



# Direct

Washington State School Directors' Association

April 2011

## Crunch time in Olympia

### Budget at the forefront as Legislature approaches end of the regular session

State lawmakers head into the final weeks of their 2011 regular legislative session facing the same challenge they started with in January—how to plug a multi-billion dollar hole in the state budget for the coming biennium.

As this issue of *WSSDA Direct* went to press, no legislative proposals had yet emerged for a FY2011-2013 state operating budget (although public hearing on the House proposal had been scheduled for Monday, April 4.) Under the state constitution, the regular 105-day legislative session will end April 24. The law provides for special sessions of up to 30 days, to be called by the governor or a two-thirds vote of the Legislature.

It was originally expected legislative budget leaders would unveil a budget proposal in mid-March following the spring revenue forecast. Those expectations went out the window, however, with the release of an updated state revenue forecast which enlarged the predicted state budget deficit by another \$700 million.

When Gov. Chris Gregoire released her budget proposal last December, the shortfall between revenues and expenditures was projected at \$4.6 billion. The updated forecast now brings the deficit to \$5.3 billion (out of an anticipated two-year budget of about \$32 billion).

The Legislature's primary task in the current session is adoption of three budgets—operating, capital and transportation—for the coming biennium. The biennium commences on July 1 of this year. The challenge for lawmakers is finding the votes to approve a budget that will continue to cut back spending in education, higher education, social services and other critical areas and leave

enough money in reserves to cover what might be a shortfall in the upcoming fiscal year.

As the budget develops, WSSDA continues its work on the Hill to advocate for strategies that minimize the impact on students in the K-12 system.

Meanwhile, here is a quick summary on the status of key education policy bills as of the end of March:

**Education System Restructuring** – Gov. Chris Gregoire's proposal to create a single state Department of Education remains in the Senate budget committee. While the governor continues to push, neither House or Senate members have shown much interest in adopting her proposal.

**School District Consolidation** – Forced consolidation of local school districts failed to pass out of committee. Bill sponsor Rep. Sam Hunt, D-Olympia, says he will not try to insert it into the budget bill, as occurred last session. WSSDA is opposed to state-mandated consolidation of local districts and will continue to keep a close watch for any re-appearance of the proposal.

**Unfunded Mandates** – Also failing to survive the cutoff was legislation to suspend or repeal a number of statutes in the common schools manual that are "unfunded mandates." WSSDA continues to oppose new unfunded mandates and seeks remedies to existing unfunded and underfunded mandates.

WSSDA's governmental relations team continues to provide regular reports on legislative activities via its website and email listserv. Visit [wssda.org](http://wssda.org) or the association's "First Reading" blog ([wssda.org/firstreading](http://wssda.org/firstreading)) for the latest updates.

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

Call for session proposals:  
WSSDA Annual  
Conference 2011

Legislative proposals sought

Magna Award honorees,  
Vancouver and Everett

# WSSDA's policy and legal expertise — a safety net for school boards



*Jonelle Adams, WSSDA Executive Director*

I am often made aware that WSSDA's ability to respond quickly to policy and legal questions provides cost savings and a safety net to districts. Carefully crafted and properly applied school district policies are the best safeguard against legal trouble. The guidance we offer helps districts avoid mistakes that can lead to costly litigation or fines. During the past year, our staff responded to nearly 2,000 requests for help with policy and legal issues. The cost to districts of using private attorneys for this guidance would amount to an estimated \$500,000.

This supportive role was exemplified by the amicus (friend of the court) brief WSSDA filed in support of the Seattle School Board's appeal of a King County Superior Court decision regarding the school board's adoption of a particular math curriculum. The court had concluded there was insufficient evidence to support the curriculum adoption—that the Seattle School Board's choice of its math textbooks had been arbitrary and capricious—and ordered the board to undertake further review. WSSDA took no position on the merits of the curriculum; rather, it supported the school district's arguments that the board followed procedures set forth in law and made a reasonable decision based on a comprehensive review of math materials. In its brief, WSSDA argued that 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. (See full text of brief at [www.courts.wa.gov/content/Briefs/A01/650360%20Amicus%20Curiae.pdf](http://www.courts.wa.gov/content/Briefs/A01/650360%20Amicus%20Curiae.pdf)).

Late last month the Washington State Court of Appeals unanimously reversed the earlier court decision. (See related story on this page.) The appellate court's ruling means that school districts may select textbooks without constant fear of court intervention.

In this, and so many other ways, WSSDA has been here to support you. Districts are held accountable to many state agencies, such as the State Auditor and OSPI. The assistance WSSDA provides with governance, policy and legal matters helps districts stay in compliance, so that they can devote their time and energy to increasing student achievement.

As WSSDA's existence continues to be threatened through proposed legislation, we must remember the benefits of our unique structure as an independent voice and self-governing association, rather than as an agency which reports to a state entity. WSSDA has a singular role in that it represents every school board, and therefore every public school student in our state. Within our current structure we can speak with a unified voice to advocate for a world-class education for all children. Thank you for all you do every day, and especially for your strong voices of advocacy during this difficult legislative season.

*Jonelle Adams*

## Appeals court upholds Seattle board's decision on math textbooks

In a victory for local school board authority, the Washington State Court of Appeals has rejected a legal challenge to the Seattle School Board's selection of math textbooks.

Last month, the Appeals Court affirmed the Seattle board's adoption of the "Discovering" series of high school math textbooks. The ruling overturns a lower court decision which concluded there was insufficient evidence to support the board's adoption.

"However much the challengers may believe the Board should have disapproved the books," the appeals court said, "the record establishes there was room for two opinions, and we cannot say the Board failed to give due and honest consideration to its decision."

WSSDA filed an amicus (friend of the court) brief supporting the Seattle board's authority to determine local educational policy. Emphasizing that WSSDA takes no position on the merits of the Discovering textbooks, the brief supported 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 pointed 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.

# Call for session proposals: 2011 WSSDA Annual Conference: *Take Charge!*



November 17-20, 2011  
Hyatt Regency Bellevue

What do school directors need to know and do to provide the highest quality educational leadership possible during these difficult times? If you have a proven program, practice or policy that would empower directors, please share it via a session at the WSSDA Annual Conference.

For detailed information and proposal submission forms, visit [wssda.org/conference](http://wssda.org/conference).

The deadline for session proposals is Monday, May 16.

## Legislative proposals requested

Each year, WSSDA's Legislative Committee requests proposals from school boards in order to develop its annual legislative package. These proposals, together with ongoing permanent positions, are annually prioritized so that legislators and WSSDA staff are clear on the association's most important legislative issues. Your participation in this process strengthens the association, and therefore, its influence with legislators.

Instructions for submitting legislative proposals can be found at [wssda.org](http://wssda.org) under Advocacy & Legislation. Please check WSSDA's permanent positions ([wssda.org](http://wssda.org) > WSSDA Information > Bylaws and Positions) to avoid duplication as you formulate your proposals. Proposals must be received by WSSDA no later than Friday, May 27, 2011.

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For more information or to arrange a demonstration, call 800-407-0141 or visit [www.boarddocs.com](http://www.boarddocs.com).

**WSSDA**  
Washington State  
School Directors' Association

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The advertisement features a central image of a pocket watch and a US one hundred dollar bill. The watch is open, and the bill is partially overlapping it. The background is a light, textured grey.

## Lighthouse funding available

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](mailto:P.Gore@wssda.org).



## Spring Regional Meetings continue

*Legislative updates; education news; communication training*

School Board/ Superintendent teams are invited to attend WSSDA's Spring Regional Meetings. In addition to a lively

dinner discussion, each Regional Meeting includes 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 several 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).

# Superintendent evaluation workshops

Superintendent evaluations are the subject of two-hour workshops which precede several Spring Regional Meetings.

A thorough knowledge of the evaluation process is essential for measuring success and providing guidance to your superintendent. Key elements of the evaluation process will be discussed, 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 this month are:

- 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; for those attending individually the cost is \$75.

Questions? Please contact Phil Gore (P.Gore@wssda.org or 360.252.3020). To register, visit [wssda.org/workshops](http://wssda.org/workshops).

### Spring Regional Meetings continue

DA 5	* Rainier	Wednesday, April 13
DA 6	Woodland	Wednesday, April 13**
DA 3	Carbonado	Thursday, April 14
DA 11	* Connell	Monday, April 18
DA 7	Soap Lake	Wednesday, April 20
DA 8	* Wapato	Thursday, April 21
DA 2	* Burien	Thursday, April 21

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

## WELCOME, NEW SCHOOL DIRECTORS!

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

- Erik Johansen, *Colville*
- Michael Thomas, *Lamont*
- Gary Chadwick, *Mount Baker*
- Karl Kanthak, *Mount Pleasant*
- Starla Daman, *Quillayute Valley*
- Christine Kilduff, *University Place*

Jim Gadberry, *Washougal*  
Terrie Hutchins, *Washougal*

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

- Karen Lehman, *Battle Ground*
- Robert Anderson, *Colville*
- Mel Fox, *Colville*

- Bernard Thomas, *Ferndale*
- Ted Thomas, *Longview*
- David Smith, *Mount Baker*
- John Morris, *Mount Pleasant*
- Jerry Nelson, *Oroville*
- Orlan Gessford, *Washougal*
- Thomas Huffman, *Washougal*

# Magna Awards honor Everett and Vancouver

*American School Board Journal's* Magna Awards recognized two Washington state districts in its Honorable Mention category. Three school boards nationwide were named Grand Prize Winners, 15 were named Magna Award Winners, and 15 were given honorable mention. The Magna Awards recognize examples of excellent school board leadership. Many of this year's winning programs addressed dropout prevention, credit recovery and college and career readiness, community engagement, closing the achievement gap, and helping disadvantaged children learn.

Everett Public Schools showcased its On-time Graduation Task Force. In 2003 only half of students entering Everett's high schools went on to graduate, and this low rate galvanized the board, community and staff to act. They launched policy and oversight systems, invested resources, and set improvement expectations. A team of high school principals and other staff began weekly meetings to look at the data and the barriers to graduation. They established interventions, pulled in community resources and more. Today, with the team still meeting weekly, the graduation rate is 82 percent.

Everett's board members are Ed Peterson (president), Jeff Russell, Carol Andrews, Kristie Dutton and Jessica Olson.

For further information on Everett's award-winning program contact Mary Waggoner ([mwaggoner@everettsd.org](mailto:mwaggoner@everettsd.org)).

Vancouver School District's Family-Community Resource Centers program was honored. Vancouver's county has the state's highest rate of unemployment, and its students experience the array of issues typical of families in poverty. The district established family-community resource centers in nine high-poverty schools to provide "wrap-around" support. At each site, a coordinator connects families with assistance such as food, shelter, clothing, employment, transportation, child care and health care. Community and business alliances have been forged in each center.

Results include increased achievement, attendance, and kindergarten readiness, and decreases in student mobility and discipline referrals.

Vancouver's board members are Edri Geiger (president), Mark Stoker, Kathy Gillespie, Mari Greves and Dale Q. Rice. To learn more about Vancouver's program contact Thomas R. Hagley, Jr. at [tom.hagley@vansd.org](mailto:tom.hagley@vansd.org).

Visit [www.asbj.com/MagnaSearch](http://www.asbj.com/MagnaSearch) to explore the Magna Best Practices Database for issues and solutions contributed by districts nationwide.

## Healthier US Schools Challenge offers incentives

Over the past 30 years, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled. Today almost one in three U.S. children is overweight or obese, with numbers nearing 40% in African American and Hispanic communities.

First Lady Michelle Obama recently hosted a conference call at the White House to promote the *HealthierUS Schools Challenge* (HUSCC). The *Challenge* is a voluntary initiative established in 2004 to recognize National School Lunch Program schools that have created healthier environments by promoting nutrition and exercise. In 2009, four elementary schools in the Toppenish School District became the first in Washington state to receive the *HealthierUS School Challenge* Gold Award.

One year ago, Mrs. Obama introduced *Let's Move!*, an initiative dedicated to solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation. HUSCC is incorporated as a component of *Let's Move!* "Students cannot reach their learning potential if they are not healthy, and that includes eating well and exercising," Obama stated in the conference call.

HUSCC components include training allowing schools to elevate nutrition workers' professional status to "chefs." Another component is incorporating salad bars in schools.

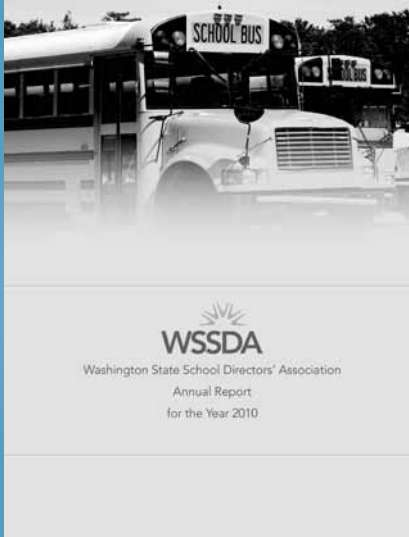
Training information and technical assistance, including menu planning and food buying guidance, are found at the program's website, [www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/index.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/index.html).

With the launch of *Let's Move!*, monetary awards became available for each HUSCC award school at the Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Gold Award of Distinction levels. Application materials are found at the website listed above. Individual schools may apply, and a simplified district application is provided if two or more schools apply from one district.

As of March 1, 2011, 599 schools are certified *HealthierUS Schools Challenge* schools. A goal of 1250 schools by June 2011 has been set.

Representing a HUSCC Gold Award school in Mississippi, a conference call participant stated that her school had received "an unbelievable amount of recognition for this award." She also remarked that the children bring the nutritional learning home, to the benefit of their families. "You can't put a price tag on a child's health," she stated, "In fact, you won't have academic achievement without it."

Individual students may gain recognition by participating in *The President's Physical Fitness Award*; for details, visit [www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org).



## WSSDA Annual Report

WSSDA's bright school-bus yellow *Annual Report for the Year 2010* has been published online. Included are articles by 2010 president, Kevin Laverty and Executive Director Jonelle Adams. Along with a review of the year's successes and activities, the report contains WSSDA's financial statement for the year.

Visit [wssda.org](http://wssda.org) > About WSSDA > Annual Report. If you need the report in an alternate format, please contact Kate Vikstrom (K.Vikstrom@wssda.org, 360.252.3015).

## Financial affairs report due to PDC this month

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 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).

## GIS software license will support STEM studies

Teaching students how to solve problems effectively may get easier with the help of mapping software.

OSPI has signed an agreement with software company Esri that will provide all K-12 schools, districts, and youth clubs statewide with free access to Esri's ArcGIS, a geographic information system (GIS) package that lets users create maps and data.

Because of the unique ability of GIS to visualize spatial data—making complex concepts clear and understandable—teachers can take advantage of the strong instructional support it provides in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects. While the statewide license is new, individual schools in Washington have been using ArcGIS for several years. At Waterville Elementary, fourth-grade students study and map the habits of the short-horned lizard as an annual project. Working closely with scientists at the University of Washington and local farmers, these young scientists have altered the understanding of the region's ecosystem and biodiversity. For information, visit [www.esri.com/industries/k-12](http://www.esri.com/industries/k-12).

## Illegal dumping on trust lands costs students

The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has launched a new interactive online map showing locations of more than 200 sites where illegal dumping occurred last year on Washington state trust lands.

DNR manages 2.1 million acres of forestland to generate revenue for public schools and county services. Along with the Department of Ecology and other agencies, DNR spends hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to clean up household trash, junked vehicles, and commercial and hazardous waste dumped illegally on state trust lands.

Illegal dumping often occurs near forest roads on these lands. Hazardous dumping sites containing discarded industrial solvents or meth labs can cost thousands of dollars each to clean up.

The new online map is intended to show the extent of illegal dumping on state trust lands. It shows locations of the 49 abandoned vehicles, 32 commercial and hazardous waste dumps, and 113 household dumping sites that DNR investigated in 2010.

Unfortunately, most offenders are never caught. DNR is putting hidden cameras and sensors at known trouble spots in an effort to catch offenders. They ask private citizens to help. Arrests have occurred when campers or hunters noted the license plate numbers of vehicles driving into the woods with loads of debris and coming out later, empty. Courts may order those convicted of littering to pay clean-up costs.

To view the map of illegal dumping on state trust lands visit [www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/Topics/OtherNeighborQuestions/Pages/illegaldumping.aspx](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/Topics/OtherNeighborQuestions/Pages/illegaldumping.aspx).

# What are students up to? Survey gives insight

More Washington students are avoiding alcohol according to a recent survey of students. But declines in cigarette smoking continue to stall and an increase in the use of new candy-flavored tobacco products is a concern.

The Healthy Youth Survey is anonymous and voluntary; it is taken every two years by thousands of Washington public school students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. Topics include drug, alcohol and tobacco use, gangs, physical activity, suicide, bullying and more.

For the first time, this year's survey also asked about sexual activity. About 31 percent of 10th graders and 53 percent of 12th graders report having ever had sexual intercourse. About eight percent of 10th graders and 17 percent of 12th graders reported they had four or more sexual partners. Among those who had ever had sexual intercourse, 63 percent of 10th graders and 54 percent of 12th graders reported using a condom the last time they had intercourse.

Since 2000, youth cigarette smoking has dropped by half, resulting in about 70,000 fewer smokers. However, these dramatic reductions have slowed in recent years, with 10th grade smoking remaining flat at about 13 percent from 2004 to

2010. Among youth who use tobacco, about half report using other tobacco products flavored to taste like candy. Chewing tobacco use by 10th graders is on the rise, particularly among girls; the rate has more than doubled in the past 10 years to more than three percent.

Drinking is down for 8th graders, from 29 percent in 1990 to 14 percent in 2010. Drinking among 10th graders has dropped from 44 to 28 percent. Since 2008, about 20,000 more youth in 8th, 10th, and 12th grade report that their parents talked to them about not drinking alcohol.

Alcohol is the primary drug of abuse among youth, but since 2008, there are about 11,000 fewer youth drinking alcohol. Pain medicine abuse is down among 12th graders.

There is more work to do in other areas. When students are depressed, abuse substances, are bullied and feel unsafe at school, they're less likely to succeed academically. About seven percent of 10th graders attempted suicide in the past year—down from the previous survey. Of 10th graders surveyed in 2010, 85 percent said they felt safe at school.

Visit [www.doh.wa.gov/healthyouth/reports/default.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/healthyouth/reports/default.htm) for survey fact sheets and further information.

## NEWS BRIEFS

The Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA), PEMCO Insurance, and School Employees Credit Union of Washington recognized Bill Motsenbocker, superintendent of Liberty School District, and Trina Hall, curriculum director of Mount Baker School District, as recipients of the 2011 Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Awards. The awards were presented at the WASA Small Schools Conference in Wenatchee last month. An administrator for the large district category will be awarded in May at WASA's Superintendent Workshop in Chelan.

The cash award can be used for personal or professional growth or to support a school or district program.

Motsenbocker, Liberty administrator for four years, has led the effort to upgrade instructional technology, establishing a focused staff development program in instructional best practices and the use of instructional technology.

Hall has led district staff and community through a rigorous process of research and data analysis in the development of clearly established high expectations for all students. Because she has included staff from every school, there has been a high level of commitment to the work and loyalty to the collective effort, and the results have been lauded.

The Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) Board of Directors has named John Welch as the next superintendent of PSESD. Welch, currently superintendent of Highline School District, will join PSESD in September. Together with PSESD's current superintendent, Dr. Monte Bridges, Welch will co-lead the agency for one year with the goal of a smooth transition and uninterrupted progress in serving the region's early learning and K-12 needs. Welch will assume solo superintendent duties in July 2012.

*Technology Counts 2011: K-12 Seeks Custom Fit* has been published by *Education Week*. It offers an overview of how educators are moving beyond a one-size-fits-all approach, turning to technology and new teaching methods to provide more personalized learning experiences. An understanding of what personalization through technology means, and definitive research into which strategies and tactics work best, are still evolving. *Technology Counts 2011* profiles schools in California, New York and Vermont to describe how individualized learning is being implemented and evaluated. The report is available online, free of charge at [www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2011/03/17/index.html?intc=TC11EM](http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2011/03/17/index.html?intc=TC11EM)



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Superintendent Evaluation Workshop, Rainier . . . . . April 13
WSSDA Regional Meeting, Rainier . . . . . April 13
WSSDA Regional Meeting, Woodland. . . . . April 13
Paramount Duty Coalition, Olympia. . . . . April 13
WSSDA Regional Meeting, Carbonado . . . . . April 14
WSSDA Superintendent Evaluation Workshop
North Franklin . . . . . April 18
WSSDA Regional Meeting, North Franklin . . . . . April 18
WSSDA Regional Meeting, Soap Lake . . . . . April 20
Superintendent Evaluation Workshop, Burien. . . . . April 21
WSSDA Regional Meeting, Burien . . . . . April 21
WSSDA Regional Meeting, Wapato . . . . . April 21
Superintendent Evaluation Workshop, Wapato . . . . . April 21
WSSDA Board of Directors, Olympia . . . . . April 29-30
Leadership WSSDA, Lacey. . . . . April 29-30

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

NSBA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
San Francisco: April 9-11
AESD ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Seattle: April 14-16
WASHINGTON STATE INDIAN EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Marysville: April 18-20
WASHINGTON STATE PTA CONVENTION
Seattle: April 29-May 1
2011 STARTING STRONG INSTITUTE
Spokane: August 11-12
WSSDA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Pasco: Sept. 23-24
WSSDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Bellevue Hyatt Regency: Nov. 18-20