



# direct

Washington State School Directors' Association

JULY-AUGUST 2016

## ESSA in full swing



**W**ashington is in the midst of the transition from 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) to the 'Every Student Succeeds' Act (ESSA). The first year that ESSA will be in effect is 2017-18. Between now and then the ESSA transition team, led by OSPI, will be busy seeking stakeholder input and putting an implementation plan in place.

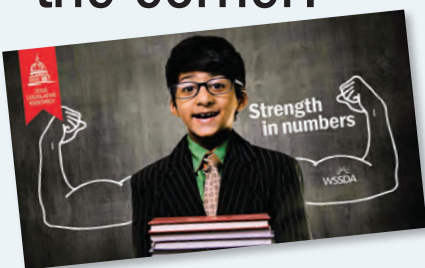
The stakeholder input phase of the transition is now in full swing. OSPI just concluded a series of nine statewide ESSA information and comment public meetings. In addition, OSPI has created no fewer than 11 separate committees that are developing recommendations to be sent to the ESSA Consolidated Plan Team (CPT). The CPT will develop a plan that will be sent to Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn and Governor Jay Inslee in November.

The established timeline is set so the state plan can be delivered to the U.S. Department of Education for its comments by March.

ESSA, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY 2016

## Just around the corner!



The 2017 Legislative Session is near and planning is underway for the 2016 WSSDA Legislative Assembly, September 23 - 24, at the new Davenport Grand Hotel in Spokane. Now is the time to register and join the 81 districts already attending. ▶

ASSEMBLY, CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

### 2016 STUDENT VOICES

## Imagining tomorrow

Below is the voice of our student representative on the Eatonville School Board for 2016, Aria Beaupre. Her dedication and passion for our schools is evident in her willingness to serve as representative.

**T**he children are the leaders and inventors of tomorrow. The "traffic" at eight and two thirty is not just a mild inconvenience, but proof that the town of Eatonville is investing in the future. The children of Eatonville will grow up, go into the work force, develop new ideas and help all aspects of our community thrive with innovative changes that only a new generation could implement.

As a student at Eatonville High School, I am constantly thinking about how I want to impact the world. I am not so vain as to think that I will cure cancer, however if I try, my failures may narrow the scope for the person that finally comes along and accomplishes something that important. Growing up in a world ravaged



by global warming, depletion of resources and rampant disease, my generation is confronted with the fact that we need to be the ones to fix it. If we ignore these problems, and continue to misuse our planet it will no longer be habitable.

One of the main jobs of a high school is to introduce students to possible future careers. It is necessary for our students to know what problems exist in the world, and that there

IMAGINING, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Inside this Issue

**GARCHOW:** WSSDA's new executive director shares his values in "This I Believe".

**NATION:** Speaking out against discrimination

**Candidates for WSSDA elections announced!**



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Tim Garchow

# “This I believe”

In 1951, acclaimed journalist Edward R. Murrow launched a radio series titled, “This I Believe”. The series quickly gained popularity and each evening, Americans gathered around their radios to hear personal essays depicting the guiding principles by which people lived.

Some of these essays were written by well-known individuals such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Robinson, Helen Keller, and Harry Truman. Others were written by business leaders, scientists, housewives, teachers, cab drivers, and others. Anyone who was willing to outline their beliefs in 500 words or less had a chance to influence others and add to the collective understanding of our society’s values. In 1954, a compilation of these essays was published as a book and that year it was second only to the Bible in total sales nationwide.

As a means of introducing myself as your new Executive Director, I would like to share with you my “This I Believe” essay.

*I believe in relationships. We have a relationship with everyone with whom we come into contact from the person we buy a cup of coffee from in the morning, to our spouses and our children. These relationships evolve with each interaction that we experience. Have you ever been a “regular” at a restaurant? Have you sat down and been asked, “Would you like the usual?” It makes us feel good to go to a place where people know our names, our likes, and our dislikes. When we experience a negative interaction, we think differently about returning to that place. In our public schools, students, staff, and families are the customers. Each of them need to feel that warmth and comfort that comes with being a “regular.”*

*I believe in always assuming good intent. Far too often in life we get wrapped up in the daily grind and fail to give others the benefit of the doubt. Two boys were playing out in the yard and the younger one ran into the kitchen with a bleeding scratch on his cheek. The boys’ mother asked what happened and the younger boy explained that the older one had scratched him while playing. As the mother began to scold the older boy, the younger one stopped her and said, “He didn’t mean to do it, it was an accident.” We often jump to conclusions without getting all of the information. In education it is critical that we always assume good intent. Whether we are interacting with children or*

*adults, we set the example for our students and they will learn to handle life’s challenges by watching us.*

*I believe that what we do in our school districts each day matters. From the boardroom to the classroom, the decisions that we make and the interactions that we have with others are the bedrock upon which we build the future of our society. The challenges that education faces these days will not be solved overnight. It will be the little things that we do each day – the customer service, the relationships, and the assumption of good intent, that will make the difference in the long run.*

What do you believe in?

I would love to hear your version of a “This I Believe” essay. I invite you to write down what it is that you hold dear in the guiding principles of your work and email it to me at [t.garchow@wssda.org](mailto:t.garchow@wssda.org). I look forward to learning more about you and your district as your new executive director.



**“ We have a relationship with everyone with whom we come into contact – from the person we buy a cup of coffee from in the morning, to our spouses and our children. ”**



PRESIDENT  
Chris Nation

## Getting to know your WSSDA consultants:

### UNA MCALINDEN



Una McAlinden is a catalyst for consensus-based, action-oriented visioning and planning. Una served ten years as Executive Director of

ArtsEd Washington, a statewide non-profit. Taking a systems approach, she developed programs that supported school leaders and engaged the community with local education systems. Having created a nationally recognized principals' leadership program, she is regularly called on to present about systems-change and community engagement at both state and national levels. A former attorney, Una brings innate abilities to guide groups through focused conversations, trusting their collective wisdom to solve the challenges they face with creative, feasible, sustainable strategies.

### LORRI EDWARDS



Lorri Edwards is co-director of an educational consultant firm that partners with organizations to impact student learning through implementation of research

based initiatives. Lorri has teaching and educational administration degrees and many years of experience in adult education as an instructional coach, university program director and adjunct faculty. She has spent many years as an elementary school teacher in both public and private school settings. Lorri has served on several boards and advisory committees with a special interest in continuous quality improvement. Her tenure as a school director on the Kettle Falls School Board since 2009 adds to her rich background of experiences.

Meet more of WSSDA's consultants in the next issue of *Direct*.

# Making a difference

Over this last week, as I thought about what I wanted to discuss in this column, I considered many educational topics and issues. After watching the news the last few days, I feel compelled to discuss a growing dilemma that is troubling our communities, our country and our world.

Incidents of violence against specific ethnic groups and retaliation towards authority have reached a point that demands our full attention. Continued racism, bigotry and ignorance has to stop; not only in our communities, but within our schools as well. As school directors, our mission is to provide a safe, secure and meaningful education to ALL children, no matter where they come from, what they look like or what language they speak. We must learn to honor, embrace, and, most importantly, respect each of them as unique human beings.

School directors must show strong leadership in developing policies and systems which no longer allow for any type of discrimination. One way that these situations will end is through education and knowledge. Professional development in the areas of cultural knowledge, awareness and sensitivity are a must for every board member, staff member and student.

Over the last year, WSSDA has worked diligently towards developing a training program for directors and districts on equity awareness. Your WSSDA Board feels deeply about this and have made it a priority, not only in our actions, but in building a system of support that will aid school directors in understanding how they can make change within their own district.

I urge each of you to engage in conversations with your fellow board members and administration considering the following questions:

- Are we doing everything we can to make sure that we are embracing the culture and diverse backgrounds of every student?
- Do we have systems in place that promote unity and cultural understanding with all of our staff, including the board?
- How do our policies address the needs of students?  
Are they supportive or do they create barriers?

Invite others into the conversation and use these questions as a starting point to stimulate deeper and more meaningful dialogue among your board and the community that you serve.

These are difficult and uncomfortable conversations. As community leaders we can use this opportunity to invite a range of voices to bravely bring these challenges forward and work through them together. If we don't, who will?

Together we can and will make a difference!





**IMAGINING**, CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

are actually scientists and other professionals actively trying to fix them. People need to know that an occupation or career exists to strive for it, and this is one of the down-falls of a rural school district like Eatonville. City schools can easily introduce their students to a variety of issues and careers due to the number of external resources in their backyard, but districts like ours need to more actively strive to do so. This is why *Imagine Tomorrow* is so important for our district.

*Imagine Tomorrow* is a large sustainable living science fair in Pullman Washington at Washington State University. It is a three day event in which children from all over the Pacific Northwest come and present year-long culminating projects to judges. These projects range from rain gardens to electrical powered rockets. All projects are striving to make the world a better place, and almost all improve their immediate community in some way. *Imagine Tomorrow* not only allows students to think critically about current and future problems, as they work on their projects, but also allows them to talk to the judges who are real professionals in their fields.

This exposure is infectious. It leaves the students with the information and the drive to pursue a career in making our world more sustainable. This experience is invaluable for Eatonville High School students.

The student team this year, Andrea Litzenberger, Janelle Thirtyacre, Madeline Frey, Erin Long, Ryley Wade and myself, as well as our advisor Kristi Simpson, appreciate the gift of going to *Imagine Tomorrow*. "It is a fun way to tackle . . . (and) think about these world problems" — Madeline Frey.

*Imagine Tomorrow* is not cheap—relative to other club budgets—if we do it right. We need the gas to get us to Pullman, and, though the entire *Imagine Tomorrow* event is free, thanks to generous sponsors, we need money for supplies to create projects that we are actually passionate about, and can make a real positive impact on our community. In the past, our budget has only gotten us to Pullman, and we have had zilch for the project. This has left us having to settle for easier, less immersive projects year after year. Next year, our goal is to raise funds to have a project that could actually help our community, and engage students beyond the club in the science of sustainability.

Involvement in the *Sustainable Living Club* at Eatonville High School, and especially *Imagine Tomorrow*, has changed my career path to epidemiology, something that can help our society survive these trying times, and I know these experiences have done the same for many other students at our school. Eatonville School District is a fantastic district that develops and encourages intelligent, hardworking, students, and *Imagine Tomorrow* allows them see the possibilities that would help the world the most.

It is critical that the *Sustainable Living Club* has enough money to continue this great program in the years to come, because it benefits our students who could really make a difference.



This story and many more can be found at [www.ourkidswa.org](http://www.ourkidswa.org). Be part of Our Kids, Our Future's first anniversary. Send stories of your school district's successes to [M.Wilson@wssda.org](mailto:M.Wilson@wssda.org).

**ESSA**, CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

WSSDA members seeking information about ESSA can go to the OSPI [website](#). The website has a sign-up function that will provide periodic updates via email.

WSSDA has members on eight of the 11 sub committees and two representatives on the CPT. They are: Patty Wood (Kelso) on Effective Educators; Mary Fertakis (Tukwila) on Early Childhood; Marnie Maraldo (Issaquah and WSSDA vice-president) on Students with Disabilities; Aurora Flores (Manson) on English Learners; Claire Wilson (Federal Way) on Parent and Community Engagement; Dave Larson (Tukwila) and Andrea Cobb (Tacoma) on Accountability System; Chris Nation (Marysville and WSSDA president) on Report Card and the CPT; Jessica Vavrus (Government Relations) on Student Assessment System; and Andrea Cobb (Tacoma) and Tim Garchow (Executive Director) on Accountability System and the CPT.

All of these WSSDA committee members are available for discussion on these matters. Please contact the WSSDA office for individual email addresses.

**Join us for the  
NEW WSSDA  
2016 LAW  
CONFERENCE**

**Space is limited.  
Pre-registration is required.**



**REGISTER  
TODAY** Visit [www.wssda.org/events/annualconference/registration](http://www.wssda.org/events/annualconference/registration)



# Get ready to be inspired!

The WSSDA Annual Conference in November is the biggest educational gathering for school directors in Washington, and it will be jam-packed with learning opportunities for school directors. This means more classes on key topics, more like-minded people to discuss your issues and successes with and new perspectives.

Your Annual Conference Planning Committee has selected an exciting lineup of breakout sessions to capture the interests of fellow board members. Sessions include new voices, as well as highly rated breakouts from the past.

The high-caliber keynote speakers will expand your perspective and inspire new levels of leadership. Speakers Sarah Kay, Jeff Utecht, and Nathan Gibbs-Bowling will also hold breakout sessions where you can dive deeper into their lines of thinking. For possibly the first time ever, all three keynote speakers are also educators!

Extended four-to-five-hour pre-conference workshops allow more time for deeper learning on your topic of choice: coherent governance, law, or grounding concepts for new board members.

Be sure that your whole board-superintendent team attends. You will have the rare opportunity to spend time learning together, discussing session content and building your team. Treat this as an open public meeting, giving notice of your intent to gather, so you are within the OPMA rules.

You'll be able to view the lineup of options in early September. Inspiration awaits!

## BOARDS OF DISTINCTION

# Narrowing the focus

All school boards – smallest to largest – are encouraged to apply for a Board of Distinction Award. A grand total of four quick essays and your choice of data or evidence make applying easier than ever.

The questions on the application rotate through the standards and benchmarks of the Washington School Board Standards over time – eight years, to be exact. The schedule is online, so you can look ahead.

Some boards fold the standards into their work plans over the course of the year, or discuss a different standard each board meeting. These research-based, best practices in school board governance then become embedded in how they operate. They rarely create new things for boards to do, but rather offer a more focused framework for doing them.

Narrowing the focus of the application means you can give more attention to each governance practice, while still keeping your attention on the needs of your district.

BOD, CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

# New equity tool for school boards

School boards review, revise and adopt policy throughout the school year. How do school boards ensure that policies, programs and practices don't hold unintentional barriers for staff, community and students?

At WSSDA, we have been researching that question over the past year to find a tool for boards to use to identify possible barriers. With permission from Portland Public Schools, WSSDA recommends five guiding questions for school boards to use as a guide for reviewing policies, programs and practices.

Begin applying an 'equity lens' to your

work with policy by asking the first of the five questions shown on the bookmark below. By September 1, 2016, each district will receive a set of six of these bookmarks for use by your board and superintendent.

**EQUITY LENS\***

**Objective:**  
By utilizing an equity lens, a school board aims to (a) provide a common vocabulary and protocol for evaluating policies, programs, practices and decisions for equity and (b) produce policies, programs, practices which result in more equitable outcomes.

**Procedure:**  
For any policy, program, practice or decision, consider the following five questions:

- 1**  
Who are the under-represented groups (federal subgroups) affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? And what are the potential impacts on these groups?
- 2**  
Does this policy, program, practice or decision worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?
- 3**  
How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? Can you validate your assessments in (1) and (2)?
- 4**  
What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)
- 5**  
How will you (a) mitigate the negative impacts and (b) address the barriers identified above?

**EQUITY**

\*Courtesy of Portland Public Schools

(Federal Sub-groups include American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino of any race(s), white, two or more races, limited English Language, Special Education, and Low Income.)



## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

# A year-round process

**S**chool directors play a pivotal role in educating and supporting state legislators on the issues that matter most in K-12 education. The relationships built and nurtured now will be critical when the excitement of the legislative session begins.



Legislators need trusted school leaders to provide input on the implications of legislative proposals. Between now and November, 98 seats in the House and half of the 49 Senate seats are up for election. So, don't wait; now is the time for school directors to be out and about in your communities meeting with and educating current and prospective legislators! See WSSDA's Next Steps for Advocacy in the Interim document [Legislative Updates Web page](#) for more ideas.

Eight legislators comprise the Education Funding Task Force (created in 2016 by SB 6195) and districts are providing data to OSPI to inform the work of the EFTF. Many state associations will be submitting input to the task force with the recommendations they are required to submit to the Legislature in January.

Though three of the task force members are former school directors (Rep. Kristine Lytton; Rep. Chad Magendanz; and Rep. Norma Smith), it is important for school directors to be engaged in providing thoughtful local insights into possible solutions. WSSDA will be submitting their input to the Task Force at the end of July. The input will be grounded in existing WSSDA Permanent and Standing Legislative Positions on these issues.

## UPDATED POLICY

# Student discipline

**W**SSDA has new interim updates for policies on student discipline. They cover student conduct, reasonable sanctions, classroom management and corrective action. The updates were issued to keep policy aligned with state law, which changed this past session with the passage of House Bill 1541.

The bill addresses racial disproportionality in exclusionary discipline statewide. The new law went into effect in June. It incorporated recommendations from the legislature's bipartisan Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee.

The recommendations addressed a vast array of issues: discipline, educator cultural competence, ELL instruction, ELL accountability, disaggregated student data and teacher recruitment and retention. It was an enormous bill with an equally enormous fiscal note - \$13M over five years - and its chances of passage looked slim. But pass it did, funded at just \$1M for the first year.

OSPI announced in June it would

undertake emergency rule-making. Our usual practice is to wait to update WSSDA models until WACs are adopted. However, we proceeded with this update because emergency rules should closely track the statutory language and it is unlikely that rule-making will conclude in time for districts to adopt updated policies and procedures prior to the start of school.

The new law requires districts to adopt policies and procedures consistent with the [WSSDA] model policy by the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. It also requires districts to annually disseminate discipline policies and procedures to students, families, and the community. Districts must periodically review and update their discipline rules, policies and procedures in consultation with staff, students, families and the community.

More information on these changes is available to subscribers of WSSDA's *Policy and Legal News*. Check with your superintendent to find out if your district is a subscriber.





Representative Sam Hunt was elected to the House of Representatives in 2000 to represent the 22nd legislative district. He served on the North Thurston School Board from 1995-2003. Prior to the Legislature, Rep Hunt served as a public school teacher and in a variety of state and national policy director roles. Representative Hunt will be seeking the 22nd legislative district senate seat this fall.

## Sam Hunt

22nd District

**How did your experience as a school board member prepare you for the state legislature, especially in terms of education?**

My first two years in the House I also served on the school board. I found out that state budget assumptions did not always fit into district budget assumptions. That's largely the result of having 295 distinctly different school districts in Washington. My background as a classroom teacher, staff member of the US Senate Appropriations Committee, and school board member provided me with expertise and examples I could share with other members. Serving on the board provided me with lots of personal contacts who provided expertise and information on education issues.

**The 2017 session will be critical for districts as the legislature takes action to fully finance K-12 education. What do you see as the most important issue in this conversation for school directors to have voice in, especially with funding *McCleary* ?**

School directors need to encourage their legislators to be bold and vote for the necessary revenues to meet the *McCleary* obligation. We cannot rely on cuts to other areas of state government nor can we fall back on the old excuse of "let's cut fraud, waste, and abuse." Cutting a few million dollars here and a few million dollars there will not generate the \$3-5 billion needed for *McCleary*. We have enacted the education reforms, now the responsible thing is to fund them. In short, it's about the money, and school directors, teachers, and administrators need to make that clear and voice their support for legislators to make bold and difficult choices.

**What suggestions do you have for school directors to build relationships with legislators (and candidates) this season?**

It's important to engage legislators proactively. Waiting until the legislative session is too late. Meet with your legislators in-district during the interim, invite them into your schools, and explain your needs and why you support the need to address *McCleary*. In the 22nd district, local legislators meet regularly for breakfast with local superintendents, some board members, and other administrators to discuss education issues.



Senator Linda Evans Parlette was elected to represent the 12th Legislative District in the House of Representatives in 1996 and to the Senate in 2000. She served on the Lake Chelan School Board from 1981-1986 and on the North Central Educational Service District Board from 1993-1996. This past spring she announced she will not be seeking re-election to the Senate.

## Linda Evans Parlette

12th District

**How did your experience as a school board member prepare you for the state legislature, especially in terms of education?**

Serving on the school board taught me the mechanics of policy making and strengthened my communication and negotiation skills. It also exposed me to the variety of views about education, and the idea that those views typically depend on which "hat" is being worn – school director, administrator, teacher, classified staff or parent. All of this has helped me not only as a legislator but specifically in my role as chair of the Senate Majority Coalition Caucus and during 20 years as a budget-committee member.

**The 2017 session will be critical for districts as the legislature takes action to fully finance K-12 education. What do you see as the most important issue in this conversation for school directors to have voice in, especially with funding *McCleary* ?**

The *McCleary* ruling is really about two things: how much money school directors have to allocate, and how that money is generated. In 2017 the Legislature needs to finish its work adjusting how the money for K-12 is generated. SB 6195 was adopted this year to set the stage for these reforms, including gathering budget information from districts and analyzing how state dollars are spent compared to local money. School districts should realize the Legislature is not going to have a lot of leeway on this, if it is to meet the standards set by the court. They need to be prepared for their districts to see a change in the amount and use of locally generated dollars.

**What suggestions do you have for school directors to build relationships with legislators (and candidates) this season?**

First, make sure the relationships are "real." I learned as a school-board member that your ability to be effective depends a great deal on your ability to establish trust, and to understand where the other person or group is coming from. It takes time to do that, so the second thing is to start working on those relationships sooner instead of later. The "interim" period between legislative sessions is a great time to get to know your legislator or the person who will become your legislator. Don't wait until January.

# Shop talk

WSSDA last conducted its biannual membership survey in 2014 and the time has come again to find out what you think of WSSDA, K-12 education and anything else you want us to know.

We conduct this easy survey online to help us understand what is important to you, how well we are doing our job and how we can improve our services.

About a quarter of school directors in the state responded in 2014, more than in the prior survey, but we are hoping to have an even higher response rate this time around.

Feedback from past surveys has helped us plan our priorities and make specific updates to WSSDA products and services including:

• **Changing the WSSDA Boards of Distinction program** to include student achievement data and clarify the difference between Boards of Distinction and Boards of the Year.

• **Becoming more active with social media** to digitally connect and engage our large number of members who also have a Facebook profile.

• **Developing research summaries** on items of interest through the new Research Blast.

• **Building awareness** about WSSDA products and services.

• **Incorporating member feedback** in WSSDA communication materials.

To continue to understand what is valuable and needed in 2017, we will conduct a similar survey next month and invite every WSSDA member to participate.

The survey will be available to complete online from September 19 through October 3. Direct links to the survey will be emailed to all members so please keep an eye on your inbox.

Responses will be kept strictly confidential and you will not be asked for any personally identifiable information. Email is our primary way of communicating. If we do not have a current email address for you, please send updates to Antonio Gonzalez at T.Gonzalez@wssda.org.



Marnie Maraldo



Aurora Flores



Susan Weed

## WSSDA Elections 2016

The WSSDA Nominating Committee has interviewed the officer candidates and recommends all three as leaders of this organization. Marnie Maraldo of Issaquah, your current vice president, is running unopposed for president-elect. Aurora Flores of Manson and Susan Weed of Pullman will be vying for the position of vice president.

Officer elections will be open for just two weeks this year, and much closer to the annual conference when all the other board and committee positions are filled. So, there is plenty of time to “meet” the candidates – either online through the elections web pages, or at the Legislative Assembly in September.

The web pages offer a new twist. Instead of reading a candidate speech on camera, the candidates addressed two topics, which we hope you will find more engaging:

- *What is your view of the purpose of public education?*
- *Share your view of successes and challenges of equity and access facing education today.*

Marnie, Aurora and Susan have also been invited to give a short candidate speech at Legislative Assembly, where they will also participate in a Q&A session. Please join us there to meet the candidates!

Online elections run from September 30 through October 14.

Now is the time to consider running for a board or committee position. Nominations and elections occur during the Director Area Caucus Meetings at the annual conference in November. If interested, don't be shy. Ask a fellow board member or friend to nominate you for that role.

Below are all of the positions up for election this year. Your new president will also be trying to fill positions on a number of appointed committees and task forces. Please let us know you are available by submitting a simple interest form, available online year-round, or on paper at the annual conference.

More specific information on committees and task forces can be found in the “About Us” section of wssda.org and in the WSSDA Bylaws.

### Board and committee positions subject to election

#### Director Area One

*School districts within Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties*

- Board of Directors – one for 3-year term
- Legislative Committee – one for 2-year term
- Nominating Committee – one for 2-year term
- Resolutions Committee – one for 2-year term
- Interscholastic Activities Committee – one for 2-year term

#### Director Area Two

*School districts within King County and Bainbridge Island School*

- Board of Directors – one for 3-year term
- Legislative Committee – two for 2-year term
- Nominating Committee – one for 2-year term



# The most dangerous city? Hey, media, these kids have a lesson for you!



When local and national news media began spotlighting a research study naming Tukwila as the most dangerous city in the U.S. last month, something seemed fishy to students at Showalter Middle School. The statistic did not match their sense of reality, and that's when teacher Debbie Aldous recognized a perfect real-world math lesson in the making.

"A major focus of seventh-grade math is Proportional Reasoning," Aldous said, "and that was the problem with the data—it's skewed because it isn't proportional. That's what the students were innately feeling but were not able to articulate."

Using a teaching method called a Socratic Seminar, over the course of a week, Aldous had her students read several news articles and reports and look at Tukwila demographic information from Tukwila City Hall. Students then came together as a group in a student-led, circular discussion to ask and respond to open-ended questions.

The students themselves developed an essential question for the forum that guided

their work: "How can data/numbers impact the way people think?" The answer, they discovered, is quite a bit.

The primary issue with the report is that it uses a formula dividing the number of crimes committed within a city by the number of residents, the students found out. For Tukwila, that is significantly skewed because the residential population is under 19,000; however, the city's major retail, entertainment, and athletic centers draw a population of 200,000 (or more on holiday weekends) during business hours. Put in another perspective, that's like taking the crime rate of Tacoma and dividing it by the population of Moses Lake.

The students' more rational calculation showed that if you divide the crime rate by the actual number of people in the city when the crime occurs, it becomes a much less alarming statistic.

But that's not where the conversation ended. Students wanted to better understand how to be informed consumers of data and statistics in the future, too.

For instance, student Martell Stokes brought up the fact that the study was conducted by Safewise, a home-security comparison company. "If they say our city is really dangerous, does that mean they're trying to make us buy more alarm systems?" he asked.

Others talked about the difference between violent crime and property/petty crime, and how that's an important distinguishing safety factor in a city with the region's largest shopping mall.

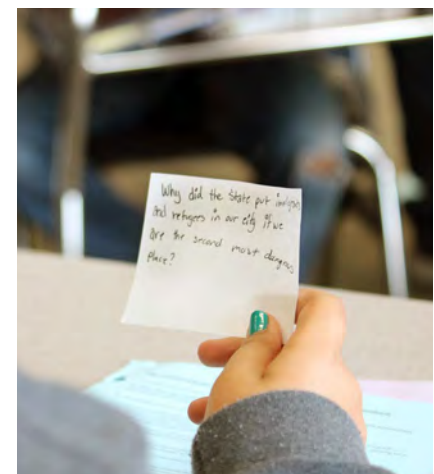
Overall, they agreed that it's their duty to dig deeper when statistics do not seem to align with their reality or sense of proportionality.

"I mean, in Tukwila, it's not like that," said student Bontu Abdullahi. "When I moved here, people treated me like I was one of their family members, even though they didn't know me. They'll just take you in. I don't feel like it's dangerous."

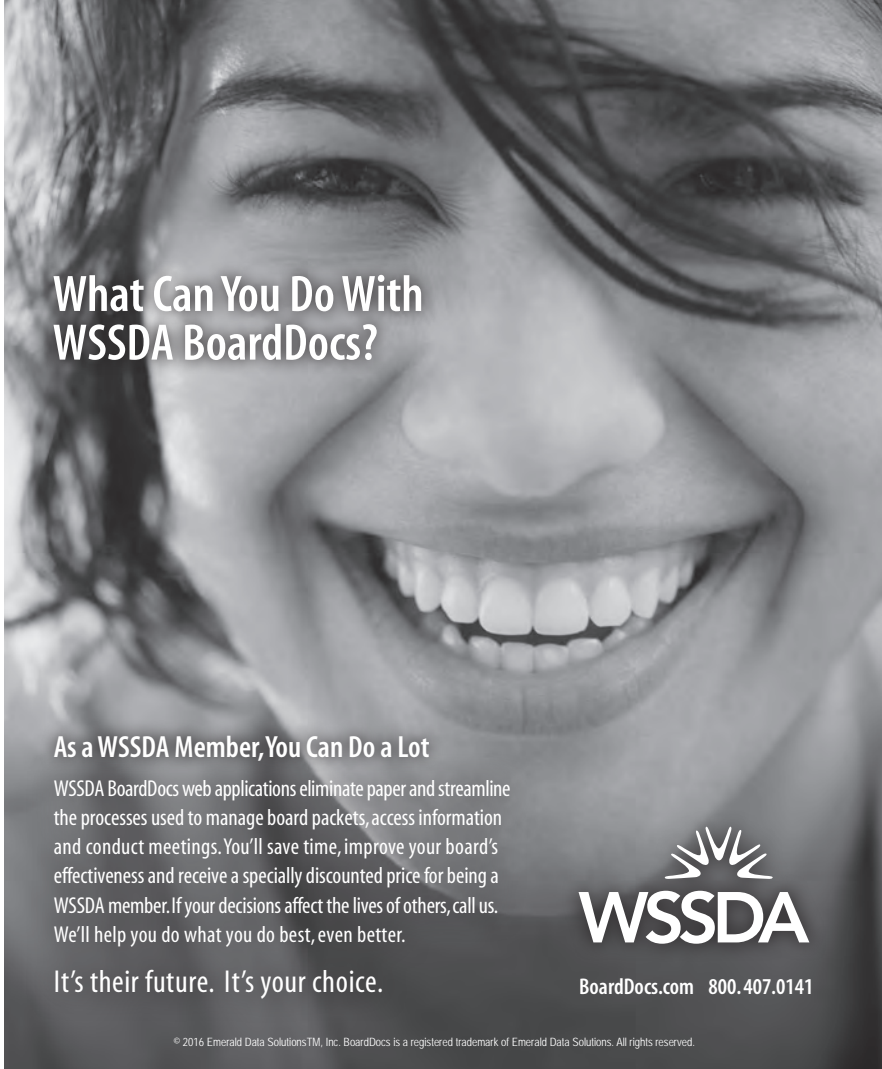
For Aldous, the Socratic Seminar was a success. One of her main goals is always to help students think about the very nature of information, and she's sure that they will now be more inclined to "question what shows up in their social media feeds." And, it's not just a good lesson for middle-schoolers, she added, eyeing the news reports.



This story and many more can be found at [www.ourkidswa.org](http://www.ourkidswa.org). Send stories of your school district's successes to [M.Wilson@wssda.org](mailto:M.Wilson@wssda.org).



**In the Socratic Seminar, students had a rich dialogue by asking and answering open-ended questions about documents they had read ahead of time. They then wrote their questions on notes and passed them to their peers seated in an inner circle for discussion.**



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## ELECTIONS, CONTINUED FROM PG.8

- Resolutions Committee – one for 2-year term
- Interscholastic Activities Committee – one for 2-year term

### Director Area Three

*School districts within Pierce County*

- Legislative Committee – one for 2-year term
- Nominating Committee – one for 2-year term
- Interscholastic Activities Committee – one for 2-year term

### Director Area Four

*School districts within Kitsap County (except Bainbridge) Jefferson and Clallam counties, and North Mason School District in Mason County*

- Legislative Committee – one for 2-year term
- Resolutions Committee – one for 2-year term

### Director Area Five

*School districts within Grays Harbor, Lewis and Thurston counties, Mason County (except North Mason); and Raymond, South Bend, Willapa Valley and North River school districts in Pacific County*

- Legislative Committee – one for 2-year term
- Nominating Committee – one for 2-year term
- Interscholastic Activities Committee – one for 2-year term

### Director Area Six

*School districts within Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties; Klickitat County (except Bickleton and Goldendale); and Naselle-Grays River Valley and Ocean Beach school districts in Pacific County*

- Legislative Committee – one for 2-year term
- Resolutions Committee – one for 2-year term

### Director Area Seven

*School districts within Chelan, Douglas, Grant (except Royal and Wauke) and Okanogan counties*

- Legislative Committee – one for 2-year term
- Nominating Committee – one for 2-year term
- Interscholastic Activities Committee – one for 2-year term

### Director Area Eight

*School districts within Kittitas and Yakima counties, Royal and Wauke school districts in Grant County, and Bickleton and Goldendale school districts in Klickitat County*

- Board of Directors – one for 3-year term
- Legislative Committee – one for 2-year term
- Resolutions Committee – one for 2-year term

### Director Area Nine

*School districts within Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties; and the following school districts within Spokane County: Central Valley, Deer Park, East Valley, Mead, Nine Mile Falls, Orchard Prairie,*

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## ELECTIONS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



*Riverside, Spokane and West Valley*

- Board of Directors – one for 3-year term
- Legislative Committee – one for 2-year term
- Nominating Committee – one for 2-year term
- Interscholastic Activities Committee – one for 2-year term

**Director Area Ten**

School districts within Lincoln, Adams (except Othello) and Whitman counties; Clarkston in Asotin County; and the following school districts within Spokane County: Great Northern, Medical Lake, Freeman, Cheney and Liberty

- Legislative Committee – one for 2-year term
- Nominating Committee – one for 1-year unexpired term
- Resolutions Committee – one for 2-year term

**Director Area Eleven**

School districts within Asotin (except Clarkston), Columbia, Garfield, Walla Walla, Franklin and Benton counties, and Othello School District in Adams County

- Legislative Committee – one for 2-year term
- Nominating Committee – one for 2-year term

**BOD**, CONTINUED FROM PG.5

You have already done the work of leading your school district with excellence. Now you can apply for a Board of Distinction award and reap benefits, such as:

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- *Generating common language around your accomplishments.*
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1. Download the application.
2. Describe the work you've done on the Washington School Board Standards' benchmarks 1b, 2c, and 3b, and on progress towards closing the opportunity gap.
3. Attach supporting data or artifacts.
4. Submit the application by Sept. 21.

to have your voice heard in setting the course for WSSDA's 2017 legislative positions and priorities!

**ATTEND TO HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**

Each spring WSSDA's Legislative Committee asks school boards to submit position proposals - either new or continuing positions - to form the basis of the association's legislative positions. Proposals are presented for a vote at the assembly in September.

All school directors are encouraged to attend the Legislative Assembly, regardless of whether your board submitted a proposal. Proposals that pass the assembly become WSSDA legislative positions. These positions and our Standing Legislative Positions are ranked in order of importance by districts present at the assembly.

The resulting ranked list becomes WSSDA's legislative agenda for the upcoming session. The Legislative Assembly cycle begins each April to form WSSDA's Legislative Priorities for the next year's legislative session. The highest ranked positions become WSSDA's legislative priorities for 2017. Check out the results of the 2015 Assembly on WSSDA's Priorities and Positions Web page.

**PRE-ASSEMBLY DAY: SPECIAL EVENTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

On Friday the 23rd, the annual innovative schools tour will take participants to two Spokane Public Schools sites to learn about STEM innovation at the high school level. They will visit the North Central Institute for Science and Technology and observe the hopes and challenges at Bemiss Elementary, one of the many schools in the state that was eligible for, but did not receive a K-3 class-size reduction grant from OSPI.

The tour is open to the first 40 registrants. At press time, the tour is fully booked. If you'd like to be placed on the wait list, please contact Tricia Kimbrough at WSSDA, [t.kimbrough@wssda.org](mailto:t.kimbrough@wssda.org).

The "New-to-Assembly" Luncheon is back by popular demand. Legislative Committee Chair, Tony Ghazel, members of the Legislative Committee, and new WSSDA Governmental Relations

Director, Jessica Vavrus, will host this year's luncheon for newbies and veterans who want a refresher on the Assembly process and procedures. The luncheon is also limited to the first 40 registrants, with a \$25.00 charge to cover lunch.

Starting at 1:00pm, the Pre-Assembly Program will feature a welcome from local legislators and presentations that will shed light on key issues for the 2017 session. Participants will hear from state experts on hot topic issues including K-12 education funding issues, specifically compensation and local levy reform, and K-12 capital funding in order to inform district decision making on Saturday.

Topping off Friday afternoon will be "Town Hall" meetings with the top candidates for two statewide offices that are important to school directors: Commissioner of Public Lands and Superintendent of Public Instruction. Friday will wrap up with a reception at 6:30pm with hearty appetizers and a no-host bar. Participants can network with each other and mingle with the candidates.

**THE ASSEMBLY: SATURDAY'S MAIN EVENT**

Active participation from every district in this process strengthens WSSDA's voice and message. At the assembly, every district is eligible to vote on every issue. Assembly meetings begin bright and early Saturday morning with Director Area Caucuses at 7:30am to discuss local issues and assembly procedures. The assembly will begin at 9:00am and the day will be full of debate and voting. Our goal is to be as efficient and streamlined as possible with the process however participants should make travel arrangements for later Saturday afternoon to assure your district is represented for the entirety of the assembly process.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS! FUTURE ASSEMBLY DATES AND LOCATIONS**

2017 Seattle, Southcenter Doubletree Hotel Sept. 22 & 23

2018 Location TBD  
Late September





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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E-Mail	mail@wssda.org

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### September

- 22** Board of Directors meeting  
Davenport grande Hotel,  
Spokane
- 23-24** Legislative Assembly  
Davenport Grand Hotel,  
Spokane

### November

- 16-19** Annual Conference  
Convention Center  
and Doubletree Hotel,  
Spokane
- 16** Board of Directors  
Meeting
- 19** Board of Directors  
Meeting



For the most updated calendar, visit [WSSDA.org](http://WSSDA.org)

### Fall Regional Meetings

- Sept. 28** **Kelso** Director Area 6
- Sept. 29** **Auburn** Director Area 2
- Oct. 3** **Franklin Pierce** Director Area 3
- Oct. 4** **Colville** Director Area 9
- Oct. 5** **LaCrosse** Director Area 10
- Oct. 6** **Bellingham** Director Area 1
- Oct. 12** **Centralia** Director Area 5
- Oct. 13** **Richland** Director Area 11
- Oct. 19** **Ephrata** Director Area 7
- Oct. 20** **Naches Valley** Director Area 8
- Oct. 29** **Cape Flattery** Director Area 4