



Officer elections go online in 2012

We will hold elections for WSSDA officer positions of president-elect and vice president electronically this year. Association members voted in this new change to enable all Washington school directors to have a voice in selecting our leadership.

Elections for open positions on the association's Board of Directors and committees will continue to take place during caucus sessions at the WSSDA Annual Conference in November.

The new process begins, as usual, with the call for candidates. This process is now open. You may submit a nomination for a board member you believe would be an excellent association leader, or submit a candidate application for yourself. There are several critical due dates (see page 2). Forms are available at wssda.org, or watch for the call for candidates brochure in your mailbox.

The WSSDA Nominating Committee interviews candidates and selects the slate of candidates for the ballots. Those who disagree with the proposed slate of candidates will have an opportunity to present "nominations from the floor." Details for that process are



forthcoming. All candidates will have the opportunity to submit a statement, photo, and videotaped speech for posting on wssda.org.

Voting will be done electronically. Each WSSDA member will receive email communications with detailed instructions for accessing the Internet-based ballot. Members for whom WSSDA does not have an email address will be mailed a letter with similar information and will still be expected to access a computer to vote online. An option to request a paper ballot for this one election will be included in the letter.

We have posted more detailed information on the new elections process on the WSSDA website.

2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAPS UP

No cuts to K-12 education

When the gavels finally fell early on April 11 to close the 2012 legislative session, the supplemental operating budget was a big winner for public schools. There was no cut in funding.

The Legislature agreed on a \$31.1 billion supplemental budget with a \$320 million reserve. The budget, also known as 3ESHB 2127, passed the Senate 44-2. The House voted 64-34.

Senate Democrats were the first to propose a budget that had no cuts to K-12 or higher education, and the other budgets were forced to follow suit. In the end, the supplemental budget includes some additional funding for enacted bills and pet programs.

The supplemental budget has two provisos that affect school funding. The first is the formation of a working group to review the current-law funding formula for transportation. The group is to make recommendations by September 30, 2012.

The second proviso relates to the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP). In the 2011 budget, TBIP was to be restructured to target more funding at Level 1 and less at

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Nominate or Apply for a WSSDA Officer Position

Your WSSDA Nominating Committee is now seeking school directors as candidates for the WSSDA officer positions for 2013. This will include:

- **President-elect.** This is a member from either side of the state. He or she becomes WSSDA President for 2014.
- **Vice president.** This position alternates between directors from the east and west sides of the Cascades. This year it is open to a member from the east side.

These are two important opportunities to assert your leadership beyond the local level. I encourage you to consider running for one of them. You can also nominate a fellow director who you believe would do an excellent job of representing school board members throughout Washington.

Statistically, school directors are a force with which to be reckoned, a fact recognized by the legislature and other elected officials. We must make the most of that by being active participants in the governance, not only of our local districts, but of our own association.

We have the capacity and responsibility to make a positive difference at a statewide level. To do this, we need to identify and elect effective leadership.

Please go to wssda.org for detailed information on the responsibilities of these positions. The site also has nomination and application forms. Watch for this information in the "WSSDA Seeks Officer Candidates for 2013" brochure. If you have not already received this brochure, you will receive one soon.

The committee will accept nominations until May 22. Candidate applications will be accepted until June 8.

DEBORAH HEART is WSSDA Past President and Nominating Committee Chair

VOTING TIMELINE



APRIL 2–JUNE 8
WSSDA officer candidates recruited

MAY 22
Deadline for nomination forms for officer candidates

JUNE 8
Deadline for candidate applications

JULY 14
Candidates interviewed and candidate speeches videotaped

BY JULY 31
Nominated candidates announced. Two-week period for accepting nominations from the "floor" opens.

AUGUST–SEPTEMBER
Campaign period. Candidate statements posted on WSSDA Web site.

AUGUST 27
Balloting begins. Voting instructions emailed to all WA board directors. They will be mailed through the postal service, if no email address is available.

SEPTEMBER 28
Voting closes for WSSDA officers

OCTOBER 5–19
Run-off elections, if needed. These would be conducted via an emailed link to an online ballot.

NOVEMBER 15
New officers announced at the WSSDA Annual Conference

It's time for a new position on Charter Schools



Dr. Jonelle Adams

It is time for school directors to adopt a new position on the charter school movement. The association's current position dates back to 2004 and the debate

has evolved considerably since that time.

A variety of legislative and citizen-led efforts over the past 15 years have sought to explicitly permit charter schools in Washington state. Districts now have the ability to partner with outside organizations to run schools, but the pressure to do more is mounting. Supporters are calling for an initiative directly to voters, a legislative referendum for a public vote, or a new law passed by the legislature.

Several organizations are leading and financing this current charter school movement. These include Washington Stand for Children, the League of Education Voters, Democrats for Education Reform, the Center for Reinventing Public Education, Excellent Schools Now, the Partnership for Learning, The Boeing Company, Microsoft, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Both President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan have given unprecedented attention to charter schools, characterizing them as "one of the most profound changes in education." (Duncan 2009)

I believe School Directors should be taking the lead role in shaping the future of public education in our state by demanding more complete research-based evidence. This must clearly answer the following questions:

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Spokane, Washington is the home of this year's WSSDA Annual Conference.

Get ready for the 2012 Annual Conference

Plans are underway to make the WSSDA Annual Conference this November an outstanding event for each attendee. Consider expanding your participation by submitting a session proposal or recommending student entertainment from your district. For more information on the items below, please go to www.wssda.org/conference.

Call for session proposals

We are now seeking proposals for conference breakout sessions. The deadline is May 11, so don't delay. If you have specific experience or knowledge that may benefit school directors, please consider submitting a proposal.

The planning committee is looking for sessions with practical information that can be replicated in other districts, programs with a history of success, innovative information or hot topics. New strands for this year's conference include "Online and Blended Learning" and "Partnering for Success."

The full list of strands and proposal submission forms are accessible through the web link, above.

Registration and housing

On-line registrations and housing are scheduled to open, beginning in mid-May.

As in past years, housing is available at low conference rates once we receive your registration. It always pays to get housing requests in early to ensure you can get a good room.

Keynote speakers

Three, top-rated, speakers are scheduled. Conference evaluations from the past few years have regularly called for the return of both Dr. Yong Zhao and Jamie Vollmer.

You will have the opportunity this year to hear each of these education experts in person. Dr. Tony Wagner will also be on the agenda. Tony will join us via Skype. You can expect to hear more about presenters as we get nearer to the conference.

Dr. Yong Zhao is Presidential Chair and Associate Dean for Global Education, College of Education at the University of Oregon, and author of *Catching Up or Leading the Way: American Education in the Age of Globalization*.

Jamie Vollmer, President, Vollmer Inc., is author of *Schools Cannot Do It Alone*, one of the top ten education books of 2010 according to the American School Board Journal.

Tony Wagner is Co-Director of the Change Leadership Group, Harvard Graduate School of Education. His latest book is *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need – And What We Can Do About It*.

Student entertainment and participation

Students are the focus of every board member's work and are welcome participants at conference.

Help us showcase their talents and your excellent programs at general sessions by submitting a recommendation for student entertainers to C.Lauderdale@wssda.org. Please include the group name, size, school, district and a CD or video link showing the kids performing.

Groups generally have from 10-15 minutes to perform. The audience includes school directors and superintendents from around the state.

What is considered a “conflict of interest” under state law?



People often speak of someone having a “conflict of interest,” but what does that term mean when it comes to the narrow restrictions of state law, Chapter 42.23 RCW?

The law provides that a municipal officer may not have a beneficial interest in a contract made under his or her supervision. Let’s break down the meaning.

Under this law, *municipal officer* is a board member and/or the superintendent, and *beneficial interest* is a financial interest such as receiving payment under the contract. A *contract* includes any contract, sale, lease or purchase.

For example, a director who owns a printing business could not legally approve a contract between the district and that business. Also, if the director’s spouse, rather than the director, owned the business, approval of the contract would still be a conflict of interest since in Washington state the income of one spouse belongs to the other as well.

Because the law focuses only on contracts, a municipal officer’s actions in other areas are not considered to be a conflict of interest under state law.

For example, a director may approve payment for a school trip that his/her child attends. While the child may benefit from the trip, such approval does not involve a contract and would then not be considered a conflict of interest. Because the board is the ultimate authority for the district, all contracts would be under its supervision, not the director’s.

Although a director has a number of factors to consider in determining how to act, understanding the narrow focus of the conflict of interest law can assist with those decisions.

STACIA HOLLAR is the Director of Policy and Legal Services

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Level 3. It included an incentive to exit the program. In the final budget, the 2011 scaling concept was eliminated, and the Joint Select Education Funding Task Force created in HB 2824 is directed to review the issue.

On the capital side of the equation, public schools will have an opportunity to apply for \$40 million in energy efficiency grants. Unfortunately, funding for the Urgent Repair program was cut in the last couple of days of session. A number of skills centers across the state will receive funding and three school districts — Seattle, Orcas and Grand Coulee — will receive funding for school construction projects.

Big policy changes

Of all the bills passed this session, two will have the most significant impact on school districts.

The first, ESSB 5895, continues implementation of the teacher/principal evaluation projects started after the 2010 session. The bill limits school districts to three “frameworks” selected by OSPI. It sets in place a four-tier rating system and requires that at least three of the eight evaluation criteria include student growth data. In addition, starting in the 2015-16 school year, evaluations may be used in reductions in force or assignment decisions. This would be subject to bargaining.

Passed in the wee hours of the 2nd special session, ESSB 5940 requires school districts to offer a high deductible health savings account and a health benefits plan. The plan would have premiums comparable to the one offered at the state level, about 15 percent.

In addition districts must show progress in reducing the gap between premiums for single employees and families. The intent is to have family

K-12 BUDGET ITEMS

- \$5.7 million to implement the teacher/principal evaluation program (SB 5895).
- \$2.0 million for the urban turnaround schools initiative. This will fund two persistently low-achieving schools in the Seattle Public Schools district.
- \$1.5 million for three collaborative projects. These also focus on persistently low-achieving schools (HB 2799).
- \$1.0 million in additional funding to implement the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, or WaKIDS (HB 2586). This is for the 2012-13 school year.
- \$300,000 for one-time start-up grants for aerospace assembler programs at 12 high schools;
- \$250,000 to create an open source curriculum library at OSPI (HB 2337);
- \$250,000 one-time funding for Project Lead the Way, a STEM-related program for up to 10 high school programs;
- \$200,000 one-time funding for online instruction for at-risk students;
- \$150,000 one-time funding for two aerospace and manufacturing skills centers;
- \$128,000 to help foster children prepare for higher education (HB 2254);
- \$100,000 to backfill federal funding for AP/IB exam fees for low-income students;
- \$100,000 for supervisor support of CTE student organizations; and
- \$25,000 to the Professional Educator Standards Board to develop educator interpreter standards.

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Questions I'd ask politicians about education

- 1 Both Republican candidates and President Obama are enamored of charter schools — that is, schools that are privately managed and deregulated. Are you aware that studies consistently show that charter schools don't get better results than regular public schools? Are you aware that studies show that, like any deregulated sector, some charter schools get high test scores, many more get low scores, but most are no different from regular public schools? Do you recognize the danger in handing public schools and public monies over to private entities with weak oversight? Didn't we learn some lessons from the stock collapse of 2008 about the risk of deregulation?
- 2 Both Republican candidates and President Obama are enamored of merit pay for teachers based on test scores. Are you aware that merit pay has been tried in the schools again and again since the 1920s and it has never worked? Are you aware of the exhaustive study of merit pay in the Nashville schools, conducted by the National Center for Performance Incentives at Vanderbilt, which found that a bonus of \$15,000 per teacher for higher test scores made no difference?
- 3 Are you aware that Milwaukee has had vouchers for low-income students since 1990, and now state scores in Wisconsin show that low-income students in voucher schools get no better test scores than low-income students in the Milwaukee public schools? Are you aware that the federal test (the National Assessment of Educational Progress) shows that—after 21 years of vouchers in Milwaukee—black students in the Milwaukee public schools score on par with black students in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana?
- 4 Does it concern you that cyber charters and virtual academies make millions for their sponsors yet get terrible results for their students?
- 5 Are you concerned that charters will skim off the best-performing students and weaken our nation's public education system?
- 6 Are you aware that there is a large body

of research by testing experts warning that it is wrong to judge teacher quality by student test scores? Are you aware that these measures are considered inaccurate and unstable, that a teacher may be labeled effective one year, then ineffective the next one? Are you aware that these measures may be strongly influenced by the composition of a teacher's classroom, over which she or he has no control? Do you think there is a long line of excellent teachers waiting to replace those who are (in many cases, wrongly) fired?

- 7 Although elected officials like to complain about our standing on international tests, did you know that students in the United States have never done well on those tests? Did you know that when the first international test was given in the mid-1960s, the United States came in 12th out of 12? Did you know that over the past half-century, our students have typically scored no better than average and often in the bottom quartile on international tests? Have you ever wondered how our nation developed the world's most successful economy when we scored so poorly over the decades on those tests?
- 8 Did you know that American schools where less than 10% of the students were poor scored above those of Finland, Japan and Korea in the last international assessment? Did you know that American schools where 25% of the students were poor scored the same as the international leaders Finland, Japan and Korea? Did you know that the U.S. is #1 among advanced nations in child poverty? Did you know that more than 20% of our children live in poverty and that this is far greater than in the nations to which we compare ourselves?
- 9 Did you know that family income is the single most reliable predictor of student test scores? Did you know that every testing program — the SAT, the ACT, the NAEP, state tests and international tests — shows the same tight correlation between family income and test scores? Affluence helps — children in affluent homes have educated



“Do you recognize the danger in handing public schools and public monies over to private entities with weak oversight?”

parents, more books in the home, more vocabulary spoken around them, better medical care, more access to travel and libraries, more economic security — as compared to students who live in poverty, who are more likely to have poor medical care, poor nutrition, uneducated parents, more instability in their lives. Do you think these things matter?

- 10 Are you concerned that closing schools in low-income neighborhoods will further weaken fragile communities?
- 11 Are you worried that annual firings of teachers will cause demoralization and loss of prestige for teachers? Any ideas about who will replace those fired because they taught too many low-scoring students?
- 12 Why is it that politicians don't pay attention to research and studies?
- 13 Do you know of any high-performing nation in the world that got that way by privatizing public schools, closing those with low test scores, and firing teachers? The answer: none.

DIANE RAVITCH is a research professor at New York University. Previously, she was a U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education. She was a keynote speaker at the 2011 WSSDA Annual Conference. This article originally appeared on www.neimanwatchdog.com and is reprinted with permission of the author.

Success of elections depend upon you

You have many responsibilities as school board directors. One of the most important is to actively select our association officers.

In the past, directors had to attend the caucus at the annual conference to vote. This meant that some could not participate. In these days of tight budgets, the problem was only going to get worse. To address that concern, membership chose to give all the state's 1,477 school directors the opportunity to vote for officers through an on-line ballot.

I urge all of you to take advantage of

this new approach. Without your vote, our organization's decisions cannot truly reflect our membership. Your voice matters.

Voter apathy does make an organization weaker. Our State Board of Education was once comprised solely of individuals elected by WSSDA members. Over time, fewer members cast their vote. The result was a reconstituted board in which we now have a minority influence.

Don't just vote, be an educated voter. We are creating a number of resources

to acquaint you with the candidates. Voting will be more convenient this year than ever before and you should have good information to go online to cast your ballot for president-elect and vice president. Until then, please consider whether you, or one of your peers, should run for a position.

We are the voice for over one million public school students. It is up to us to make sure our board reflects that very important responsibility.

DEBORAH HEART is WSSDA Past President and Nominating Committee Chair

“Charter schools have been described both as America’s answer to failing schools and a grave threat to public education.”

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1. How do charter schools work best?
2. How do they strengthen or harm traditional public schools? This needs to cover funding, governance, logistics, accountability and performance.
3. What is the best state process to evaluate whether local charter schools improve achievement?
4. What is the process for closing underperforming charter schools prior to their renewal date? This includes the timespan before renewing a school's charter and defining the local school district role.
5. What lessons could we apply from the 41 states who have implemented charter schools?

Your WSSDA Board of Directors is reviewing both sides of the charter schools research, as well as public opinion polls and language from proposed 2012 charter school legislation. I encourage you to do the same. We have posted a special charter school research link on our WSSDA website.

Charter schools have been described both as America's answer to failing schools and a grave threat to public education. The issue is driving many education discussions. We cannot afford to sit by and let uninformed, knee jerk thinking determine our course.

DR. JONELLE ADAMS is the Executive Director

Clover Park School District honored by Magna Awards

Clover Park School District, located in Lakewood, Washington, received Honorable Mention in the 2012 Magna Awards for districts with enrollment between 5,000 and 20,000.

The Magna Awards, established by *American School Board Journal*, has awarded examples in excellence of school district leadership for the past 18 years. This year, 300 programs were nominated from school districts across the United States.

In order to address budgetary losses, the Clover Park School Board worked to establish and develop sustainable partnerships throughout the community and among organizations and civic groups that would ultimately benefit the students.

A few examples of the partnerships and how they have benefited the Clover Park School District:

- A partnership with The Boys and Girls Club resulted in a school construction bond campaign and the sharing of facilities and resources with Lakeview Hope Academy.
- A partnership with Clover Park Technical College resulted in a collaborative educational program and the exchanging of facilities and properties.
- The Greater Lakes Mental Health partnership provides mental health services for families across the district.
- The school district and city partnership for parks and recreation and early learning programs, which focus on fitness, nutrition, and healthy youth, resulted in students having more recreational opportunities and more direct support in after-school programs.

Magna Award winners will be honored April 21 at *American School Board Journal's* annual Best Practices for School Leaders luncheon, held in conjunction with the National School Boards Association's annual conference in Boston.

Welcome new staff members



GRETCHEN BORCK joined WSSDA April 2 as our new administrative assistant for government relations. Gretchen most recently was the executive assistant for a county elected official, has been a legislative assistant to a Washington state senator and staff to the Senate Republican Caucus. She was also the Eastern Washington outreach director for U.S. Senator Slade Gorton. Gretchen has vast experience with a member-

ship organization, serving as the director of issues for the Washington Association of Wheat Growers for 14 years. She is very familiar with many of our smaller communities.



ROBERT MARTIN joined WSSDA March 1 as our new IT Manager. He has more than 22 years of technical experience. During his career, Robert worked in both customer service and technical support. He has been a server administrator, IT manager, business system analyst, developer and business owner. Robert offers a customer-

centered approach to technology. Another of Robert's passions is integrating systems, making the "whole" greater than the sum of its parts. Look forward to many enhanced products and services as Robert gets into full swing at WSSDA.



GINI NILES joined WSSDA April 2 as our new communications specialist. She has more than 10 years of professional experience in graphic design, with an extensive background in developing training systems, educational materials, and information design. Prior to joining WSSDA, Gini worked for a wide variety of clients in the healthcare industry including several Fortune 500 companies. Her primary design goal is to create

clear, meaningful, easy-to-use design solutions. Gini has two children in the Olympia School District and volunteers for many PTO-related activities.



MICHAEL WILSON joined WSSDA March 1 as our new communications and marketing director. He was communication director for the Employment Security Department for 13 years. Prior to that, he was press secretary for Gov. Madeleine Kunin of Vermont. He also served as her state economist and deputy commissioner of labor. He began work as a newspaper reporter. Michael graduated from Central Valley

High School in Veradale and has a bachelor's degree in politics from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's degree in economics from Oxford University, England.

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premiums be no higher than three times that for a single employee. School districts and their providers are required to report a significant amount of data annually to the Office of the Insurance Commissioner.

Under the new law, all employees who enroll for health benefits will be required to pay a premium, subject to bargaining. The district must make sure that employees who choose richer plans pay higher premiums. School districts also must make progress on promoting health care innovations, cost savings, and reduced administrative costs.

Look for more information on implementation of these bills in the near future.

MARIE SULLIVAN is the Director of Governmental Relations. Marie stayed up into the wee hours after the session wrapped to report this story.

ArtsEd Washington and AWSP to host Principals' Peer Forum

Principals are invited to attend a Principal's Peer Forum on Thursday, May 24, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Tacoma Arts Museum.

The forum, hosted by ArtsEd Washington and the Association of Washington School Principals is a great opportunity for principals to participate in an energetic, interactive and collaborative session on arts leadership.

Participants will learn how to develop their individual School Improvement Plan and about connecting arts learning to the new evaluation frameworks for teachers and principals.

The keynote speaker is Erin Jones, former Assistant Superintendent of Student Achievement at OSPI. Planned activities include a lively panel discussion, participation in peer workgroups, and networking opportunities.

The forum is free to attend for ArtsEd Washington Super School members and \$60 for all other attendees. The cost to attend includes free admission to the Tacoma Art Museum once the forum concludes.

Visit www.artsedwashington.org for more information.



WSSDA Direct is published monthly by the Washington State School Directors' Association to provide information of interest to school directors and the education community. The views expressed in opinion articles appearing in WSSDA Direct are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent WSSDA policies or positions. If you have a disability and need this publication in an alternate format, please contact the WSSDA Communications Department.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- WSSDA Board of Directors
April 27
- State Board of Education
May 8
- Enhancing Leadership
May 12
- Legislative Proposals Due
May 18
- WSSDA Legislative Committee
June 15
- WSSDA Legislative Committee
June 16
- WASA Summer Conference
June 24

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

- WASHINGTON STATE PTA CONVENTION
Seatac: May 3 - 6
- WSSDA ENHANCING LEADERSHIP SERIES
Olympia
May 12: Evaluation and Improvement
July 14: Highly Capable Board/Superintendent Teams
Sept. 15: Policy Governance
- WSSDA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Seatac: Sept. 21 - 22
- WSSDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Spokane: Nov. 14 - 17
- WSSDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Spokane: November 14-17