



Gregoire: Create 'seamless' education system

Governor's proposal would consolidate P-20 education functions under one superagency

On the eve of the 2011 Legislative Session, Gov. Chris Gregoire has unveiled a package of proposals that would make sweeping changes to the state's education system, including eliminating several boards and councils and consolidating their functions into one state agency.

"We must create a student-focused education system that unites our scattered education agencies into a single department," Gregoire said at an Olympia news conference. "We will create an integrated education system, from pre-school to the Ph.D."

Gregoire's proposal would effectively transfer the functions of several agencies—including OSPI, the Department of Early Learning, the State Board of Education, the Higher Education Coordinating Board and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges—into a new cabinet-level state Department of Education. The Department would be headed by a Secretary of Education appointed by the governor.

The education secretary would work with a state Education Council, whose members also would be appointed by the governor, and a K-12 education ombudsman.

"Today in our state, we do not have an education system," Gregoire said. "We have a collection of agencies that deal with the subject of education."

Under Gregoire's plan, the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, now an independently elected statewide official, would report to the Secretary of Education.



Gregoire

Gregoire said she did not have a position on whether the Superintendent should continue to be elected.

The proposal drew a sharp reaction from State Superintendent Randy Dorn, who agreed with

the governor about the importance of student learning, but took issue with the idea of having the State Superintendent to report to a new Secretary of Education. "I am an elected official," Dorn said, "My boss is the people of this state, not the Governor. That is state law, explicit in Article III of the State Constitution."

Dorn also said the governor's proposal "feels like a smokescreen."

"The most pressing issue we face is lack of funding," he said. "Consolidating commissions and eliminating agencies isn't a bad idea, but it takes time and energy away from much more pressing issues."

Other components of the governor's plan include making the senior year of high school a "launch year" to

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Confidence in the talents you bring

Deborah Heart, WSSDA President



When asked what motivated me to become a school director, my response has never changed: a passion to devote my energy to ensuring that each child has equal opportunity for a quality education. The answer to the query of why I chose leadership in the Washington State School Directors' Association has a similar motivator: a desire to ensure that each school director has access to the most innovative governance

models and best practices needed for local leadership.

Equity seems logical, yet elusive, given the competitive funding options currently in vogue at the federal level. Despite budgetary shortfalls, however, we are still charged with providing our students with a world class education. How we accomplish this audacious goal will be the legacy we offer those who will govern when we move on to other ways to be of service.

WSSDA is our vehicle to achievement. Our association offers the tools necessary for success. Our staff is constantly researching education data and cutting edge governance methods. Our board of directors, working with our executive director, is in the process of ensuring that our strategic plan is still viable. We are investigating governance models that have proven to be successful.

We are strengthening our collaboration with other educational entities and communicating with governmental agencies. Our collective advocacy efforts continue to challenge legislators to meet their constitutional duty in addition to maintaining local control.

While recognizing the rhetoric, I firmly believe that we are in the midst of incredible challenges to public education. We face challenges to local control as more districts join the ranks of those who have failed to meet the standards for adequate yearly progress. We face challenges to sufficient, let alone ample, funding in spite of a judicial ruling upholding the directive of our state constitution. We face challenges to maintaining operation of all 295 school districts across our state as budgetary solutions are sought. We face myriad challenges to maintaining best practices as we grapple to balance what is proven to improve quality educational outcomes with inadequate resources to do so.

These, and many other challenges, must not become barriers to classroom success. Together, we must seek and implement effective strategies to ensure that our graduates are prepared for active engagement in a global society. WSSDA is the catalyst for our collective success.

I am humbled by your confidence and edified by the talents you each bring to boardsmanship. Together, we will continue to improve public education in Washington state.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah B. Heart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Governor's proposal

continued from cover

give students more options for classes that would transition them to college or career training, and support for a recently released recommendations to provide more tuition support for state colleges and universities.

Reacting to the governor's proposal, WSSDA Executive Director Jonelle Adams said WSSDA "shares the Governor's desire to ensure that Washington's education system is clearly focused on what is best for our students. We welcome the opportunity to participate with the Governor and legislators in furthering a world-class education system in our state.

"Locally elected school boards are an essential part of that system, providing a vital connection between communities and their schools. As these proposals are considered, WSSDA will work to ensure that the local citizens' voice in our education system is supported and encouraged.

"Ultimately, funding continues to be the biggest issue facing education in our state. A world-class education system requires a consistent commitment and investment in funding—our schools rely on predictable state funds to provide a quality education and promote success for all students.

"WSSDA welcomes the discussion about reorganization and we await the details of the Governor's proposals. Meanwhile, our primary focus remains the same: advocating for the resources that are needed to support student achievement both now and into the future."

Additional information regarding the governor's proposal is available online at www.governor.wa.gov.

Work of school directors celebrated this month



Gov. Chris Gregoire has declared January 2011 to be School Board Recognition Month in the state of Washington, coinciding with a nationwide effort to spotlight and honor the important role of elected

school directors in public education and student achievement.

There are 1,477 school board members in Washington state's 295 public school districts, each elected by the citizens of their respective communities. The districts they lead serve more than one million students, have a combined annual budget of \$6 billion, and employ nearly 100,000 people.

As school directors govern their districts, they contribute hundreds of volunteer hours making decisions with the overall aim of promoting student achievement. They have a multitude of responsibilities, including vision- and goal-setting, establishing standards for what students should learn, adopting policies and budgets, and collaborating with administrators, teachers, parents, students and the community to foster a safe and productive learning environment.

Several ideas and tips for celebrating School Board Recognition Month can be found at wssda.org/sbrm. In addition, personalized certificates for each board member have been mailed to every district based on WSSDA's existing database. To request a new certificate with updated information contact Sheila Chard, S.Chard@wssda.org, or 360.252.3011.



2010 Board of Distinction: North Mason School Board
(The North Mason board's photo was unavailable for last month's issue) Left to right: Student board members Ryan Jones and Nicole Carnahan; Laura Boad, WSSDA Executive Director Jonelle Adams, Mike Gaudio and John Campbell. Not pictured: George Fouts and Art Wightman

Governor Gregoire's Proclamation School Board Recognition Month January 2011

WHEREAS, the mission of Washington's public school system is to assure that all students achieve at high levels and possess the knowledge and skills to be responsible citizens and enjoy productive and satisfying lives; and

WHEREAS, Washington's 295 locally elected school boards are the core of the public education governance system in our state; and

WHEREAS, the districts they lead serve more than one million students, have a combined annual budget of \$6 billion and employ nearly 100,000 people; and

WHEREAS, school directors play a crucial role in promoting student learning and achievement by creating a vision, establishing policies and budgets, and setting clear standards of accountability for all involved; and

WHEREAS, school directors are directly accountable to the citizens in their districts, serving as a vital link between members of the community and their schools; and

WHEREAS, school directors provide a passionate voice of advocacy for public schools and the welfare of school children; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize school directors as outstanding volunteers and champions for public education;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Christine O. Gregoire, Governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim January 2011 as

School Board Recognition Month

in Washington state, and I urge all citizens to join me in this special observance.

Signed,

Governor Christine O. Gregoire

Cash awards available for sustainable school projects

Applications for the 2011 Terry Husseman Sustainable School Awards are now available. The awards promote sustainability and reward school efforts to reduce waste and increase environmental curricula. For example, awards may go to schools implementing activities such as recycling, environmentally preferable purchasing, organic gardening, composting, resource conservation, and more. All K-12 schools in Washington are eligible to apply.

Awards are presented in three categories:

- **Seed Awards** fund start-up costs for programs promoting waste reduction, recycling, and sustainability both within the school and in the community.
- **Sustainable School Awards** recognize ongoing efforts to maintain and expand programs that focus on waste reduction, recycling, and sustainability.
- **Creative Environmental Curriculum Awards** recognize original curricula that introduce students, teachers, staff, and administrators to the concepts of waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and sustainability.

Applications are due at the Department of Ecology (300 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey, WA 98503) no later than 5 p.m., Feb. 28, 2011. Awards range from \$100-\$5,000. Awardees will be recognized at a ceremony at the Capitol in May. For information or application materials, visit www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/terryhusseman.html

Renton superintendent named national finalist

The American Association of School Administrators has named four finalists in the 2011 National Superintendent of the Year program. Renton School District's superintendent Mary Alice Heuschel is one of the four.

The national finalists were chosen from 49 state finalists. "Dr. Heuschel is a superb choice as a finalist in the National Superintendent of the Year program. We are honored that the work she is doing in our state has been recognized on a national level," said Dr. Paul Rosier, executive director of the Washington Association of School Administrators.

Applicants were assessed for leadership for learning, communication, professionalism, and community involvement. The national winner will be named at the AASA National Conference on Education next month.

Fletcher elected to State Board



Fletcher

Connie Fletcher of Issaquah has won election to Western Region Position 3 on the State Board of Education. Fletcher won the election with 58 percent of the

vote, the other candidate, Fred O'Neal, receiving 42 percent. The board is comprised of 16 members:

- two from the eastern region of the state, elected by school board members;
- three from the western region of the state, elected by school board members;
- one member, at large, elected by approved private schools;
- the superintendent of public instruction;
- seven appointed by the governor; and
- two student representatives selected by the state board itself.

For 16 years Fletcher was a member of the Issaquah school board, and served three years as president and officer of WSSDA. She was appointed to the State Board in September 2009, where she has been active in the Board's work on accountability and revision of high school graduation requirements. Her elected term will run through January 2012.

WELCOME, NEW SCHOOL DIRECTORS!

Congratulations and welcome to the following new school directors:

Robert Maxson, *Anacortes*
Randal Wilhelmsen, *Peninsula*
Travis Fletcher, *Republic*

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

Kristine Lytton, *Anacortes*
Catherine Dahlquist, *Enumclaw*
Richard Eich, *Republic*
Kip Calaway, *Wahluke*

IN MEMORIAM

Wilson "Sandy" Wells, Jr., longtime member of the Queets-Clearwater School Board, passed away September 7. The officers, board of directors and staff of WSSDA extend deepest sympathies to his family and friends, his fellow board members, and the staff and students of the Queets-Clearwater District.

Collaborative effort strengthens model anti-bullying policy

A cooperative effort among WSSDA, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Office of the Education Ombudsman and others has resulted in a comprehensive update to a model policy aimed at protecting students from harassment, intimidation and bullying.

The new policy and procedure, now available to school districts, was prompted by law changes approved by the Legislature last year. Lawmakers directed WSSDA to work with OSPI and OEO to strengthen the previous models, particularly in promoting greater awareness of anti-bullying protections and beefing up reporting and response requirements.

The law requires districts to adopt, at a minimum, the new policy and procedure no later than Aug. 1 of this year. Previously, districts were only required

to have a policy. The law also requires districts to designate one person as the primary contact regarding the policy.

The model policy and procedure, developed collaboratively by the three organizations, creates a new complaint process, specific timelines for a district to respond to complaints, and greater protections for targeted students. In response to the directive that schools widely disseminate anti-harassment documents, districts are required to provide information on the policy and procedure, and training to all staff and students.

Other elements dramatically expand the tools, information and strategies used in districts to create respectful learning communities.

As required by the law, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy

Dorn delivered the new policy and procedure to the Legislature last month. OSPI is also responsible for monitoring districts' compliance through its School Safety Center. By Aug. 15 of this year, each district must give OSPI a brief summary of its policies, procedures, programs, partnerships, vendors and instructional/training materials aimed at preventing bullying, harassment and intimidation.

The new policy and procedure are available on the WSSDA website (wssda.org), the OSPI website (www.k12.wa.us), and the OEO website (www.governor.wa.gov/oao). Questions about the new documents can be directed to WSSDA Policy and Legal Services at 360.493.9231.

WSSDA supports local school board authority in Seattle curriculum case

Curriculum selection goes to the heart of a school board's duty to determine local educational policy and should not be second-guessed by the courts, according to a legal brief submitted by WSSDA this past month.

The arguments are included in an amicus (friend of the court) brief filed by WSSDA in support of the Seattle School Board's appeal of a King County Superior Court decision regarding the board's adoption of the "Discovering" series of high school math textbooks. Last February, the court concluded there was insufficient evidence to support the adoption and ordered the board to undertake further review.

WSSDA's amicus brief emphasizes that the association takes no position on the merits of the "Discovering" curriculum. Rather, it supports the Seattle district's arguments that the board followed procedures set forth in law and made a reasonable decision based on a comprehensive review of various instructional materials.

The brief points out that the Legislature specifically chose to place curriculum decisions in the hands of people elected from the local community, and that the courts have historically recognized that policy judgments by school boards are entitled to great deference.

"The decision to implement one form of curriculum or another is precisely the type of difficult decision elected board members are supposed to make," the brief states.

WSSDA also argues that the court's decision is likely to have a "chilling effect" on local boards across the state because every school district "will be in a position of uncertainty as to what curriculum selection process may be upheld by the judicial system."

The case will be heard in the state Court of Appeals, Division I. At press time, a date had not been set for oral arguments. The full text of the brief is available online at wssda.org.

Leadership WSSDA Class of 2010, challenged and inspired



Back row, left to right: Mike Harris (East Valley), Danny Edwards (Riverview), Frank Kline (Methow Valley), Jeff Thorp (Mukilteo), Jeff Vigue (Ridgefield). Front row, left to right: Rob Coffey (Mount Vernon), Jean Lacy (White River), Jay Rosapepe (South Kitsap), Nita Haag (Grand Coulee Dam), Roger Trainor (East Valley).



Burke

The Leadership WSSDA Class of 2010 celebrated its graduation during the Annual Conference in November. Ten dedicated school directors collaborated for a year-long focus on developing leadership skills to enhance student learning.

To celebrate this theme, graduation keynote speaker Ethelda Burke, poet, and superintendent of the Tukwila School District, inspired the graduates with the theme “Leadership for Life.”

Washington’s homeless students number 21,000

With homeless children numbering 1.3 million nationwide, more than 21,000 of them live in Washington state, according to numbers reported by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The number is up five percent from the previous year and up 56.5 percent from 2005-06.

The increase is due in part to more thorough reporting, according to Melinda Dyer, OSPI’s program supervisor for the education of homeless students, however homelessness may still be under-reported by families because of the stigma it carries. The lack of a stable home results in higher student mobility and absentee rates, more health problems and lower graduation rates than for students with homes.

The McKinney-Vento law ensures free education for students who are homeless. It mandates that they must be given the same access to education as other students and cannot be separated from other students. Where feasible, the student can remain in the district he or she lived in before becoming homeless and is provided transportation to and from school.

Washington state receives about \$850,000 per year from the federal government to help homeless students, which is given to districts in the form of competitive grants, with priority given to districts with the greatest need. Districts can use the funds to help defray the excess cost of transportation, for tutoring and enriched educational services, for supplies and materials, and for early childhood education programs. Title I or other state or federal funding sources may also be used to support the educational needs of homeless students. In addition, Washington state received \$1.3 million in one-time federal stimulus dollars for homeless education.

Lowery to retire from WSSDA staff



Lowery

Linda Lowery, Administrative Assistant in WSSDA’s Policy and Legal Services, has announced her retirement after 22 years of service to

association members.

Lowery has held several different positions throughout her years with WSSDA. Most recently she has worked on layout design and distribution of *School Law Digest* and *Policy News*, assisted with Superintendent Search, and staffed the Resolutions Committee.

Though retired from full-time work, Lowery will continue working a few days each month for one additional year. WSSDA staff, together with the Board of Directors, extend their gratitude for her presence with us, and wish her a happy and interesting retirement.

Washington second in new National Board Certified teachers

Washington state continues to place near the top of the country in National Board Certified teachers, according to numbers released in December by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Washington has the second-most new NBCTs (1,272), behind only North Carolina, and is fourth overall with a total of 5,247 NBCTs.

In addition, three districts ranked in the top 20 nationally. Seattle ranked 6th nationally (71 new NBCTs), Evergreen ranked 14th (56) and Bellevue 20th (49). For details visit www.k12.wa.us/Communications/PressReleases2010/WashSecondNewNBCT.aspx



2011 WSSDA/WASA Legislative Conference

February 27 - 28, 2011

Olympia Red Lion Hotel and the Capitol

The annual WSSDA/WASA Legislative Conference is your opportunity to:

- Network with school directors and administrators from across the state.
- Get up-to-date information on the state budget and key education policy issues.
- Communicate with local legislators to influence the debate in Olympia.
- Advocate on behalf of common WSSDA/WASA priorities, such as the full funding of public schools.

Registration opens at the Red Lion at noon on Sunday and the conference begins at 1 p.m. On Monday, the majority of the morning is spent at the Capitol, and the conference concludes at noon.

The charge for early registration (through Feb. 18) is \$205; after Feb. 18, registration will cost \$260. The agenda and online registration are available at www.wasa-oly.org. Questions? Contact Sheila Chard, 360.252.3011, S.Chard@wssda.org.

NEWS BRIEFS

Four Washington schools have been recognized as Title I, Part A Academic Achievement Schools, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction announced last month. Each of the schools will receive a \$10,000 award. The awarded schools and subjects are as follows:

- Garfield Elementary (Spokane), Reading and Mathematics
- Logan Elementary (Spokane), Reading
- Tapteal Elementary (Richland), Reading
- Whitman Elementary (Spokane), Mathematics

The awards are given to schools with exceptional student performance or those that have demonstrated significant progress in closing the achievement gap. For OSPI's full story on the awards see www.k12.wa.us/Communications/PressReleases2010/AcademicAchievement.aspx.

NSBA has announced a new resource to support board training and communications efforts: the *Data First* website, www.data-first.org. This site complements *Data First* training modules developed through the NSBA Center for Public Education.

Data First translates what school boards need to know about education data into a fun, easily accessible, and useful website that explains the basics of data use and how to understand education data. It was designed with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant also supported development of in-depth data training modules for school

boards in partnership with state associations in California, Illinois and Michigan.

The *Data First* site offers range of resources such as a quiz evaluating school directors' "data savvy" and short videos developed from parts of the training. The site's Data Center lays out crucial questions to ask about school data and shows where to find such data at the national, state, or even the local level when available. The site even allows visitors to submit their own questions about using data.

For more information about *Data First* school board training or the new *Data First* website contact Patte Barth (pbarth@nsba.org or 703.838.6721).

NSBA has announced the 2011 Technology Leadership Network Education Technology Site Visits. The host districts showcase learning powered by technology and innovative teaching strategies as they share their best practices. Discover how technology is transforming the entire education enterprise. Site visits will be held at:

- Pascack Valley Regional High School District, Montvale, New Jersey, March 23-25, 2011
- Newport News Public Schools, Newport News, Virginia, April 27-29, 2011
- Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, Kentucky, May 11-13, 2011

See www.nsba.org/tlbsitevisits for further 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.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- WSSDA Legislative Committee, Olympia Jan. 8
Western Washington Native American Education Consortium, Kent Jan. 11
State Board of Education, Tumwater Jan. 12-13
Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Jan. 17
WSSDA Board of Directors, Olympia Jan. 21-22
2011 Annual ERNN Conference, Yakima Jan. 27-28
2011 Leadership WSSDA, Olympia Jan. 29-30
Federal Relations Network Conference, Wash. DC. . Feb. 6-8
Washington State Learning First Alliance, Olympia . . . Feb. 9
Annual Conference Planning Committee, Bellevue . . Feb. 12
Presidents' Day Feb. 21
WSSDA Resolutions Committee, Olympia Feb. 26
WSSDA Legislative Committee, Olympia Feb. 27
WASA/WSSDA Legislative Conference Feb. 27-28
Task Force on Small Schools Issues, Wenatchee Mar. 13

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

- NSBA FEDERAL RELATIONS NETWORK (FRN) CONFERENCE
Washington D.C.: Feb. 6-8, 2011
WASA/WSSDA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
Olympia: Feb. 27-28, 2011
NSBA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
San Francisco: April 9-11, 2011
WASA SMALL SCHOOLS CONFERENCE
Wenatchee: March 14-15, 2011
WSSDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Bellevue Hilton Hotel: Nov. 18-20, 2011