



## Education Writer to Keynote Meeting

Jay Mathews, *Washington Post* education columnist, will be the keynote speaker at the W. Va. School Boards Association's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, slated for September 10/11, 2004 in Charleston (Marriott Hotel). Mathews will speak at a 7:00 p.m., September 10, banquet.

A popular speaker on educational topics, Mathews has appeared in 20 states over the past 15 years, including forums ranging from educational conventions to national television networks such as NBC, MSNBC and CNN. He also has contributed articles to *The New Republic*, one of the nation's most respected magazines of politics and opinion.

"We've tried to secure Mr. Mathews for past association conferences, but due to scheduling conflicts, he wasn't able to attend. This year, things worked out. Mr. Mathews has much to say about public schooling, both as a journalist and author," said association Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D.

He said Mathews is "very aware of the progress being made with education in West Virginia as well as some of our challenges. His remarks will center on how to make public schools more relevant, exciting and challenging, and he'll address the issue from several perspectives, including governance."

According to the WVSBA staff, other conference details are "coming into place." O'Cull previously announced that Marshall University researcher Michael Hicks, Ph.D., will discuss student achievement in a plenary session and has confirmed that Deputy State Superintendent Steven Paine will lead a session regarding the W. Va. Department of Education's newly-inaugurated school improvement program. "These two programs are arranged back-to-back. That will provide for maximum impact," said O'Cull.

Other programming relates to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court of Appeals' *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which paved the way for an end to segregated

schools. "I'm really pleased with how this panel is shaping. One preeminent topic: Are schools – and society – 're-segregating' along lines that are not necessarily racial but also geographic, economic, and cultural? The answers, as expounded by our panelists, may surprise you. Yes, this will be a good, solid program," said the WVSBA executive director.

The conference also features these offerings:

- Three concurrent workshops, one relating to the federal No Child Left Behind Act;
- The 2004 Delegate Assembly Meeting where a Region VIII vacancy (associate director) will be filled until the FY05 Annual Membership

Meeting in March;

- The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet and Reception, at which

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## Directory, Training Venues Information Needed

Association Administrative Assistant Shirley Davidson urges county board members to return the "WVSBA Membership Directory Information" and "Venue(s) of Approved Training Program(s) Options" documents by August 6, 2004.

"The original deadline was July 15. This information is critical for our directory and for us to determine or gauge the W. Va. School Boards training efforts and initiatives," she said.

If a member has misplaced or lost a copy of his or her forms, please contact Davidson: [sdavidson@wvsba.org](mailto:sdavidson@wvsba.org).

The association's directory is published annually, containing the names, addresses, and other contact information for all county board members, county superintendents, legislators and others. It also includes listing of contact information for various governmental officials, education associations and W. Va. Department of Education personnel.

Due to a change in WVSBA fiscal policy, there will be no fee for the directory, which also includes advertising.

Under terms of association policy, the directory isn't issued to external persons, groups and organization. Mailing labels are supplied, however, providing they aren't forwarded to vendors, and providing the WVSBA staff releases mailing labels consistently in regard to requests.

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"What we learn to do, we learn by doing."  
— Thomas Jefferson

# Model Superintendent Policy goes to State Board

The W. Va. School Boards Association/W. Va. Association of School Administrators' "model" county superintendent evaluation policy has been forwarded to the W. Va. Board of Education for consideration at the August WVBE meeting in Charleston.

The document grew out of a series of meetings and discussions between the associations' representatives, beginning in March. The model policy was finally approved at the WVASA Summer Conference held at Stonewall Jackson Resort State Park July 14.

Training regarding the document will be held in mid- to late-August 2004, as required superintendent goal-setting is to be completed by September 15. The training will be conducted via a teleconference, with a videotape then forwarded to all county boards, along with supporting materials.

Under terms of a 2003 statute as well as WVBE Policy, county boards must submit their proposed superintendent evaluative instrument ("process") to the state Board of Education for approval.

Accordingly, the committee developed a model evaluation policy, along with a model evaluation instrument which boards may customize for use in superintendent evaluation. If approved by the WVBE, boards using the WVASA/WVSBA model instrument – or portions of it – will be assured of approval for their process and document. County

boards, however, may use their own instrument or process. At any rate, WVBE approval is required, with the advantage being the associations' model will have had WVBE approval.

WVSBA Counsel Howard E. Seuffer Jr., along with WVSBA, WVASA, and W.Va. Department of Education representatives, will conduct the August training.

More details will follow.

WVASA Executive Director Martha Dean, Ed.D., will present the policy to the WVBE in August. She will be accompanied by representatives of the committee.

Active members of the committee included (WVSBA): Debbie Thompson (Pleasants), President Elect; Carroll Staats (Jackson); and Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., WVSBA Executive Director. WVASA representatives included: Lyn Guy (Monroe), President; Ron Blankenship (Calhoun); Helen Whitehair (Fayette); and, Dean.

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*On the Web at:*  
**WVSBA.ORG**

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

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## KEYNOTE

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WVSBA past presidents will be invited to attend, along with past association officers and county board members;

- A new meeting exhibit format;
- The quarterly WVSBA Executive Board Meeting; and,
- Program segments for the Democrat and Republican gubernatorial candidates. Each candidate will be allotted 30 minutes to speak to conference attendees in separate presentations. (Based on association policy enacted in February, if a candidate can't attend, substitutes or representatives are not permitted.)

Conference mailings, including a pre-meeting brochure, will be forwarded in mid-August. The last day to reserve lodging at the Marriott (WVSBA discounted rate) is August 25. (Board executive secretaries have been informed of these details.) For those who prefer, lodging also can be secured before Aug. 20 at the nearby Embassy Suites Hotel.

Mathews' column, which appears on Tuesdays, can be accessed at [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com). (Free registration is required.)

Mathews serves on the board of directors of Editorial Projects in Education, the publisher of the newspaper *Education Week* and *Teacher* magazine. He is the author of several books on education, including "Class Struggle: What's Wrong (and Right) with America's Best Public High Schools" (1998).

# 27 School Boards Complete Self-Evaluations

About half the school boards in West Virginia have completed the required county board self-evaluation. Association Executive Director Howard M. O’Cull, Ed.D., is writing board presidents in the remaining boards, providing them copies of the evaluation instrument, as approved by the W. Va. Board of Education, as well as other pertinent information.

Once the evaluation is completed, O’Cull provides each board with a 5-7 page customized report, including recommendations for evaluative items which, as indicated in the county board responses, may warrant “additional or further attention.”

Typical recommendations include suggested discussions about board norms and expectations, as well as evaluation-inspired recommendations for specified training. Based on the first 27 evaluations completed, O’Cull has called, in some

instances, for greater dialogue between board members and the county superintendent and for a review of board meeting practices and customs.

“I review each evaluation. Indeed, it is customized, and there is no particular or ‘canned’ recommendations. I have seen certain patterns emerge. This was the association’s rationale for using one instrument, as approved by the state Board of Education. Later, we’ll see, on a statewide basis, how many of these items can be handled by regional or state conference training,” he said.

O’Cull is preparing a composite report to the WVBE, State Superintendent and legislators once all evaluations are completed, he said, adding that no county will be individually identified in the report.

For more information, please contact WVSBA at 304.346.0571.

## Thompson Suggests Meeting Revisions

W. Va. School Boards Association President Dr. Rodney Thompson (Wayne) is recommending a change in the scheduling of the Association’s Annual Business Meetings and Delegate Assemblies.

Under his proposal, to be considered by the WVSBA Executive Board in September, the ABM and DAs would be convened prior to Association training meetings rather than during meetings, the current practice.

Discussed by past executive boards, the proposal – if ultimately adopted by the WVSBA Delegate Assembly in September – would become effective for the FY06 meeting in Charleston next March.

The procedure also would involve shifting the WVSBA Executive Board Meeting as well. According to Thompson, it also would include some “rearranging” at the Winter Conference (legislative conference) as well as “other logistics.”

Executive Director Howard M. O’Cull, Ed.D., says there has been “past support for the notion due to the ABM or Delegate Assembly time being cramped. Dr. Thompson has discussed this with me. We both realize the logistical ‘rearranging’ as he refers to it.”

Thompson urges members to contact him with suggestions about the proposal or with ways in which to improve WVSBA meetings.

County boards are to declare their voting delegates and alternate voting delegates by September 1. A form regarding such will be forwarded to counties.

Thompson’s telephone contact is 304.486.5368 (residence).

Contact O’Cull at 304.346.0571 or [hocull@wvsba.org](mailto:hocull@wvsba.org).

Thompson became president July 1. Other newly elected officers include Debbie Thompson (Pleasants), president elect; Lyle Spencer (Nicholas), vice president; and, Kim Cooper (Raleigh), financial officer. William J. Raglin (Kanawha) is immediate past president.

## Wirt Schools Seeks Superintendent

The Wirt County Board of Education is involved in a superintendent search process. Deadline for applying for the position is 4:00 p.m. August 2, 2004.

The W. Va. School Boards Association is conducting the search.

The Wirt County Schools system includes three schools serving 1,029 students. The board has an \$8.1 million budget; employs 138 personnel; and has a 90 percent excess levy which garners about \$540,000 annually.

The board office is located in Elizabeth, the county seat, about 20 miles from Parkersburg.

A largely agricultural county, many residents commute to Parkersburg for work.

The current salary is \$65,000.

The new contract will be from one to four years, and salary, terms and conditions are negotiable.

Contact the W. Va. School Boards Association for a “Notice of Position Vacancy,” Application Form and other related materials. As stipulated by the county board, please refrain from contacting members. For more information: Wirt County Superintendent Search, c/o West Virginia School Boards Association, P.O. Box 1008, Charleston, WV 25324. Materials also available online at [www.wvsba.org](http://www.wvsba.org).

The board stipulates that the successful applicant reside in the county.

## BRIEFLY...

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- Copies of the association's handbook, *West Virginia School Boards Association 2004 – First Edition "Leadership Skills" County School Board Handbook*, should be distributed to your board shortly. The association staff has forwarded one copy to each member and county superintendent. The handbook, the first issued by WVSBA in more than two decades, was paid for by a grant the organization received from the W. Va. School Board Effectiveness Project, a funding effort of the W. Va. Legislature, with moneys distributed via the W. Va. Department of Education.
- Plans are on track for studying ways in which to create an induction program for aspiring county schools superintendents. WVSBA, which received a grant from the Claude E. Worthington Benedum Foundation to undertake this project, is seeking two county board members for service on the Project Leadership Replication Grant Steering Committee. If you are interested in serving, please contact Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D.
- County board member training records for FY04 have been forwarded to members. If you don't receive the information within the next few days, contact Shirley Davidson, administrative assistant: [sdavidson@wvsba.org](mailto:sdavidson@wvsba.org).



*Celebrating 50 Years of  
School Board Excellence*

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