



Executive Board to use results **Membership Survey to be Returned by Dec. 1**

County school board members should have received their copy of the W. Va. School Boards Association's "Membership Survey – Fall 2003," according to association Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D.

O'Cull said the survey, suggested by attendees of a session that preceded the Nov. 7 Presidents Retreat in Morgantown (Radisson Hotel), will provide guidance to the association's Executive Board in making some "significant decisions regarding the role of the organization." He said the decisions are critical given the need for WVSBA to become "adaptive to members' current and anticipated needs, and the need to serve our board member/superintendent core constituency."

The 37-item survey doesn't require postage for forwarding to WVSBA, and must be returned by Dec. 1, according to O'Cull.

He said survey results will be compiled by a researcher at the Marshall University Graduate College, and will comprise a large portion of the Dec. 6 WVSBA Executive Board meeting.

"I envision the Executive Board having a general discus-

sion regarding these topics. From there, I expect the president [William J. Raglin – Kanawha] to appoint a committee to study the issues further, making recommendations at the February 2004 Annual Business Meeting," said O'Cull.

Several items were discussed at the Presidents Retreat, including bullying. The Showtime film, "Bang Bang You're Dead," served as the prompt for this program segment, which was lead by Kimberly Croyle, an attorney with Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love PLLC in Morgantown. O'Cull lead a discussion focusing on **Senate Bill 522**, legislation aimed at strengthening accountability of county boards of education and county superintendents.

All three WVSBA staff members discussed various issues at the retreat, including the federal No Child Left Behind Act, with Executive Assistant Jason Keeling pointing out several ways in which the law potentially strengthens local school boards. Administrative Assistant Shirley Davidson reviewed matters concerning school board member training, especially procedural aspects.

About 58 board officers attended the meeting, along with one county schools superintendent.

Meeting open to members **Executive Board to Meet Dec. 6 in Flatwoods**

The W.Va. School Boards Association Executive Board will meet Saturday, Dec. 6 in Flatwoods (Days Inn). The meeting will commence at 2:00 p.m. or immediately upon adjournment of the association's Committee on Legislation meeting, slated for earlier in the day.

In its deliberation, the Executive Board will review findings of a membership survey regarding the future direction of the organization. The board also will make a final determination as to WVSBA's legislative agenda, and plan for the FY05 Annual Business Meeting, to be held Feb. 13 in Charles-

ton (Marriott Hotel).

Regarding the future direction of the organization, President William J. Raglin said the membership surveys will form the base for most of the executive board's deliberations.

"We'll use the survey results as a 'barometer' regarding association and membership sentiment, although the Executive Board—and eventually delegates who attend the annual membership meeting—are going to have to make the final discernment.

"WVSBA is a very open organization—none of our meetings are scripted—and I feel we've put the right details in place to assess where we need to go as an organization," said Raglin.

The last major membership survey was conducted in 2001, but dealt only with products or services the association could provide members. Results of that survey, undertaken by the WVSBA 21st Century Committee, have formed the basis of the policy service being undertaken with NEOLA Inc., an Ohio-based consulting firm, said Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., association executive director.

Executive Board meetings are open to the membership, county schools superintendents and the public, according to association policy and practice, said O'Cull.

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"If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people."

— Chinese Proverb

Committee on Legislation to Meet

The W.Va. School Boards Association's Committee on Legislation will meet Saturday, Dec. 6 in Flatwoods.

The meeting, at the Days Inn, will commence at 10:00 a.m. and will adjourn by not later than 2:00 p.m.

Committee Chairman Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., association director, will preside.

In this meeting, the committee will determine the association's legislative goals and priorities for the W.Va. Legislature's upcoming 2004 regular session, and will revisit and revise the long-standing listing of association legislative philosophies, the document under-girding WWSBA's legislative efforts and pronouncements, said O'Cull.

"That document was first prepared in 1990, and we've used it since that time, mailing copies to legislators, opinion-leaders, state Board of Education members and others," he said.

The Committee on Legislation meeting also will include discussion of several issues relating to a report prepared by Jefferson County Board President Dr. Lori Stilley. That report, prepared for the WWSBA Executive Board, relates to the School Building Authority of W.Va.

O'Cull said several other legislative matters will be discussed, including the school calendar, teacher and school employee pay, and other issues that have been discussed within the Legislature's interim meetings.

WWSBA Monthly provides county boards of education members, superintendents, and state policymakers with information regarding WWSBA programs and activities. This publication does not necessarily reflect the official views, opinions or policies of the WWSBA, unless specifically stated.

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Vollmer to Keynote Winter Conference

Jamie Vollmer, Iowa attorney and businessman-turned-education consultant, will keynote the W.Va. School Boards Association's 2004 Winter Conference program, slated for Friday, Feb. 13 in Charleston (Marriott Hotel).

Vollmer's message is one of inclusion and talking up public education—points he recently made at a presentation to the W. Va. Education Association in Charleston and to the Kentucky School Boards Association.

In his KSBA speech, Vollmer is quoted as saying, "You've got a lot of people who feel it is not their job anymore to support public education. Every year they get older, they worry more about healthcare, insurance, crime and infrastructure. They don't see a relationship between their lives and schools."

Vollmer, once a fierce critic of public education, will provide conference attendees with several ideas and suggestions for "reconnecting to the community," including working with individual constituent groups such as senior citizens, the clergy, and businesspersons. The goal is both to inform and "educate," while also "listening" to parents' concerns, says Vollmer.

Finally, in regard to public school "enemies," Vollmer says he "[doesn't] dwell [on them], but they are working night and day to undermine the system and they are feeding your local clergy a lot of garbage about what goes on in your public schools." He uses clergy as an example of "powerful opinion-makers. I can't think of a group more important to this conversation than your local pastors."

Vollmer's presentation will include interactive exercises with members and county superintendents.

The presentation is set from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., Feb. 13.

Other program details are being finalized.

The FY05 Annual Business Meeting, including election of officers for 2004-'05 and the ensuing year's budget, will also be part of the conference.

Conference Registration

Winter Conference notification will be made in early December, with county board executive secretaries provided the necessary registration information as well as lodging information. The date to reserve rooms at the Marriott Hotel (discounted rate) is Jan. 26, 2004.

If you would like more information about the program, please contact WWSBA Conference Registrar Shirley Davidson at sdavidson@wvsba.org.

Stay Informed.

On the Web at:
WWSBA.ORG



Project Leadership Program Slated for December

The final of three Project Leadership programs will be held Dec. 8-10 in Charleston (Embassy Suites Hotel).

This program segment will include presentations relating to leadership opportunities inherent within the federal No Child Left Behind Act, as well as information regarding emergent school facility needs in the 21st century, the role of information in school board decisionmaking, and a program relating to school superintendents' roles in school budgeting, among other topics. That program will be conducted by State Superintendent of Schools David Stewart.

PL is an initiative designed for those executive level school administrators, principals and teachers who, at some point in their career, aspire to become county schools superintendents.

The W. Va. School Boards Association sponsors the PL

sessions, along with the W.Va. Association of School Administrators and W.Va. Department of Education.

About 115 persons are scheduled to attend.

Dr. Mark Manchin, McDowell County Schools Superintendent, will host a concluding program whereby county superintendents will discuss various issues they have encountered and how they've addressed those, including difficulties with school board members, dealing with the public, and working with state agencies and entities.

The inaugural PL session was held last December in Morgantown, with a follow-up session held in Bridgeport Oct. 7-8.

For more information on the program, please contact association Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull at hocull@wvsba.org.

Online Training Cohort to be Established

Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., announces that the W. Va. School Boards Association has received a \$20,500 grant from the W.Va. Legislature's School Board Effectiveness Project for the purpose of an online training initiative with Duquesne University.

A total of 15 persons will be selected for the program, including one or two W.Va. Board of Education members, at least one county superintendent. The remaining participants will be county board members chosen based on a wide array of characteristics, including geography, county size, rural or non-rural school board, age, gender, and other factors, said O'Cull.

Members, he said, would have to apply through a formal application process for program consideration. Application forms will be mailed in early December. The program commences in January 2004, with Duquesne officials on site at the Winter Conference to work directly with participants.

"We're trying to see whether or not a program such as this has validity. We have several members who because of illness particularly or employment duties have some difficulty receiving their seven training hours. This might be one vehicle that we can explore. We also just want to see how viable e-training is," said O'Cull.

All training programs will be customized to school boards, and will have a leadership focus. Association counsel Howard E. Seufer Jr., Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love PLLC is being consulted to design one program.

Other program considerations relate to whether members have a "dial-up" Internet connection or DSL, and the program is geared to work with both type connections. "The Duquesne people, who have been involved in Web training since 1987, have developed a way that AOL-users and others who primarily use dial-up connections can fully participate," said O'Cull.

Members will "log-in," working to complete five training modules by May 2004.

The group will form the first cohort for training and will participate through making comments on a "bulletin

board," through interaction with other members, and through completion of various assigned readings and homework.

"I think this is exciting, and I'm glad we were able to work with Duquesne to bring the program here. This is our first such venture; we're breaking new ground," said O'Cull.

He may be reached at hocull@wvsba.org for details.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Committee on Legislation

December 6, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Flatwoods, Days Inn

Executive Board Meeting

December 6, 2:00 p.m.
Flatwoods, Days Inn

Winter Conference

February 13/14, 2004
Charleston, Marriott Hotel

WVSBA Monthly

A West Virginia School Boards Association Publication
P.O. Box 1008
Charleston, WV 25324