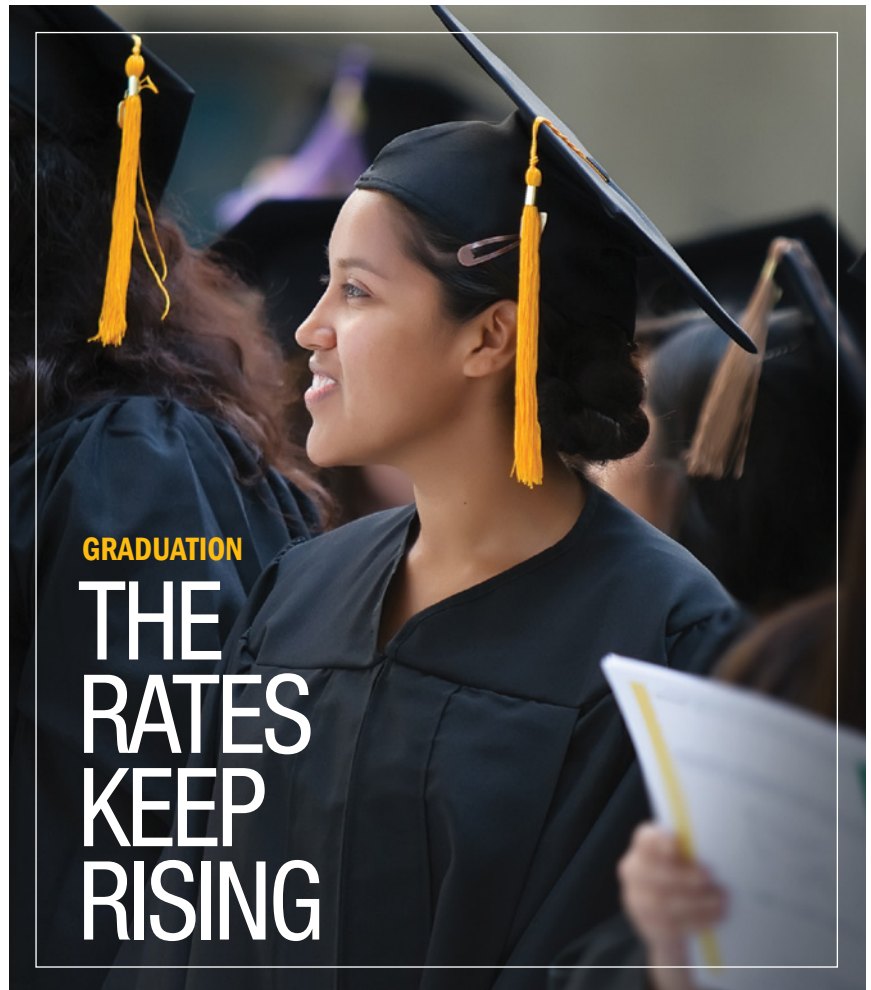
By Jolene Andres, Mead School District

Elaine started 7th grade at Northwood in the fall of 2015. Like many middle school students, she was growing like a weed, always hungry and often tired. These characteristics, along with a busy schedule and Scandinavian heritage seemed to explain her thin frame and pale skin.

As the year progressed Elaine expressed occasional concern about her hunger and tiredness but, as her mother Heidi explains, "We never had a 13-year old before so we assumed it was all part of growing up."

Students learn about human body systems in 7th grade science. A part of this body systems unit is the Diagnostic Challenge. Using medical analysis, students in "physician" teams look at patient symptoms and make diagnoses based on what they have learned about each body system and key diseases.

SCIENCE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



GRADUATION

THE RATES KEEP RISING

Washington's statewide graduation rate nudged closer to 80 percent in 2016, an all-time high that also marks the third straight year of improvements, according to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Overall, the on-time state graduation rate for the Class of 2016 was 79.1 percent. That represents a 1.0-percentage-point increase from 2015, or an increase of 1,528 students.

While the calculation method has changed a bit, making historical rates not strictly comparable, the percentage of students graduating has clearly risen substantially in recent years. In 2003, for example, the on-time graduation rate was estimated at 65.7 percent.

GRADUATION, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Tim Garchow



The gift of time

March is one of the longest months of the year. It has more work and school days than any other month. The legislative session is at full speed. Districts are in the throes of budget planning. Students and staff are gearing up for testing season. It's not quite winter and not quite spring. Yes, March can be an extremely busy time of year.

The work we do is important and it consumes much of our time. That is why it is so important, especially in March and early April, to make sure to dedicate time for those we serve and those closest to us. It reminds me of a story that I once heard.

One evening, a young boy greeted his father when he came home from work, "Dad, how much do you make an hour?" A little taken aback by his son's question, the father said, "That's none of your business. Don't bother me now, I'm tired." The boy insisted, "But Dad, please just tell me, how much do you make an hour?" The father finally gave in. "Twenty dollars per hour," he said.

The boy then went to his room and returned a few minutes later. The boy asked, "Dad, could you please loan me ten dollars?" The father, exhausted from working three straight sixty-hour weeks was a little harsh as he responded, "No. Go to sleep and don't bother me anymore!"

Later in the evening, after the boy had gone to bed, the father was sitting in the living room thinking about the odd conversation that he had had earlier with his son. He began to feel a bit guilty about shutting down his son's request so quickly. Finally, trying to ease his mind, the father went to his son's room. "Are you asleep, son?" asked the father. "No, Dad. Why?" replied the young boy. "Here's the money you asked for earlier," the

father said. "Thanks, Dad!" rejoiced the son, while putting his hand under his pillow and removing some money that was already there. "Now I have enough! Now I have twenty dollars!" the boy said to his father, who was gazing at his son with a confused look on his face. "Dad could you sell me one hour of your time?"

Time is often the greatest gift that we can give to those for whom we work so hard. As we continue in our efforts on ESSA and McCleary, as we strive to get a grasp on the myriad of challenges that come our way and as we continue making great decisions for our districts, let's remember the importance of the time that we spend just being present.

Please join me in a renewed effort to give the gift of our time. Let's get out into schools, attend a track meet or school play, visit the FFA at Spring Fair and volunteer to read with kindergartners or attend a curriculum night. Not only will the children and their families love it, but your staff will appreciate your attention as well.

During the upcoming Spring Regional Meetings, I hope to spend more time with you, in your schools, learning about the people you serve. After all, the time we spend with those we serve is priceless!

“ Let's get out into schools, attend a track meet or school play, visit the FFA at Spring Fair, volunteer to read with kindergartners or attend a curriculum night. ”



PRESIDENT
Joanne Greer

SCIENCE, CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

Last March, during this project-based Diagnostic Challenge, Elaine came home and shared what she was discovering about diabetes. She told her parents, “It’s weird . . . every symptom we are learning about is something I’m experiencing.”

To alleviate her concerns, they approached a neighbor whose daughter has Type 1 diabetes and asked to test Elaine’s blood. Fasting blood sugar should be less than 100, Elaine’s was 375! They immediately headed to Sacred Heart Emergency where a diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes was confirmed. Elaine’s doctor informed the family she had most likely been experiencing blood sugar levels in the very high 600-700 range for several weeks – scary! Waiting even another day may have led to Elaine suffering a coma or worse.

Reflecting on this past year Elaine says, “It was actually school that really saved me from a coma and possibly even dying. I had unknowingly been getting sicker and sicker. Thank goodness I paid attention to the unit on diabetes.”

In a letter to the 7th grade science teachers, Elaine’s parents Heidi and Kelly expressed sincere appreciation stating, “Thank you for teaching our daughter and all her peers. Thank you for engaging them in meaningful and compelling lessons that keep their attention. We can’t imagine what might have happened had Elaine not self-diagnosed when she did.”

When Elaine grows up she wants to be a pediatric endocrinologist helping other young people deal with Type 1 diabetes. “That’s the goal,” says science teacher Renee Demand, “to show students real world context for the content being taught so they can be team-based problem solvers who make a difference in our world and community.”



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.

Goodbye Winter!

It is time to embrace spring in Washington. It seems as though this last season was the longest in recent history. Between politics and the weather, it’s time for a new beginning.

Let’s welcome longer daylight hours, sunshine, warmer temperatures and blooming flowers with optimism and hope for better things to come.

As school board directors, we are in a position to make a real difference in the lives of our students and communities. I want to challenge and encourage you to take the opportunity to be an active participant in the changes that are coming.

When reading about legislation in front of our senators and representatives, don’t assume that the details are finalized. State and federal legislation is still in the working stages.

There is still time to let your voice be heard!

Use your elected position to inform those in power to make changes and hear how our classrooms and communities will be affected by their decisions. We are the voice for public education.

WSSDA has momentum and is leading conversations involving K-12 education. Use this to strengthen your message. If you’d like help gathering information to use in your conversations, contact WSSDA Government Relations. (360.252.3010).

Our staff has been working seven days a week, from dawn till dark, advocating our positions. While we are making great progress, our voice individually and collectively will assure they hear us. Each of us needs to take this opportunity to send emails and make phone calls to our legislators.

We are the largest body of elected officials in the state. Let’s exercise our influence,

experience and expertise. This is the time to make change. Be proud of what we do for our students and be part of shaping tomorrow’s classroom!

Spring Regional Meetings have already begun. Be sure to check your calendars and plan on attending an event. Regional meetings are a great time to reconnect with colleagues from your director area to hear the latest updates, network and support each other. WSSDA.org has all the details to register and attend.

It is also time to plan for the immediate future. WSSDA is taking applications for vice president. This year the VP seat will be filled from the west side of the state. If you are interested and feel you would be able to serve our membership in this capacity, the process is underway. The timeline and information is posted to the web. WSSDA officers work hard to keep our members educated, empowered and well-represented with our senators, representatives and state and federal entities.

Locally, it’s time for elections. If you are up for re-election or if you have an open seat in your school district, the filing window is May 15-19. I want to say “Thank You” in advance for your willingness to serve. Our students and communities benefit greatly from your efforts in our board rooms across the state.

Enjoy this new season,
Joanne





Graduation equity initiative

by Colleen Miller, Director of Leadership Development Services

There is a saying that you cannot be a prophet in your own land. That may be changing in our state. OSPI has identified 11 school districts that are increasing their graduation rates and closing the opportunity gap for students living in poverty. These districts are called positive outliers. They have a high graduation rate and large low-income population. They also have a small gap between low income graduation rates and higher income graduation rates.

For over a year, OSPI staff and education researchers from Gonzaga University have been visiting these districts. They have compared their strategies for success and identified what they have in common. The goal is to share successful strategies to help other districts replicate this success.

A common theme that emerged was the expectation that all students are capable of success and all adults are accountable. Other themes: clearly defined goal and outcome measures, implementation of data-based Dropout Early Warning and Intervention System (DEWIS), positive school climate, multi-tiered systems of support—including prevention, intervention and reengagement, an emphasis on the transition years between elementary and middle school and middle-to-high school, and connections to mental health and drug

and alcohol supports and the addition of Professional Learning Communities.

The partnership between OSPI and Gonzaga University produced resources to help other districts put these strategies and themes into place. The Graduation Equity Initiative webpage can be found on the [OSPI website](#).

The resources include an assessment to measure a district's preparedness to move ahead, a graduation resource packet and a 45-day action plan. There are also links to the 11 school districts' web pages and presentations on what initiatives have done to increase graduation rates and decrease the gap between low and non-low income students.

Let's learn from one another and increase graduation rates for all children!

Mid-size to large districts: 5,000 to 15,000+

Franklin Pierce School District
Kelso School District
Spokane School District
Sunnyside School District

Small districts: less than 5,000

Ephrata School District
Kettle Falls School District
Manson School District
North Franklin School District
Rainier School District
Reardan-Edwall School District
West Valley School District-Spokane

Over the longer term, graduation rates followed a consistent increase until the mid-1960's, when they flattened or even declined, both in the state and nationally.

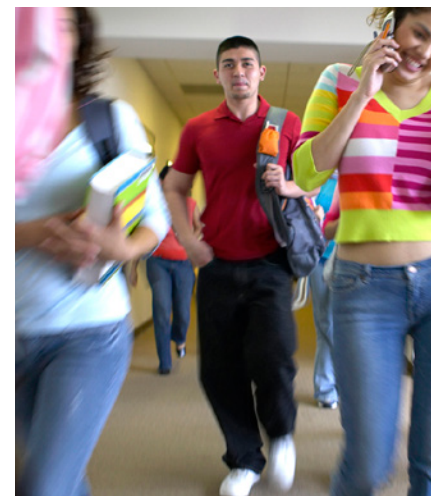
The "extended graduation rate" – which includes students who take five years to graduate – is 81.9 percent for the Class of 2016. This is also an all-time high.

The group making the largest gains in four-year graduation rates was homeless students. For the Class of 2016, 53.4 percent of homeless students graduated. This compares to 44.9 percent the year before.

"Graduating an additional 1,528 students will have an enormous economic benefit to our state, in addition to improving the lives of these young people," said Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction. "High school graduates produce over \$370,000 more in lifetime earnings than their peers who do not graduate. Because of this, our state can count on well over \$500 million in additional economic activity just from last year's graduation improvements."

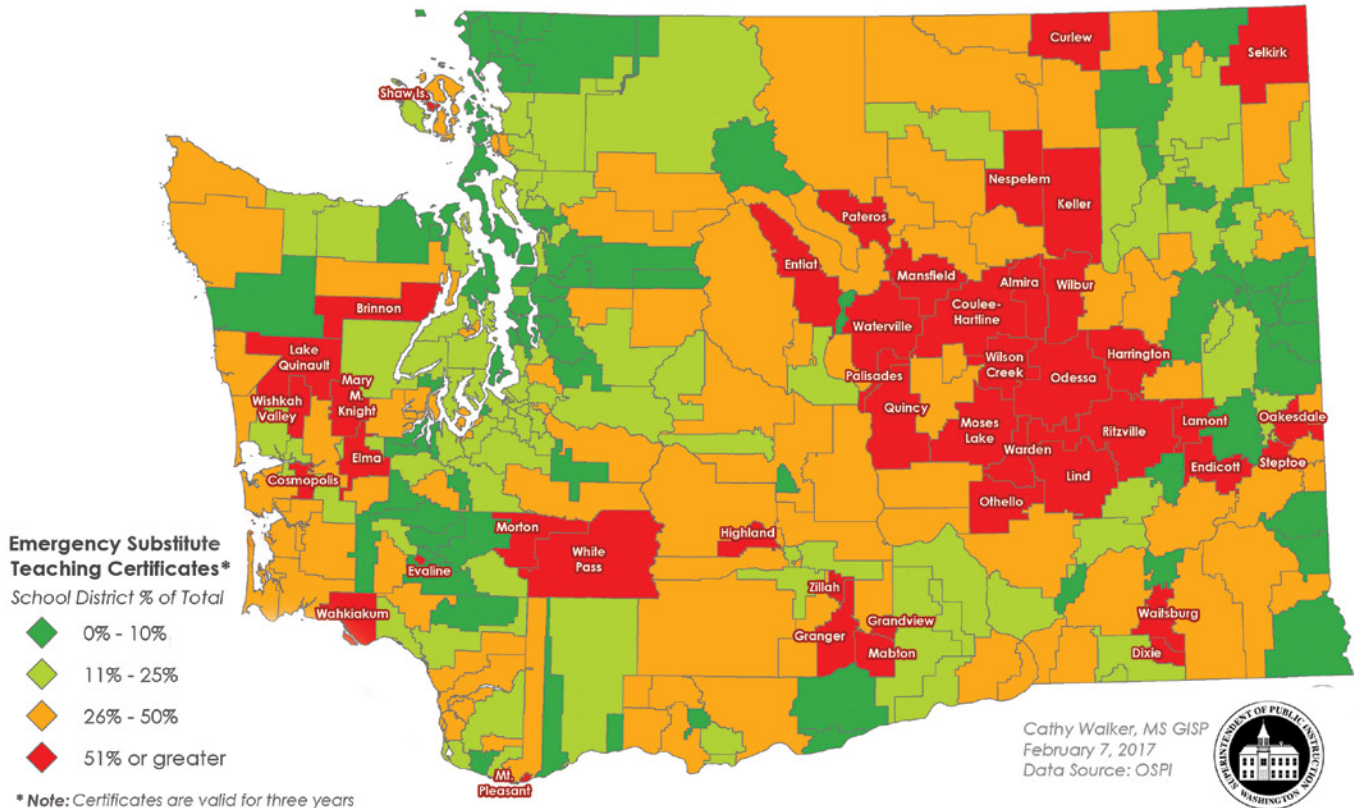
The improvement in graduation rates was also broad, touching most racial and economic subgroups, according to an analysis by the State Board of Education.

"The improved graduation rates for the Hispanic/Latino, English Learner, and the American Indian/Alaskan Native student groups (6.7, 7.2, and 8.1 percentage points respectively)" was particularly noteworthy, the SBE report said.



Substitute teaching certificates as a percentage of all teachers

The demand for substitute teaching certificates is one indicator of the severity of the teacher shortage. While shortages have been reported elsewhere, the chart below suggests areas with the highest rates of shortage, mapped in red, are found in the central part of the state and other rural areas. Visit OSPI's [Teacher and Substitute Shortages webpage](#) for more information.



Seeking nominations for 2018 WSSDA officers

Every school director in Washington has the chance to shape their association (WSSDA) through officer nomination and elections. We encourage you to talk with your fellow board members about whom to nominate – or encourage them to apply – for a position as vice president or president-elect of WSSDA. Officers are charged with representing all board members in Washington at the state and national levels.

The call for officer candidates is now open. There is no requirement to be nominated in order to apply for office. You can nominate a candidate through May 28 or send in an application through June 11.

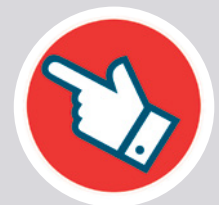
Consider running for office or nominate a fellow board member for one of these two positions:

PRESIDENT-ELECT: open to a member from any area of the state.

VICE PRESIDENT: alternates yearly between members from the east or west sides of the Cascades.

This year it is open to a member from the west side.

[Nomination and application forms](#) are available on our website: wssda.org > about us > elections





LEADERSHIP WSSDA

Everything you loved about school, nothing you didn't

WSSDA's leadership training program is off to a strong start. The first of five sessions began in February and focused on defining leadership and examining its many facets.

Leadership WSSDA saw record enrollment this year, with 22 school directors from around the state comprising the class of 2017. "I can only hope each session is as powerful as this one. I didn't want it to end," said one participant. "I learned so much about how I can become a better leader," said another.

Expert speakers address the class on topics including leading for innovation, using advocacy and influence, and sharing personal leadership journeys. A third class member added, "This made me feel good about my role as a board member and refreshed me to continue."

Class sessions take the group around the state, from touring OSPI and meeting with Superintendent Reykdal to exploring equity in Wenatchee and innovation in Spokane. The program wraps up with graduation in November at WSSDA's Annual Conference in Bellevue.



Leadership WSSDA at their first class in September, titled *Leadership Defined*, working in groups to create visuals showing the qualities that make a great school director.

ELECTIONS

Training offered for prospective school directors

Do you know someone who would make an excellent school director? Elections aren't until November, but the filing period of May 15-19 is just around the corner.

WSSDA offers eight free candidate workshops across the state throughout June to give information about the role of school directors. Great schools need excellent leadership; encourage your community members to consider school board service.

As you reach out to your community, WSSDA helps by sending a flyer and workshop schedule to each school district's administrative office and election offices in late April. The flyer answers common questions of those seeking to serve on a school board.

Workshop dates and locations are listed on the next page. For more information visit wssda.org>Leadership Development>Board Development>For School Board Candidates.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER?



Courtesy of the Oregon School Board Association



Candidate Workshops

Workshops are free and take place from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 1
NEWTECH Skills Center, Spokane

Monday, June 5
WSSDA Conference Center, Olympia

Wednesday, June 7
North Central ESD, Wenatchee

Thursday, June 8
ESD 123, Pasco

Tuesday, June 13
ESD 105, Yakima

Tuesday, June 13
Port Angeles School District, Port Angeles

Wednesday, June 14
Longview School District, Longview

Late June
Northshore area location TBD



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ADDITIONS

Two familiar faces join the State Board of Education

Pasco resident **Ryan Brault** and former WSSDA executive director and K-12 powerhouse **Alan Burke** have been selected to serve on the Washington State Board of Education.

Brault, a former member of the Pasco School Board and graduate of Leadership WSSDA, was selected to fill a vacant position on the State Board of Education. He serves out

the remainder of an existing term until January 2018, when he would be eligible to run for election to retain the seat.



Ryan Brault



Alan Burke

Burke is a former teacher and a superintendent in Yelm, as well as a former deputy superintendent at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. He was appointed by Governor Inslee to fill a vacancy that lasts into January of 2018.

Lead **now** FOR THE **FUTURE**

VISIONARY THEME

The 2017 WSSDA Annual Conference Planning Committee seeks breakout session proposals that will help attendees lead for strong schools and successful students now and into the future.

Challenges abound in public education, and those challenges are being met on a daily basis. Public education works, so please share how you engage students in their learning, create budgets and policies to meet changing requirements, and form partnerships to support your district's needs. WSSDA's Annual Conference is a time to share effective and inspiring ideas and practices.

POWERFUL PRESENTERS

Conference attendees are primarily school directors. We know they prefer to learn from peers, so we encourage proposals from school directors and school board/superintendent teams. Student voice is another powerful way for us to learn about best practices. Consider inviting a student to co-present with you or incorporate and highlight student feedback into your session.

ENGAGING TOPICS

The strands may help spark your ideas on what to submit. Don't be shy about sharing what works! The strands are: Lead with Excellence, Lead to Engage, Lead for Student Success, Lead for Educational Equity and Lead Now for the Future

A [PDF](http://wssda.org/annual-conference-for-presenters) of the strands to share and discuss can be found at wssda.org/annual-conference-for-presenters.

**REGISTRATION
OPENS MAY 18**



PROPOSALS DUE IN JUNE

Start planning now to help set the 2018 K-12 agenda

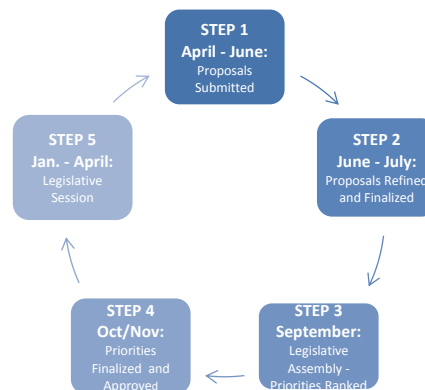
By Jessica Vavrus, Director of Government Relations

Join fellow school directors September 22 and 23 at the Southcenter Doubletree Hotel in SeaTac to help set the agenda for the 2018 Legislative Session. On Friday, September 22, WSSDA will host a pre-assembly program where school directors, superintendents, and other education leaders come together to consider current legislative hot topics and emerging issues.

On Saturday, delegates from each school board will spend the day deliberating and prioritizing WSSDA's legislative positions. Every district is eligible to vote on and prioritize every issue. School board engagement is critical. In 2016, 95 school districts (just over 1/3 of districts in the state) and about 150 school directors participated in this process. Let's get the numbers up for 2017!

How to get involved

The legislative positions of our state's 1,477 elected school directors are a key piece of the education policy discussion in Olympia each session. It is important that positions reflect the majority of districts' priorities. School directors from every school district are encouraged to attend the Legislative Assembly, regardless of whether their board submits a proposal.



There are many ways for boards to participate

- Watch the recorded webinar on the legislative agenda building process.
- Review current positions and recommend new ones.
- Coordinate with other districts to submit joint proposals
- Attend the legislative assembly and help decide the agenda by voting on proposals and setting priorities.



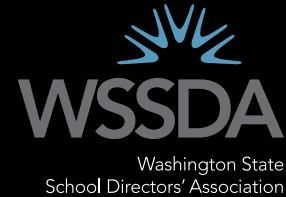
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K-12 AGENDA, CONTINUED FROM PG.8

The platform-building process

The annual cycle begins each April when WSSDA's Legislative Committee begins reviewing current positions for consolidation and revision, and when they solicit recommendations for new and continuing positions.

Sometimes, more than one district has a similar issue they wish to address. It is not uncommon for districts to come together to submit a collective proposal. This year the window for submission is longer to allow extra time for multiple boards to work together.

“ Once again, it's time for us to make sure our voices are heard in the collective process of the legislative assembly. I encourage each of you to attend and share your district's views. Please help us build our platform for the second half of the 2018 biennium. ”

— Geoffery McAnallo, Legislative Committee chair and president of Federal Way Public Schools.

Active participation from every district in this process strengthens the voice and message of all school directors. Every proposal is voted on at the assembly, unless it is withdrawn. WSSDA's Legislative Committee is responsible for reviewing each proposal and making a recommendation to the assembly.

In addition, the committee brings forward recommendations on consolidation and streamlining of positions. All positions considered at the assembly will be published on the web by late August. That way boards have time to consider the positions in light of local priorities.

Following the assembly, the legislative committee brings the top priorities together and recommends a comprehensive platform, subject to final approval by the WSSDA Board of Directors.

What's new this year

You can learn about the process and WSSDA's 2017 legislative positions at an informational webinar Friday, March 31. The session will be recorded and available later.

To be considered as part of the suite of 2018 legislative positions, new and continuing positions must be submitted for review to the legislative committee. This year there will be two submission forms: one for existing Legislative Positions (LPs) that you would like to see continue, and one for newly proposed legislative positions.

Important Dates

Informational webinar March 31, 2017 (12:00 – 1:00 p.m.)
Watch the recorded webinar online to learn more about WSSDA's 2017 Legislative Positions, key issues this Legislative Session, the Legislative Assembly process and how to submit a proposal for consideration.

Position proposal submission process opens March 31, 2017.

Position proposals due June 2, 2017 by 5:00 p.m.

Online registration for assembly and lodging opens June 7, 2017.

9:30 A.M. EVERY WEEKDAY, IT'S WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST

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Vancouver's resource center wins grand prize

Vancouver's Family Community Resource Center model picked up a grand prize Magna Award in March during the annual conference of the National School Boards Association. The honor capped a string of successes for the district. In 2015, the district was honored for its back-to-school readiness festival and in 2014 it picked up an award for its Jump Start kindergarten program.

The Resource Centers (FCRCs) are located in 18 high-poverty schools, and staffed by full-time coordinators. These coordinators connect students and their families with much-needed housing resources, utility assistance, transportation, in-school dental care, in-school mental and behavioral health care, in-school fresh food pantries and weekend food backpacks, and clothing, shoes, hygiene, and cleaning items.

When the district and the community revisited their strategic plan in 2014, the idea came up to expand the FCRCs for the other 18 schools in the district, which still had pockets of poverty and students who needed services.

The Mobile FCRC came out of these discussions, says Tamara Shoup, director of family engagement and Family-Community Resource Centers. The district purchased

a Dodge Ram ProMaster and hired a full-time coordinator, Nicole Loran-Graham.

The van is equipped with clothing and bins for supplies and food. Loran-Graham is in contact with the principals, counselors, and staff of the schools she serves. She serves as a central point for the coordinators, holding pop-up stores for donated clothing and supplies and hauling donated produce to monthly fresh fruits and vegetable pantries at the FCRC schools. Loran-Graham has become a point person for community charities, foundations, and faith-based groups who want to donate time, supplies and food.

The goal of the school and mobile FCRCs: eliminate barriers for students so they can concentrate on school. Homelessness, hunger, lack of medical and mental health services—these can affect children's ability to learn.

"Teachers call principals and tell them a student showed up wearing only one shoe," says Shoup. "They find out the family is living in their car. You can't solve that problem by yourself as a classroom teacher.

Giving schools a point person for children and families to connect with needed services is an important part of the program.

"We can't have our teachers dealing with hunger issues, mobility issues, clothing issues," says school board President Dale Rice. "If they are dealing with that, they are not dealing with educating."

Mobility and shortage of affordable housing is an issue in Vancouver affecting children and their schools. The district tracks mobility as a performance indicator, says Superintendent Stephen Webb. In the schools with the highest percentage of free and reduced price lunches, the district found that with the wraparound support for families and students, mobility decreased by 12 percent.

"We know if students start and finish in our schools, they are more likely to become graduates," says Webb. "This effort is about creating stability for students, recognizing what children have to cope with when families are affected by unemployment, criminal behavior and other problems."

Helping students without helping their families does nothing to stabilize and build community in school neighborhoods.

"Culture trumps strategy every time," says Webb. "When there is that kind of constant churn, it's difficult for a classroom to get the cultural context of a safe and supportive learning environment. Before the FCRCs, the principals and teachers were crisis managers. That gets in the way of focused instruction that helps eliminate achievement gaps."

"People say why are schools in this business? I would say, if not us, then who? We are held accountable regardless of the context students are raised in," says Webb. "If decades of research demonstrated the correlational link between poverty and achievement, why wouldn't we tend to the environmental context? If we can close the opportunity gaps, we can close achievement gaps."

The above story is reprinted with the permission of the American School Board Journal, a publication of the National School Boards Association.

The Vancouver mobile Family-Community Resource Center with coordinator Nicole Loran-Graham and local students.



2017 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

A big cheer for the more than 500 school directors and administrators—including 50-plus students—who made the journey to Olympia to learn and advocate together. Sunday's program provided a thorough briefing and resources for district teams to prepare for their meetings on Monday's "Day on the Hill". Videos and materials from several of the presentations are available on WSSDA's [Legislative Conference webpage](#).



School board members and students met with legislators on Monday's Day on the Hill.



An enthusiastic crowd gathered for the 2017 Legislative Conference. Governor Inslee and OSPI Superintendent Chris Reykdal were among the speakers at Sunday's event.

Legislative Update

Stay connected to what's happening on the Hill by checking WSSDA's weekly [legislative updates](#) and joining each Friday's weekly legislative update webinar. The webinars are recorded and available for viewing. In addition, WSSDA has launched a Web page to help board members navigate the many moving parts with this session's education funding proposals.

The 2017 105-day regular session is scheduled to end April 23. WSSDA's governmental relations team will keep you apprised as to what's happening leading up to Sine Die, and possibly beyond, if there is a special session.



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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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April

- 8** 2nd Meeting of the Resolutions Committee
- 15** Interscholastic Activities Committee
- 17** DA6 Regional Meeting, Battle Ground
- 18** DA3 Regional Meeting, Clover Park
- 21-22** WSSDA Board of Directors Meeting

May

- 1** DA8 Regional Meeting, Yakima
- 2** DA7 Regional Meeting, Brewster
- 3** DA11 Regional Meeting, Pasco
- 4** DA10 Regional Meeting, Freeman
- 6** WSSDA Board of Directors Meeting
- 10** DA5 Regional Meeting, Rainier
- 11** DA9 Regional Meeting, Central Valley
- 20** DA4 Regional Meeting, Bremerton

June

- 16-17** WSSDA Board of Directors Meeting



For the most updated calendar, visit wssda.org