



# Direct

Washington State School Directors' Association

Nov./Dec. 2011

## Getting ready to 'Take Charge'

Annual Conference focuses on school board leadership for innovation in schools

School directors, superintendents and many others from the education community will gather in Bellevue this month for the WSSDA Annual Conference, a four-day professional development event specifically designed to support school board leaders in strengthening public schools and student achievement.

This year's Conference (Nov. 17-20 at the Bellevue Hyatt Regency) takes place under the theme of "Take Charge of Innovation in Your Schools." Keynote speakers and breakout sessions will provide information and inspiration for transforming schools and improving student achievement.

Packed more than ever with timely, relevant and valuable content, the 2011 Conference programming offers a new level of practical, on-the-ground best practices in educational leadership. World class speakers and state elected officials will address attendees with urgent and compelling appeals to improve governance and outcomes for student learning.

Featured speakers and presenters include

• **Bill Daggett**, CEO of the International Center for Leadership in Education and a recognized expert in moving education systems toward more rigorous and relevant skills and knowledge for all students. He has assisted states and hundreds of school districts with school improvement initiatives.

• **Diane Ravitch**, author and historian of education who has advised numerous state and national leaders about education policy. Ravitch is a prominent voice in the



Daggett



Ravitch



Danielson



Gregoire



Dorn



Beck



Symonds

The 2011 WSSDA Annual Conference features a powerful lineup of general session keynoters, early-bird session presenters and distinguished speakers

national debate over the future of public education and is recognized for her many articles and books.

• **Charlotte Danielson**, an educational consultant who specializes in teacher quality and evaluation, curriculum planning, performance assessment, and professional development.

• **Lynn Beck**, Dean and Professor of Education at the University of the Pacific and an authority in establishing

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# Looking back, looking ahead

Deborah Heart, WSSDA President



As I look back on my tenure as a member of your board of directors, I am amazed at the changes we have undergone: a new executive director, a reconstituted state board of education, yet another round of education reform ... the list is too expansive to include here.

As I look forward, I envision a strong, vital association, one that has proven to be the foremost authority on public education issues. I see a Legislature that fulfills its paramount duty and funds education as our constitution requires. I see generations of students continuing to achieve at progressively higher levels.

What I envision and, daresay, hope for, is possible. It will require a continuation of the dedication each of us offer our home districts. It will also require a continuum of the strong local governance that we, as locally elected officials, provide.

In every district across our state, amazing things are occurring in classrooms. Students are actualizing their potential because of our efforts, in spite of fewer resources, more demands from those outside our community, even outside our state and certainly outside the education community. We are being driven from political arenas rather than from research and best practices. This must stop.

Public education is in the midst of a paradigm shift. The insidious erosion of local governance is compounded by decreasing funding while simultaneously being confronted by increasing accountability and shifting standards.

The good news is that we have always found creative ways to 'do more with less' while striving for increased student achievement. Now we must increase our own board achievement and illustrate how innovative our public schools already are and the potentiality for sustained improvement.

During my visits, and conversations across the state, I have witnessed myriad examples of just how inventive public schools are and how collaborative local boards are with their neighboring districts. The strategic methods employed by governance leaders save money and resources without jeopardizing student achievement. In fact, in spite of being labeled as failing schools, due to failure to meet AYP, Washington public schools are graduating productive individuals who are prepared for their future.

I believe we are standing at a time of great opportunity. We are at the cusp of a paradigm shift in local governance. If we take charge, we can be the authors of change. If we choose not to be the instruments of change, we will be made redundant by those who would impose changes upon us. Those outside harbingers of change do not fully comprehend the philosophy of public education nor, I believe, do they have the best interests of all children as a focus as do we. Nurturing the zeal for learning while meeting standards is a balancing act directors understand.

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

## Conference

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innovative programs to enhance access to the teaching profession for prospective mathematics teachers, paraprofessionals seeking to become special education teachers, and early childhood educators.

• **William Symonds**, director of Pathways to Prosperity, a director at Harvard University and lead author in their report challenging America's education leaders to rethink post-secondary opportunities, particularly the assumption that college is the correct path for all students.

WSSDA is also honored to welcome **Gov. Chris Gregoire** and **Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn** as featured speakers at this year's Conference. The appearance by these two statewide elected officials is especially timely as the Legislature prepares to convene a special session Nov. 28 to make further cuts to the state budget.

Conference attendees are encouraged to use the online Conference planner to personalize their day-to-day conference activities and meetings (available as a smart phone app), and to provide feedback on the breakout sessions by going online to [wssda.org/rateyoursession](http://wssda.org/rateyoursession). All Conference information, including presentation materials, is available online at [wssda.org/conference](http://wssda.org/conference).

Registrants should be looking for an "Off-to-Conference" email in their inbox with final details about how best to prepare and get the most from your Conference experience. We look forward to seeing you and believe you will be thrilled with the value Annual Conference brings to you and your work this year.

## Board adopts WSSDA legislative priorities

The WSSDA Board of Directors has adopted the association's top legislative priorities for the upcoming special session and 2012 regular session. The priorities were based on recommendations from the Legislative Committee and on the position rankings from the September meeting of the Legislative Assembly.

The board took action at a special teleconference meeting held Oct. 28. The top priorities are:

- Implement the new definition basic education and funding formula changes as adopted in 2009 by the Legislature under ESHB 2261.
- Establish a comprehensive, stable and sustainable funding system for education.
- Fund Local Effort Assistance (LEA).

In addition, the board considered some guiding principles to be used in budget discussions over the coming months.

These include:

- Avoid mid-year or retroactive cuts in the 2011-12 school year.
- Provide statutory relief from locally bargained contracts to create flexibility to best meet student needs.
- Stop using school district fund balances to backfill state obligations.

Eliminating unfunded mandates scored high among Legislative Assembly delegates but is not listed in the top priorities because it is clearly a priority for the association, and is viewed as more of a "given" than a priority.

As always, WSSDA will oppose any new requirements to districts. Members and staff also will push for legislation that makes most current state-level requirements for public schools voluntary, and suspends requirements that have not been implemented. School directors are encouraged to have conversations with their boards, superintendents and finance officers to identify burdensome reporting and activities that don't add value to student learning.

In light of the current state and local budget situations, the board will continue to refine the priorities and choices around proposed budget cuts based on input from membership.

Forty-seven new positions were adopted by voting delegates at the Legislative Assembly. These were in addition to the 41 Standing Legislative Positions that had been approved as part of a regular legislative agenda. Delegates ranked their top 10 of the 88 positions; the list of all positions in priority order is available at [wssda.org](http://wssda.org) > Legislative > Our Priorities and Positions > 2012 Positions.

Typically the board would adopt priorities at its November board meeting during Annual Conference. With Gov. Chris Gregoire's announcement of alternatives and preliminary choices (see article below), and the fact the legislative budget negotiators are drafting their own versions of the supplemental budget now, the board acted to make sure WSSDA's voice was heard and part of the deliberations.

## Governor offers 'alternatives' for budget cuts

As this issue of *WSSDA Direct* went to press, Gov. Chris Gregoire presented a list of about \$4 billion in "budget reduction alternatives," including her "preliminary choices" to bridge a projected \$1.4 billion shortfall in the current biennium.

For K-12 advocates, her preliminary choices list represents \$365.373 million in cuts and eliminations, including \$150 million in cuts to Local Effort Assistance.

The governor also proposes shifting the June 30, 2013 apportionment payment by a day to July 1, 2013, which moves a \$330 million payment into the 2013-15 biennium and avoids a deeper cut to K-12 in this biennium.

Recognizing the terrible impact mid-year and retroactive cuts had on districts last session, the governor would start most most cuts to K-12 in the 2012-13 school year, and make changes to LEA starting in January 2013.

For additional details and updates, see WSSDA's online legislative reports at [wssda.org](http://wssda.org) > Legislative > Legislative Updates and Reports.

## Legislative Conference registration now open

Registration is now open for the 2012 WSSDA/WASA Legislative Conference, which will be held Jan. 29-30 at the Olympia Red Lion Hotel and the State Capitol.

The Conference is your opportunity to get up-to-date information on key education issues and communicate directly with your legislators on priority issues and concerns.

For online registration and information on reserving accommodations, visit [www.wasa-oly.org/2012LegConf](http://www.wasa-oly.org/2012LegConf).

# WSSDA launches online board self-assessment

WSSDA is pleased to announce the launch of a new online board self-assessment tool, designed by board members for board members.

Research-based and scientifically validated, the WSSDA Online Board Self-Assessment was developed from the Washington School Board Standards through funds from the Stuart Foundation and in partnership with The BERC Group and Anderson Data Solutions.

Every school district in the state has received a link to its personalized assessment. (The link was sent to the board's secretary—the superintendent—to forward to all directors.) Upon completion of the assessment by each board member, the district receives a report back to the board on how the board members assess their performance in governance to improve student achievement in their district.

The reports are based on best practices for representation of data, as developed by Data First, a new training service available through WSSDA. The reports provide boards an overview of how they are performing against the standards and details for how they are meeting benchmarks and indicators for success.

Aggregated data collected from boards across the state can inform WSSDA of the training and services board members most need to address their improvement goals. Information from the survey can also increase WSSDA's understanding of board member practices, which will help provide insight into how to improve outcomes for students.

For more information on the self-assessment service, contact WSSDA Leadership Specialist Colleen Miller at [C.Miller@wssda.org](mailto:C.Miller@wssda.org) or 360.252.3006.

"We're excited to launch this cutting-edge, dues-supported service for WSSDA members," said Miller. "We welcome your participation and feedback."

## January is School Board Recognition Month!

Gov. Chris Gregoire has declared January 2012 to be School Board Recognition Month in the state of Washington, coinciding with a nationwide effort to



**SCHOOLBOARD**  
*recognition month*

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 will be available in December at [wssda.org/sbrm](http://wssda.org/sbrm). In addition, personalized certificates for each board member will be mailed to every district based on information in WSSDA's membership database. To be sure your district information is up to date, please contact Antonio Gonzalez at [T.Gonzalez@wssda.org](mailto:T.Gonzalez@wssda.org), or 360.493.9231.

## WELCOME, NEW SCHOOL DIRECTORS!

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

Andrew McLaurin, *Ferndale*  
Joseph Peters, *Griffin*  
Deon Pakootas, *Keller*  
John Gahagan, *Mukilteo*  
Leslie Robb, *Skamania*

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

Thomas Christensen, *Cashmere*  
David Elliott, *Griffin*  
Cheryl Richmond, *Keller*  
Amanda Stehlar, *Loon Lake*  
Roberta Doster, *Skamania*

As 2011 comes to a close, WSSDA would like to extend its thanks and best wishes to the many school directors who will be concluding their school board service at the end of the year. Your contributions to Washington's schools and students are deeply appreciated.





Lead the way to learning

The National School Boards Association's Annual Conference will help you become a better leader for your district. Get a national perspective on today's education issues in over 200 sessions:

- Hear updates on how the legislative agenda and federal court cases may impact your district
- Get best practices and new insights from your colleagues across the country
- See how technology can transform the learning process in the expanded Technology Track

Bring your leadership team to share insights and make a greater impact on your district.

*a better tomorrow*  
**STARTS TODAY**

[WWW.NSBA.ORG/CONFERENCE](http://WWW.NSBA.ORG/CONFERENCE)  
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

## 'Schools of Distinction' honored

Outstanding improvement in student achievement led to a special honor for 99 schools around the state this fall; all were selected to receive the 2011 School of Distinction Award from The Center for Educational Effectiveness, the Association of Educational Service Districts, the Association of Washington School Principals, Phi Delta Kappa-Washington Chapter, the Washington Association of School Administrators, Washington State ASCD and WSSDA.

Award recipients were selected based on demonstrated improvement in reading and math. Winners include 53 elementary schools, 22 middle / junior high schools, 17 high schools and seven alternative schools. This represents the 5th annual School of Distinction award recognition in Washington state.

A complete list of award recipients and details on the award selection methodology are available on the CEE website at [effectiveness.org](http://effectiveness.org).

## NEWS BRIEFS

Mark Ray, a teacher librarian at Skyview High School in Vancouver, has been named Washington's 2012 Teacher of the Year. Ray was selected from a group of nine finalists named from each of the state's Educational Service Districts. As the Washington Teacher of the Year, Ray will serve as an ambassador for the teaching profession in 2011-12 while maintaining his duties at Skyview. He will also be considered for the National Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced next spring.

A reminder that applications for Innovation Schools/ Innovation Zones are due Jan. 6, 2012. Approved schools will be eligible for waivers from certain state rules. Priority is placed on schools focused on arts, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs that actively partner with the community, business and higher education to implement project-based or hands-on learning. Learn more at [www.k12.wa.us/InnovativeSchools/](http://www.k12.wa.us/InnovativeSchools/).

Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn announced the official launch of the Jobs for Washington's Graduates program last month. The program assists high school students at high risk of dropping out by identifying graduation barriers. It also works with local businesses to help with job placement, and provides support for students interested in post-secondary education, military service or internships. JWG is the state's chapter of the Jobs for America's Graduates program ([www.jag.org](http://www.jag.org)).

Dec. 16 is the last day to apply for the Leadership WSSDA Class of 2012. Designed to develop proactive, visionary leaders, Leadership WSSDA offers committed school board members from across the state the opportunity to work closely together, sharing ideas and experiences throughout a year-long course. Learn more at [wssda.org](http://wssda.org) > Services > Leadership Development > Leadership WSSDA.

# School districts exploring option to offer state driver exams

The 2011 Legislature enacted HB 1635, a bill designed to lower wait times at state licensing offices by allowing school districts that provide driver's education and private driving schools the opportunity to offer written and driving exams under contract with the state.

A work group was established in July comprised of Department of Licensing (DOL) staff, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and representatives of school districts and private driving schools to discuss how the opportunity might be implemented, address questions, and build a system that would help eliminate an extra trip to a licensing office for a test.

Under the new law, DOL would continue to issue the actual driver's license. School districts and private driving schools would be able to allow students to take the written and driving test, with information being passed to DOL to issue the license.

Under the bill, DOL and OSPI, consulting with school districts, are directed to develop standards and requirements to administer each portion of the driver licensing exams that are comparable to those required of private driver training schools. In addition, individual school districts—or their contractors—would enter into agreements with DOL to ensure the exams meet state requirements.

The instruction and curriculum remains under the authority of the school district. The new option is solely for the administration of the state exams that must be passed prior to getting a driver's license. These exams will be consistent across the state, whether they are taken at a DOL office, private driving school or through a school district.

Many issues have been raised at the work group meetings, and copies of the meeting minutes and information about the project can be found at the Washington Traffic Safety Educators Association (WTSEA) website at <https://sites.google.com/site/wtseanews/>.

School districts that offer traffic safety programs through their schools or under contract with their Educational Service District or other entity are encouraged to learn more about this option and to provide input into the program as it is developed. For more information or to get engaged, please email [DOL1635PRO@dol.wa.gov](mailto:DOL1635PRO@dol.wa.gov).

## Voting underway for State Board



Marsh



Dal Porto



Rigney



McMullen



Porter



Fletcher



Hilyard



Brownfield



Lavery

School board members around the state are now voting in this year's elections for State Board of Education. Ballots were sent by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in late October and are due back by Nov. 28.

Two of the five WSSDA-elected SBE positions are up for election this year. Candidates for Position 1 (Eastern Washington) are Steve Dal Porto (Quincy), Carolyn Marsh (Burbank), Cynthia McMullen (Spokane Valley) and James R. Rigney (Yakima). Candidates for Position 3 (Western Washington) are Sally Brownfield (Shelton), Connie Fletcher (Issaquah), Tom L. Hilyard (Tacoma), Kevin Lavery (Mukilteo) and Neal Porter (Seattle).

WSSDA is providing both a printed and online guide to the State Board elections. Both guides include biographical information, candidate statements and answers to three questions posed by WSSDA. The online guide (available at [wssda.org](http://wssda.org)) also offers audio statements from several of the candidates.

Candidates have also been invited to attend the WSSDA Annual Conference, where they will be introduced and have an opportunity to meet informally with attendees.

Election results announced in early December. If a runoff is necessary, it will be conducted in December.



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## Four schools recognized as Title I, Part A Distinguished Schools

Four schools in Washington State have been recognized as Title I, Part A Distinguished Schools, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction announced recently.

Crownhill Elementary (Bremerton School District) and Evergreen Heights Elementary (Auburn) each won National Title I, Part A Distinguished School awards. In addition, Bemiss Elementary (Spokane) and East Port Orchard Elementary (South Kitsap) won the same awards at the state level.

The awards are given to schools that have exceptional student performance or that have demonstrated that they are closing the achievement gap between student groups.

The Title I, Part A Distinguished Awards program, which began in 1996, honors Title I, Part A schools for achieving high educational standards. The program is a joint project of the National Title I Association (NASTID) and the U.S. Department of Education.

Each school will receive an award of \$5,000 or \$10,000 plus money to be used to send two or four people to the 2012 National Title I Conference in Seattle next January.

## Hundreds turn out for WSSDA's Fall Regional Meetings

Many thanks to all those who attended the Fall Series of WSSDA Regional Meetings.

Twelve sessions were held around the state in September and October, with presentations on Innovation Schools and Innovation Zones, K-12 Funding Issues, Charter Schools, High School Graduation Requirements and other topics.

Attendance at this fall's meetings was just under 400, including nearly 300 school directors. A total of 194 districts were represented at this year's sessions.

If your district is interested in hosting a future WSSDA Regional meeting, contact Terri Eixenberger at [T.Eixenberger@wssda.org](mailto:T.Eixenberger@wssda.org) or 360.493.9231.



Director Area 5 Regional Meeting in Napavine



WSSDA Direct is published ten times a year by the Washington State School Directors' Association to provide information of interest to school directors and the education community.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

State General Election . . . . . Nov. 8
State Board of Education, Vancouver . . . . . Nov. 9-10
Veterans' Day . . . . . Nov. 11
Leadership WSSDA, Bellevue . . . . . Nov. 16-17
WSSDA Annual Conference, Bellevue . . . . . Nov. 17-20
WSSDA Board of Directors, Bellevue . . . . . Nov. 17 & 20
WSSDA IAC, Bellevue . . . . . Nov. 17 & 20
WSSDA Resolutions Committee, Bellevue . . . . . Nov. 17 & 20
WSSDA Nominating Committee, Bellevue . . . . . Nov. 17
WSSDA Smalls Schools TF, Bellevue . . . . . Nov. 19
WSSDA Federal Relations Network, Bellevue . . . . . Nov. 20
WSSDA School Trust Lands TF, Bellevue . . . . . Nov. 20
WSSDA Urban-Suburban Schools TF . . . . . Nov. 20
Thanksgiving . . . . . Nov. 24
State Holiday . . . . . Nov. 25
SBE Election Ballots Due . . . . . Nov. 28

WSSDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Bellevue Hyatt Regency: Nov. 17-20
WSSDA/WASA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
Olympia: January 29 - 30, 2012
NSBA FEDERAL RELATIONS NETWORK CONFERENCE
Washington D.C: Feb. 5-7, 2012
NSBA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Boston: April 21-23, 2012