



School district size/cost study findings approved

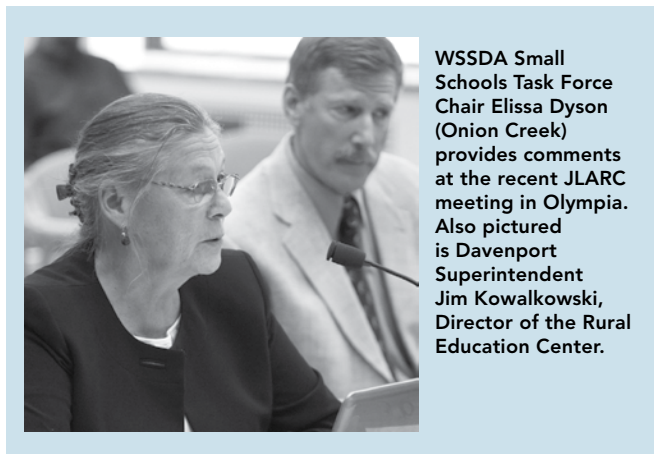
Legislative report finds 'limited potential' for savings

Opponents of forced consolidation of school districts are taking heart from the results of a recently approved legislative study on the relationship between school district enrollment size and operating costs.

The study, conducted by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, concludes there are valid reasons why some districts in the state are well above the statewide average for per-pupil expenditures. It also emphasizes there is no bonanza of savings to be had by trying to force those higher-cost districts closer to the average.

The JLARC review has been associated with recent debates over forced consolidation of school districts. During the closing days of this year's legislative session, lawmakers inserted a budget proviso establishing a commission to develop recommendations for the "reorganization and reduction of Washington school districts." WSSDA and other organizations successfully argued for a veto of the provision, noting that the JLARC study was already in progress.

The study identified 85 of the state's 295 districts with per-pupil expenditures above 25 percent of the statewide average. While those 85 are small districts (defined as those with less than 1,000 students), the report pointed out that not all small districts are in the high-expenditure category. It also emphasized that higher costs are the result of legally required state funding formulas designed to ensure small schools have adequate teaching staff.



WSSDA Small Schools Task Force Chair Elissa Dyson (Onion Creek) provides comments at the recent JLARC meeting in Olympia. Also pictured is Davenport Superintendent Jim Kowalkowski, Director of the Rural Education Center.

Overall, the study says, school districts with high expenditures per pupil offer "limited potential" for statewide savings. If those 85 districts were no more than 25 percent of the statewide average, the report said, the difference would equal 0.5 percent of total school district expenditures in the 2007-08 school year.

In comments to the JLARC members, WSSDA Small Schools Task Force Chair Elissa Dyson (Onion Creek) noted that she has visited 68 of the 85 districts identified in the report.

"What I'd like you to know about these districts is that they exist in all regions of the state, east and west of the mountains, from the Columbia to the Canadian border,

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WSSDA to receive \$50,000 grant for online board self-assessment project

The Washington State School Directors' Association has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Stuart Foundation to develop and pilot an online self-assessment for school boards based on the Washington School Board Standards. The grant is part of the Foundation's strategy to improve K-12 education in Washington by investing in education leadership at all levels, including governance. This project is part of WSSDA's continuing efforts to deliver research-based services that support school directors' efforts to improve student learning. The assessment will be a scientifically validated board survey designed to strengthen board performance that enhances teaching and learning. It will also help guide WSSDA's curriculum and leadership development services.

The assessment will be available online, free-of-charge, to all school boards in the state. For more information on this project or to discuss opportunities to participate in development of the instrument, please contact Phil Gore, Director of WSSDA Leadership Development Services, at P.Gore@wssda.org or 800.562.8927.

For more information about the Stuart Foundation, visit www.stuartfoundation.org.

The Washington School Board Standards are available on the WSSDA website at wssda.org under "Board Training & Resources."

JLARC

continued from cover

that they are, for the most part, geographically isolated, that they are well supported by their communities, and that they do an excellent job of educating their students," Dyson said.

In written comments submitted for the report, WSSDA noted that forced consolidations would likely consume any potential savings because of additional transportation and administrative costs, and would also harm community support and student learning.

WSSDA reminded state policymakers that decisions about district consolidation should be made locally and not mandated from Olympia—and that those decisions should be based on the best interests of the affected students and not judged on finances alone.

The JLARC report can be found on the Legislature's website at www.leg.wa.gov/JLARC. Copies of comments from Dyson and WSSDA are available at wssda.org under "What's New."

OSPI to offer workshops on tribal sovereignty curriculum

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has announced a series of training workshops to be held next month on a new Tribal sovereignty curriculum that will be available to school districts around the state.

Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State is an online curriculum developed through the OSPI Indian Education/Title I Office. The curriculum, pilot tested for the past two years in 14 schools in the state, will offer a menu of Tribal sovereignty information, short lessons and entire units for every Washington State History and Contemporary World Problems unit recommended by OSPI.

Under HB 1495, approved in 2005, school districts in Washington are encouraged to "incorporate curricula about the history, culture and government of the nearest federally recognized Indian tribe or tribes, so that students learn about the unique heritage and experience of their closest neighbors."

The new web-based Tribal sovereignty curriculum is endorsed by OSPI and Washington's federally recognized tribes.

Seven workshops will be offered in August.

- Aug. 2 – Little Creek Hotel Resort/Casino, Shelton
- Aug. 3 – Suquamish Tribe's Kiana Lodge, Poulsbo
- Aug. 4 – Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Community Center, Sequim
- Aug. 9 – Muckleshoot Tribal School, Auburn
- Aug. 11 – Tulalip Tribes Administration Building, Tulalip
- Aug. 16 – Northern Quest Resort, Airway Heights
- Aug. 18 – Heritage University, Toppenish

There is no charge to attend, but participation is limited to 40 people per workshop and advance registration is required.

For more information and a registration form, visit www.k12.wa.us/IndianEd or contact Joan Banker at 360.725.6160 or joan.banker@k12.wa.us.

WSSDA to support appeal of Seattle textbook ruling

Concerned over the potential impact to local school board authority, the WSSDA Board of Directors has voted to support an appeal of a court decision challenging the Seattle School Board's selection of math textbooks.

At its June meeting, the board gave the go-ahead for WSSDA to file an amicus (friend of the court) brief in support of the Seattle district's appeal of a decision by King County Superior Court Judge Julie Spector. Last February, Spector ordered the Seattle board to reconsider its adoption of the "Discovering" series of high school math textbooks, ruling that the board's action was "arbitrary and capricious."

The district has appealed the ruling, contending the board made a reasonable decision based on a comprehensive review of various instructional materials by two advisory committees. The appeal will also argue that the trial court improperly substituted its judgment for that of the Seattle board regarding which

textbooks best serve the needs of the district's students.

In approving the filing of an amicus brief, the WSSDA board emphasized that it is not taking a position on the "Discovering" materials. Rather, WSSDA's brief will focus on the authority of a school board to determine district curriculum and local control.

Other items from the June meeting:

- The board approved the contract for incoming WSSDA Executive Director Jonelle Adams. Adams will officially begin her position with WSSDA July 16.
- The board approved the formation of a WSSDA Urban/Suburban Schools Task Force. The composition of the task force and its specific tasks will be determined at an upcoming board meeting.
- The board heard a presentation on efforts to develop and implement curricula on Tribal history in Washington's public schools as envisioned by HB 1495. The presentation was made by Ferndale School Director Bernie Thomas, a member of the Lummi Indian

Business Council, and Suzi Wright, representing the Tulalip Tribe. Thomas noted that OSPI will launch a web-based Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum later this summer (see related article page 2).



Bernie Thomas discusses Tribal history curricula at the WSSDA board meeting.

- The board began a review of a series of proposed revisions to the WSSDA Bylaws and Policies. Deliberations will continue at upcoming meetings; any requested changes to the bylaws must be approved by the WSSDA Delegate Assembly.

Proposals sought for WSSDA permanent positions

Each year school boards are invited to submit their ideas for WSSDA's permanent positions. Delineating WSSDA's beliefs, positions and values as viewed by its members, these official positions are advisory to school boards as well as to other organizations and stakeholders.

School directors around the state have been mailed a WSSDA Resolution Proposal Form, which must be completed and returned no later than Aug. 16. Submittal forms and instructions are also posted online at wssda.org.

Proposed positions will be considered for adoption at the WSSDA Delegate Assembly, which will be held Nov. 19 in conjunction with the association's Annual Conference in Spokane.

The call for submittal of permanent position proposals is coordinated by the WSSDA Resolutions Committee. For more information, contact WSSDA Policy and Legal Services Director Marilee Scarbrough at 360.493.9231 or M.Scarbrough@wssda.org.

Online learning policy due Aug. 31

A reminder: State law requires school boards to adopt a policy and procedure regarding online courses and programs. The deadline for adoption is Aug. 31, 2010, and the policy and procedure shall take effect beginning with the 2010–11 school year. Detailed information and a sample policy and procedure are available at wssda.org > Policy & Legal > Model Policies > Online learning policy required (in the right sidebar).



Register now!

WSSDA 2010

Legislative Assembly

September 24 - 25
Hilton Hotel, Vancouver, Washington

School directors will approve and prioritize WSSDA's legislative positions at the association's 2010 Legislative Assembly set for Sept. 24-25 at the Hilton Hotel in Vancouver, Washington. The Legislative Assembly is part of the WSSDA's annual process for establishing legislative priorities that will become the focus of its advocacy efforts in the coming year. Key issues to be addressed include:

- **Basic Education funding** – The 2009 Legislature enacted an ambitious commitment to K-12 finance reform. The 2010 Legislature began the implementation of a new finance system, including required funding enhancements in the 2011-13 biennium. What are school directors' funding priorities? What will be the sources of revenue?
- **Local control** – The long-held tradition honoring local control of schools continues to be challenged by the potential implementation of Core 24 requirements, by the potential adoption of national common core standards, and by the intensifying conversations about forced school district consolidation.
- **Unfunded mandates** – While the issue of unfunded education mandates has finally caught fire in the Legislature, little relief has been provided. As budgets tighten, the reduction of unfunded mandates becomes even more important.

Registration brochures for WSSDA's fall Legislative Assembly have been mailed. If you prefer online registration, visit wssda.org/assembly.

The Changing Face of School Finance

WSSDA workshop, August 12

With implementation of the Prototypical School Model in the next biennial budget, the new language and structure of school finance is expected to make funding less mysterious, school board choices more transparent and outcomes more accountable to the public.

The workshop takes place Aug. 12, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., at the John A. Cherberg Building on the Capitol Campus in Olympia. Together with experts from OSPI, WSSDA trainers will provide an information-packed afternoon outlining the current school funding process, explaining the new accountability structure, informing you about expected changes to education funding through 2018, and helping you frame your own community discussions.

Register online at wssda.org/workshops. Questions? Contact Connie Lauderdale (360.252.3009 or C.Lauderdale@wssda.org).

WSSDA seeks Federal Relations Network members



Members of the 2010 FRN delegation during a meeting on Capitol Hill last February.

WSSDA is seeking members for its Federal Relations Network, a component of a nationwide network of school directors under the auspices of the National School Boards Association. Washington state currently has 44 FRN members, who maintain

strong lines of communication with their members of Congress on education issues. Mailings from NSBA and WSSDA help them stay current on federal education activities.

Each year in late January or early February, most FRN members travel to Washington, D.C., where they receive a thorough briefing from NSBA experts and meet with their legislators to discuss K-12 issues. Costs for the trip are borne by each member's local school district. The only other formal gathering for WSSDA's FRN is a planning session at the November Annual Conference, to be held this year in Spokane.

Members are appointed by WSSDA's president-elect in the fall prior to the Annual Conference. If you are interested, an informational meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, September 24, during the WSSDA Legislative Assembly in Vancouver, Washington. For further information, contact Sheila Chard (S.Chard@wssda.org or 360.252.3011).

Regional Meetings: Fall schedule announced



Attendees hear a presentation at WSSDA's Spring 2010 Regional Meeting in Cashmere

The schedule for WSSDA's fall Regional Meetings has been set. These meetings are small, close-to-home gatherings—your opportunity to dialogue, network and share information with school directors from around your region, and hear presentations on current issues from education leaders.

Individual meeting agendas will be posted later this summer. Among other topics, you can count on an update on legislative initiatives and a brief update from WSSDA officers and staff on association activities.

Fall Regional Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, Sept. 28, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Anacortes
Wednesday, Sept. 29, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Carnation
Thursday, Sept. 30, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Wilbur
Saturday, Oct. 2, 10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. ~ Quilcene
Monday, Oct. 4, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Walla Walla
Tuesday, Oct. 5, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Brewster
Tuesday, Oct. 5, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Yakima
Wednesday, Oct. 6, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Hoquiam
Wednesday, Oct. 6, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Ephrata
Thursday, Oct. 7 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Lakewood
Wednesday, Oct. 13, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Brush Prairie
Wednesday, Oct. 13, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Republic
Thursday, Oct. 14, 6:00-8:30 p.m. ~ Spokane Valley

If you or your district are interested in hosting a future WSSDA Regional Meeting, please contact your WSSDA Board of Directors Representative or Soky Chan (360.252.3012) in the WSSDA office.

NEWS BRIEFS

Washington and 30 other states are joining together to compete for federal dollars to create a series of new national academic tests. Washington submitted the application on behalf of the group, which calls itself the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. The consortium hopes to receive a Race to the Top assessment grant from the U.S. Department of Education to develop a student assessment system aligned to the Common Core academic standards released last month. The grant, which lasts four years, is worth as much as \$160 million.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education has once again awarded accreditation to Central Washington University's Center for Teaching and Learning for professional education. CWU's College of Education, the ninth largest in the nation, earned continuing accreditation

with all standards met and national recognition for the quality of its teacher, school counseling, school psychology and principal programs. CWU, which has been accredited by NCATE since 1954, reports that it supplies more teachers for Washington's workforce than any other university in the Northwest. The university's 31 teacher-preparation programs, endorsements, and specializations produced 727 graduates in fall 2007 through summer 2008.

The Washington State Association for Multicultural Education's fall conference will be held Oct. 30 at North Seattle Community College. Keynote speaker Latoya Peterson will focus on social media as the new medium for a generation raised on Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. For more information, visit www.wsame.org.

Show choirs sought for Annual Conference

Calling all Glee Clubs! Student vocal and instrumental groups have always been a highlight of the WSSDA Annual Conference. If your district has a high energy show choir that can power up conference attendees with a rousing opening performance, we want to hear from you. Talent is also being sought for other general sessions. Please contact Connie Lauderdale at 360.493.9231 or c.lauderdale@wssda.org for more information or your recommendation.

More than 300 attendees from over 60 districts have already registered for this year's conference. Are you signed up? Reserve your spot today at wssda.org/conference.

Boards of Distinction

Applications are now being accepted for the WSSDA Boards of Distinction/Board of the Year program. It is easy to apply and no doubt your board is already practicing many of the attributes of high performing boards, as outlined in the Washington School Board Standards.

Benchmark "A" of each standard is the basis for this year's application. The streamlined process limits the paperwork, encourages collaborative input from the board/superintendent team, and creates the opportunity to reapply and receive an award every year as the program focuses on a new set of benchmarks.

Districts of all sizes—small, medium and large—are encouraged to apply. Visit wssda.org > **Awards & Recognition** for complete details and application forms.

Applications are due Sept. 27, 2010.

Special election for State Board of Education to be held this fall

A special election will be held this fall for Western Region Position 3 on the State Board of Education. The position is one of five on the 16-member board that are elected by local school board members.

The special election is required to complete the remainder of an unexpired term. The position is currently held by Connie Fletcher of Issaquah, who was appointed in September 2009 to fill a vacancy.

Declarations of candidacy will be accepted between July 23 and Aug. 31, 2010. Candidates must reside in the Western Washington region to be eligible to file.

The election is administered by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, which will provide additional information on its website, www.k12.wa.us.

WSSDA will provide election information at wssda.org as well, and will provide a voters' guide to members this fall.

Ballots will be mailed to school directors in Western Washington on Oct. 29 and will be due back to OSPI no later than Nov 24. Results will be announced Dec. 7.

WELCOME, NEW SCHOOL DIRECTORS!

Congratulations and welcome to the following new school directors:

Betsy Johnson, *Bellevue*
Troy Fitzgerald, *College Place*
Thomas Eadie, *Granite Falls*
George Fouts, *North Mason*
James Sullivan, *Orcas Island*
Scott Carruth, *Ritzville*
Laurie Cox, *Southside*

Thanks and best wishes to those who have recently left board service:

Quent Goodrich, *Chimacum*
Tim Lovell, *Darrington*
Bob Quarterman, *Granite Falls*
Johanna Reed, *Manson*
Saul Martinez, *Pasco*
Bryan Harrison, *South Bend*
Linda Farrimond, *Southside*

Follow WSSDA on Twitter and Facebook

Sign up for a Twitter account and receive WSSDA's "tweets"—brief updates on education news and association activities. Visit twitter.com/wssda.

Find us at Facebook.com/wssda and click on "Become a fan." (You must be a Facebook member: Sign up to be a member at Facebook.com.)

Teacher/principal evaluation pilot sites announced

Eight districts and one consortium of districts will begin piloting new teacher and principal evaluation systems this fall, according to information received from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The districts are Anacortes, Central Valley, Kennewick, North Mason, North Thurston, Othello, Snohomish and Wenatchee. The consortium is composed of eight districts: Almira, Davenport, Liberty, Medical Lake, Pullman, Reardan-Edwall, Ritzville and Wilbur.

The pilots are required through Senate Bill 6696. Passed during the 2010 Legislature, the bill calls for significant changes in teacher and principal evaluation systems, including the introduction of a four-level evaluation ranking (currently most districts have only two: satisfactory and unsatisfactory). The pilots will be conducted in the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years. Midway through the pilot period, and at its conclusion, OSPI will collect and analyze materials from the pilot districts and make recommendations to the Legislature regarding adopting one or more of the systems for use by districts throughout the state.

Beginning in 2013-14, all districts will be required to adopt evaluation systems in alignment with E2SSB 6696. For more information describing the activities that will be involved in the pilots, visit www.k12.wa.us/Communications/PressReleases2010/EvaluationPilotSites.aspx.

Results of new High School Proficiency Exam released

For the third straight year, more than 90 percent of Washington 12th grade public school students passed the state reading and writing exams prior to reaching their respective graduation ceremonies, according to preliminary results from the first-year High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) released by state Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn last month.

This spring saw the first step in significant changes to the state testing system, including the introduction of the HSPE and grades 3-8 Measurements of Student Progress (MSP). In addition, about a quarter of public school students in grades 6-8 took the reading and math tests online.

Dorn's primary concern remains the passing rate in high school math, which fell below 70 percent – although it's estimated a little more than 20 percent of 12th graders in the class of 2010 met the graduation requirement by earning two math credits after 10th grade.

This year's ninth graders, the class of 2013, will be the first to be required to pass all four state exams: reading, writing, math and science. Those students won't have the option of earning additional math credits if they don't pass the exam.

The results from this year's HSPE are comparable to previous year's high school results because students were tested on the same learning standards and the HSPE had the same rigor.

Beginning with the class of 2013, students must earn three math credits to graduate. They will also be expected to pass end-of-course exams in algebra I and geometry, or the integrated math equivalents.

Dorn suggested that the state allow students in the class of 2013 and beyond to earn a fourth math credit if they don't pass the exam.

Additional information regarding the HSPE score release and graduation requirements is available on the OSPI Web site at www.k12.wa.us/Communications/PressReleases2010/HSPERelease.aspx



State Superintendent Randy Dorn presents the preliminary HSPE score results at a press conference in Olympia

Passing rates for the classes of 2010 and '09

2010		2009	
Reading	94.1%	Reading	94.1%
Writing	94.2%	Writing	94.4%
Math	69.2%	Math	73.4%



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

Independence Day July 4
State Holiday July 5
State Board of Education, La Conner July 13-15
NSBA Pacific Region Summer Meeting,
Banff (Canada) July 16-18
Professional Educators Standards Board,
Gig Harbor July 21-22
WSSDA Legislative Committee, Olympia July 23-24
WSSDA Workshop: The Changing Face
of School Finance, Olympia August 12
Leadership WSSDA, Olympia August 13-14
WSSDA Board of Directors retreat, Everett August 27-29
Labor Day Sept. 6
WSSDA Board of Directors, Vancouver, WA Sept. 23
WSSDA Legislative Committee, Vancouver, WA Sept. 23
WSSDA Legislative Assembly, Vancouver, WA Sept. 24-25

For event details, visit wssda.org > Calendar.

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

WSSDA WORKSHOP: THE CHANGING FACE OF
SCHOOL FINANCE
Olympia: August 12
WSSDA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Vancouver, Washington: Sept. 24-25
NSBA T+L
Phoenix, Arizona: Oct. 19-21
WSSDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Spokane: Nov. 17-20