



# Direct

Washington State School Directors' Association

March 2011

## FRN pushes for ESEA reauthorization

Washington school directors join nationwide drive to fix 'No Child' law

Nearly 30 Washington school directors joined their colleagues from around the country in Washington, D.C. last month to meet with their congressional members, and learn about national education issues and how those issues might affect school districts.

Washington's main message was simple: reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) by June 2011 or suspend the punitive sanctions associated with No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

School directors met with U.S. Senator Patty Murray, six of the nine congressional members, and education analysts for U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell and the other three congressmen.

In addition to Murray, members of the Washington delegation split up and met directly with U.S. Representatives Jaime Herrera Beutler, Norm Dicks, Jay Inslee, Rick Larsen, Cathy McMorris-Rodgers, and Jim McDermott—in several cases meeting with the member for an hour.

School directors provided examples of contradictions in the current law, where some schools are labeled "failing" but also show up on national "top 10" lists, and examples of the punitive measures that force principals who are turning around schools to be moved after progress is made but before victory can be declared.

One of the most telling examples was from Pasco School District, where a new high school opened its doors for the first time and had to send home letters telling parents it was a "failing school." One congressman declared that as "stupid." School directors agreed.



Pasco School Director John Hergert poses a question to U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan during last month's FRN Conference in Washington, D.C. (Photo courtesy of NSBA)

Murray shared that she will be on the negotiating team in the Senate on the reauthorization bill, and was hoping to have a draft bill by end of April. She encouraged school directors to share stories with her office on the "flaws" and things that need to be fixed.

(During the FRN Conference, Murray was honored by NSBA and WSSDA for her support of public education. See related story on page 3.)

Word in the House on reauthorization was not so optimistic—most members and staff said the House would likely want to write its own bill, and weren't sure if it would meet the June deadline school board members are requesting.

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# Speaking out—in both capitals

Jonelle Adams, WSSDA Executive Director



Last month I had the privilege of supporting our team of school directors on the Federal Relations Network as they worked in Washington, D.C. to advocate for students and public education.

Washington's FRN representatives put in long hours and wore out some shoe leather as they crisscrossed Capitol Hill to meet with the state's

Congressional delegation and staff. In each meeting

they carried strong messages on the need to fix the No Child Left Behind Act through reauthorization of ESEA, and to honor Congressional commitments to federal education funding, particularly for Title I programs and IDEA (special education). A couple of our members were also in the national spotlight as they posed some tough questions to U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan during the FRN Conference meetings.

Meanwhile, as this issue of *WSSDA Direct* goes to press, school directors and superintendents from around the state are on "The Hill" here in Olympia as part of the WASA/WSSDA Legislative Conference.

These efforts are great examples of school board members fulfilling their advocacy role. School directors have a responsibility to communicate with their fellow elected officials at all levels—federal, state and local—on education policy and how it affects students and schools.

There is a critical need for this kind of advocacy right now, both here in our state and in the "other" Washington. State and federal lawmakers are making decisions that will impact education for many years to come, perhaps for generations. The voice of school directors is essential to thoughtful decision-making about the funding and delivery of education.

As we have noted before, legislative leaders in Olympia say they are not hearing from the education community on the various budget proposals that are surfacing in Olympia—proposals that could have dire consequences for many of districts around the state. As this session progresses, now is the time for school directors to be communicating directly with their legislators with concrete examples of how these decisions will affect students and student learning.

WSSDA offers a number of resources to help school boards stay on top of legislative issues and sharpen your advocacy skills. We offer advocacy tools and regular legislative reports on our website ([wssda.org](http://wssda.org)). Updates are also available through our email listserv ([wssda.org/listservs](mailto:wssda.org/listservs)), our new "First Reading" blog ([wssda.org/firstreading](http://wssda.org/firstreading)) and Twitter ([twitter.com/wssda](https://twitter.com/wssda)). Please don't hesitate to contact our governmental relations staff if you need assistance. Above all, please be sure your district leadership team is communicating with your legislators about budget and other education issues. Now is the time to speak out!

*Jonelle Adams*

## FRN delegation

*continued from cover*

Congressional members responded sympathetically to messages of local control, keeping as much flexibility in the system as possible, focusing on full funding to Title I and IDEA traditional formulas rather than competitive grants, and addressing flaws in NCLB.

Some members of the Washington delegation also met with U.S. Department of Education staff, communicating many of the messages that were used with legislators.

In meetings that preceded the FRN "Day on the Hill," U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan told the nearly 800 school board members in attendance that reauthorization as a top priority for the administration and acknowledged that the proscriptive and punitive nature of NCLB needs to change to rewarding excellence and recognizing success.

Two WSSDA FRN members were able to pose questions to Duncan in the Q&A session that followed his speech. Pasco director John Hergert asked Duncan about ELL students, and WSSDA President-elect Mary Fertakis (Tukwila) asked, "Do you really believe our students should compete for their education?" The question was greeted with strong applause (and was picked up in the national media).

Duncan agreed that kids shouldn't have to compete, but said the Title I formula provides nearly 84 percent of the funding while competitive grants encourage something beyond the status quo.

For more on the conference, listen to WSSDA's podcast interview with FRN Chair Patty Wood (Kelso), available on the WSSDA website ([wssda.org](http://wssda.org)) under "News and Multimedia > Podcasts."

## Board provides guidance on legislative issues

The WSSDA Board of Directors recently held two special meetings to provide guidance to the governmental relations staff regarding legislative issues.

At a special meeting Feb. 26, the board discussed and took action on the following issues:

- **Alternative routes to principal certification** – This proposal would allow an alternative route in which principal candidates with demonstrated leadership experience would not be required to have classroom experience or a teaching certificate. The board took the position that instructional leadership should be a required element of principal certification.
- **State-negotiated health benefits** – The Legislature is considering bills to require school districts to use the state’s health care authority for health benefits. The board re-affirmed its support for WSSDA Legislative Position #12, which supports negotiating health benefits at the state level. However, no position was taken on what the best state-level approach should be.
- **Reducing school days** – Several bills have been offered this year that would give school districts the authority to “waive” days or hours to meet financial obligations. The board took the position to oppose legislation that would reduce the 180 days required by law.

The board held a special teleconference meeting Jan. 31 to review three topics that are also being discussed this session.

These are:

- **Eliminating a separately elected Superintendent of Public Instruction** – The board took the position that the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction should remain an independent, elected position.
- **State Adoption of Common Core Standards** – As originally drafted, HB 1443 would authorize the SPI to implement the Common Core Standards—a common set of learning standards that have been developed by a multi-state consortium—after ensuring that a fairness and bias review has been conducted. The board voted to support this proposal.
- **Changing Reduction in Force (RIF) provisions for teachers** – Two bills would require districts to use the past two years of evaluations as the basis for the RIF. The board voted to oppose these proposals due to a concern for potential fairness and legal issues. The board also noted that a pilot project of teacher/principal evaluations is underway and the state should wait for the new tool to be in place before making changes to the RIF process.

The next regular meeting of the WSSDA Board of Directors is scheduled for April 29-30 in Olympia.

## Murray honored during FRN Conference



Pictured, left to right, are WSSDA President Deborah Heart (Goldendale), U.S. Senator Patty Murray, and NSBA President Earl C. Rickman III. (Photo courtesy of NSBA)

Washington Senator Patty Murray was honored last month by both the National School Boards Association and WSSDA for her support of public education. During the NSBA Federal Relations Network Conference in Washington, D.C., Murray was presented with the Congressional Special Recognition Award, given by National School Boards Association’s Federal Relations Network. The WSSDA FRN also presented Murray with an award of appreciation during the delegation’s visit to the Capitol Hill.

Murray was the lead sponsor of an amendment to provide \$10 billion to school districts and states through the Education Jobs Fund. This funding was urgently needed to help school districts retain teachers and other school personnel.

“Sen. Patty Murray is such a deserving recipient of NSBA’s Congressional Special Recognition Award for her commitment to advancing our public schools,” said Anne L. Bryant, NSBA’s Executive Director. “Murray’s leadership on the Education Jobs Fund was extremely important to save thousands of education jobs across the country.”

# New report reveals school boards' strong commitment to student achievement

A groundbreaking report released by the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, and the Iowa School Boards Foundation last month gives new insights into the workings of America's nearly 14,000 school boards.

The report, *School Boards Circa 2010: Governance in the Accountability Era*, is the first comprehensive national survey of school boards in nearly a decade. It provides national data on who serves on school boards, what board members think about a number of school reform initiatives, how they do their work, how school board elections are carried out, and the nature of the relationship between the school board and the superintendent.

The report finds that school directors are increasingly concerned about student achievement, and further focusing their work on improving student learning and preparing students with 21st century skills to compete in the global economy.

Among the findings:

- Two-thirds of those surveyed see an urgent need to improve student achievement, and nine out of 10 are concerned about an overly narrow focus on achievement.
- School board members and superintendents have similar goals for preparing their students for college, the workplace, and, above all, "a satisfying and productive life."

- More than two-thirds of board members ranked their funding and economic situations as extremely urgent.

The report provides both pro and con viewpoints on school board governance. The Fordham Institute, a participant in the study, contends that "the local school board, especially the elected kind, is an anachronism and an outrage. ... We can no longer pretend it's working well or hide behind the mantra of 'local control of education.' We need to steel ourselves to put this dysfunctional arrangement out of its misery and move on to something that will work for children."

The NSBA viewpoint emphasizes that "school board members remain the critical connection between the school administration and the community at large. Their willingness to look at the broader picture and advocate for the whole child is an example of what communities want. [T]his survey shows that more and more boards are engaging in efforts to improve their schools through activities such as goal-setting, monitoring, and ensuring alignment of professional development. ... No matter what happens with education policy at the state or federal level, we will always need locally elected or appointed boards to govern and lead our schools in some capacity." The full report is available on the NSBA website at [www.nsba.org](http://www.nsba.org).

## Vancouver receives national communication award

Vancouver School District has been named the 2011 recipient of the Leadership Through Communication Award, jointly sponsored by Blackboard Connect, the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). The award recognizes the district's exemplary leadership in the enhancement of

school-to-parent communication within their school system and community.

The judges noted the strong conviction of the district's governance and leadership teams that an investment in a year-round communication and relationship-building effort is essential.

### WELCOME, NEW SCHOOL DIRECTORS!

#### Congratulations and welcome to the following new school directors:

Wayne Van Zwooll, *Bridgeport*  
Loretta Burkey, *Chewelah*  
Dixie Kelley, *Roosevelt*  
Terri Carl, *Satsop*  
Jackie Rhodes, *Southside*  
Lorraine Jenne, *Wahluke*  
Andy Portmann, *Willapa Valley*  
Jeri Reufer-Hore, *Wishram*

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

Jacque Workman, *Bridgeport*  
James Watson, *Brinnon*  
June Porter, *Lamont*  
Sam McElravy, *Quillayute Valley*  
Jodie Blain, *Roosevelt*  
Linda Foster, *Satsop*  
K.B. Trunkey, *St. John*  
Ray Tennison, *University Place*  
Craig Ritzman, *Willapa Valley*  
Christina Patten-Rowan, *Wishram*

### IN MEMORIAM

Jodi Cossell of the Chimacum School Board, passed away last month. WSSDA's officers, Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their deep sympathies to Jodi's family and friends, to her colleagues on the Chimacum School Board, and to the staff and students of the district.





# WSSDA/WASA Legislative Conference



As this issue of *WSSDA Direct* went to press, nearly 300 school directors and superintendents were in Olympia for the annual WSSDA/WASA Legislative Conference. A full report on the conference will be posted via WSSDA's Legislative Updates, available on the WSSDA website ([wssda.org](http://wssda.org)) under "Advocacy and Legislation > Legislative Updates."





# Superintendent evaluation workshops

*Participate in conjunction with Regional Meetings*

Superintendent evaluation time is near and two-hour evaluation workshops will precede several of the WSSDA Spring Regional Meetings.

A clear understanding and thorough knowledge of the evaluation process are essential for measuring success and providing guidance to your superintendent. The workshop will cover key elements of the evaluation process, including:

- Establishing goals
- Developing instruments
- Researching best practices
- Reviewing techniques for a successful evaluation
- Building a culture of teamwork

Regional Meeting sites hosting superintendent evaluation workshops include:

- Nine Mile Falls, Tuesday, March 1
- Oakesdale, Wednesday, March 2
- Conway, Tuesday March 22
- Rainier, Wednesday, April 13
- Connell, Monday, April 18
- Wapato, Thursday, April 21
- Burien, Thursday, April 21

All superintendent evaluation workshops will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. The cost for board/superintendent teams of three or more is \$200; the cost for those attending individually is \$75.

For further information, please contact Phil Gore (P.Gore@wssda.org or 360.252.3020). To register, visit [wssda.org/workshops](http://wssda.org/workshops).

*Legislative updates; state education news; communication training*

School Board/Superintendent teams are invited to attend WSSDA’s Spring Regional Meetings and—in several sites—a special two-hour WSSDA workshop on superintendent evaluation. In addition to your lively dinner discussion, each Regional Meeting will include a video legislative update from WSSDA Government Relations Director Marie Sullivan, as well as a mini-training on communication skills for discussing legislative and budget issues with your community.

Superintendent evaluation workshops have been scheduled in seven Regional Meeting locations, from 4 to 6 p.m., just ahead of the 6 p.m. Regional Meetings. (See related article on this page.)

Weekday Regional Meetings, which include dinner, are held from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday meetings, including lunch, are held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Registration is required, and the only charge is for your meal. Register at [wssda.org/regional meetings](http://wssda.org/regional meetings).

## Spring Regional Meetings continue

* Nine Mile Falls	Tuesday, March 1
* Oakesdale	Wednesday, March 2
Medical Lake	Tuesday, March 8
Cape Flattery	Saturday, March 19
Bremerton	Monday, March 21
* Conway	Tuesday, March 22
* Rainier	Wednesday, April 13
Woodland	Wednesday, April 13**
Carbonado	Thursday, April 14
* Connell	Monday, April 18
Soap Lake	Wednesday, April 20
* Wapato	Thursday, April 21
* Burien	Thursday, April 21

\* indicates locations where a superintendent evaluation workshop will be offered prior to the meeting

\*\* a hosted meeting (no charge for meal)

## Tulalip Tribe gives \$1.26 million for students

When Tulalip Tribes heard of the unprecedented mid-year cuts in the state budget they asked Marysville School District how those cuts would impact student learning and what they could do to help. The district had already undergone \$12 million in budget reductions over the past four years, with more expected next year.

The Tulalip Tribe's grant of \$1.26 million will pay for middle-level science curriculum and professional development; math materials, teacher training, and two math coaches; a new data system to track student achievement and discipline; cultural diversity training for staff; all-day kindergarten classes and K-3 teachers to reduce class sizes at two elementary schools.

## Granite Falls gains national attention

In a February speech, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan mentioned the ShopGirls team at Granite Falls High School in Granite Falls. In 2010, the all-girls group built a super-fuel-efficient car. Duncan praised the program as an example of the "new CTE."

"It comes from Washington state," he said, "where the Granite Falls High School ShopGirls built homemade cars focused on fuel-efficient designs. They designed a diesel-powered vehicle that got a staggering 470 miles to the gallon. They called their car the 'Iron Maiden.'"

The Iron Maiden won the diesel fuel design competition at the Shell Eco-marathon Americas competition last March.

## Financial affairs report due to PDC in April

It's time to file the Personal Financial Affairs Statement (PDC Form F-1) for calendar year 2010. The F-1 is due on or before April 15, 2011.

Any school director who was in office for all or part of 2010 in a school district with 1,000 or more registered voters must file. The F-1 can be filed electronically, by mail or by personal delivery.

For blank forms and instructions, visit [www.pdc.wa.gov/filers/appointed.aspx](http://www.pdc.wa.gov/filers/appointed.aspx). For more information, contact the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission at 360.753.1111 or (toll-free) 877.601.2828, or e-mail [pdc@pdc.wa.gov](mailto:pdc@pdc.wa.gov).

## NEWS BRIEFS

**School directors can disregard a letter from the state Department of Revenue regarding "Director Fees Subject to the B&O Tax."** The letter, sent in late November, clarifies state rules regarding taxes on compensation for corporate boards of directors. The rule does not apply to school boards.

**Global Exploration for Educators Organization (GEEO) runs summer professional development travel programs for teachers, offering 13 travel programs in summer 2011.** Teachers will travel to India/Nepal, China, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey/Syria/Jordan/Egypt, Ethiopia, South Africa/Mozambique/Zimbabwe/Botswana, Morocco, Argentina/Uruguay/Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Costa Rica and Guatemala/Belize/Mexico.

Teachers may earn graduate and professional development credit. The 8 to 23 day trips are open to both K-12 and college teachers, active or retired. Teachers receive educational materials and structure to help them in the classroom. For detailed information—itineraries, costs, travel dates—visit [www.geeo.org](http://www.geeo.org), or call 877.600.0105.

**OSPI's Child Nutrition Services is seeking applications for sponsors of the 2011 Summer Feeding Programs for children.** Eligible sponsors are those who operate a non-profit meal program during the summer break to children age 18 and younger. Qualified sponsors will be reimbursed for

eligible meals served. For details, contact Nancy Van't Hul at 360.725.6222 or Donna Parsons at 360.725.6220.

**The State Board of Education has launched its annual student video contest.** The competition will focus on the important role of math, science, technology, and/or Career and Technical Education courses. The contest due date is Monday, May 2, 2011. This is an opportunity for all secondary students to showcase their their creativity and video skills, along with their appreciation for math, science, technology and CTE coursework. See [www.sbe.wa.gov](http://www.sbe.wa.gov) for details. Last year's winning videos can be viewed on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/user/sbweb?feature=mhum](http://www.youtube.com/user/sbweb?feature=mhum).

**"Keeping Our Fires Burning: Traditions, Culture and Education" is the theme of the Washington State Indian Education Association (WSIEA) annual conference.** It will be held at the Tulalip Tribes' Tulalip Resort Hotel/Casino in Tulalip, Washington, April 18-20, 2011. Participants will gather, celebrate and support WSIEA's efforts to improve the quality of education for Native American/Alaska Native students in Washington state. The conference features prominent keynote speakers, workshops, cultural offerings, honoring and merit award presentations. Tuesday, April 19, will feature events geared toward Native youth. For details contact Joan Banker (360.725.6160 or [joan.banker@k12.wa.us](mailto:joan.banker@k12.wa.us)).





# WSSDA Direct



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

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- WSSDA Regional Meeting, Medical Lake . . . . . March 8
- State Board of Education (SBE), Tumwater . . . . . March 9-10
- Task Force on Small Schools Issues, Wenatchee . . . . . March 13
- WASA Small Schools Conference, Wenatchee . . . . . March 14-15
- Lighthouse Facilitator Training, Olympia . . . . . March 14-15
- WSSDA Executive Committee conference . . . . . March 17
- Western Washington Native American Education Consortium, Auburn. . . . . March 17
- WSSDA Regional Meeting, Sekiu . . . . . March 19
- WSSDA Regional Meeting, Bremerton. . . . . March 21
- WSSDA Superintendent Evaluation Workshop, Conway . . . . . March 22
- WSSDA Regional Meeting, Conway . . . . . March 22
- WSSDA Interscholastic Activities Committee, Renton . . . . . April 2
- WSSDA Superintendent Evaluation Workshop, Rainier April 13
- WSSDA Regional Meeting, Rainier . . . . . April 13
- WSSDA Regional Meeting, Woodland . . . . . April 13

## WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

- WASA SMALL SCHOOLS CONFERENCE  
Wenatchee: March 14-15, 2011
- NSBA ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
San Francisco: April 9-11, 2011
- WSSDA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
Pasco: Sept. 23-24, 2011
- WSSDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
Bellevue Hyatt Regency: Nov. 18-20, 2011

Funding is available for districts with schools in improvement to receive free Lighthouse training between now and June 30. For details, please contact Phil Gore at 360.252.3020 or P.Gore@wssda.org.

**Funding available**