



Plans 'Evolving' for 50th Anniversary Conference

Planning has begun in earnest for the W. Va. School Boards Association's 50th Anniversary Conference, according to Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D. It will be held September 10/11 in Charleston (Marriott Hotel).

"One presenter we have secured is Dr. Michael Hicks of Marshall University. He has just completed research regarding student achievement and factors that influence student achievement. We are envisioning a broad-range panel discussion, based on his presentation. While some people quibble with his research, it appears consistent with other national research," according to O'Cull.

Other topics include training on board/superintendent evaluation, as required by **Senate Bill 522** (2003). O'Cull said that association has been "asked" to include training in regard to the W. Va. Department of Education's school improve-

ment program, and that he will be meeting with WVDE officials to "best determine" how to develop this program so that it is "most meaningful."

The program will include a banquet that commemorates the organization's 50th anniversary, a delegate assembly and various workshops.

Full program particulars will be forwarded to members in early August.

The 2005 Fall Conference will be held in Morgantown – the first is a series of fall conferences to 'travel' around the state, according to an association executive board directive.

Hicks' research was completed for the School Building Authority of West Virginia. For more information regarding his findings, refer to Issue 20 of the 2004 editions of *The Legislature*.

Orientation Program Held June 14-16 in Charleston

W. Va. School Boards Association Orientation '04, held June 14-16, in Charleston (Marriott Hotel), was largely successful, according to program evaluations and comments made to the Association staff.

The program, as approved by the W. Va. Board of Education in May, included several well-known presenters in topics such as school law, governance, boardsmanship, parliamentary procedure, school finance, and implications of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

The program was evaluated on June 16 through a focus group led by presenter Phil Boyle, Ph.D., a member of the faculty of the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill). Program evaluation, required by the WVSBA/W. Va. Board of Education's Training Standard Review Committee (TSRC), is essential to "good future design of Orientation," said association executive director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D.

O'Cull listed the following as recommendations for Orientation '06, based on preliminary evaluation results:

1. Provide more time for advanced readings, as well as advanced readings for each program segment.
2. Begin the second program "day" with a "more re-

fined" school law presentation. This segment would be followed by a review of the state Ethics Act (elongated presentation) and then the parliamentary procedure workshop. Both association counsel Howard E. Sefuer Jr., Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love, and the EC representative would remain for the parliamentary procedure workshop in order to answer technical or legal questions. In terms of a "more refined" legal presentation, concentrate on "live issues" that affect county boards, eliminating – except through pre-conference readings – foundational aspects of school law.

3. Revise the school finance workshop so that it is more interactive and so that it, too, would require some basic readings in advance. Find at least some way to touch upon the state school support program (even if in a handout such as that prepared by the Office of School Finance).

4. Eliminate the No Child Left Behind program. This segment could occur in another setting, and would allow for additional program content. Or, consider inviting – as in past sessions – the executive director of the Office of Education Performance Audits. A third suggestion is to include a segment relating to WVBE/county board relations, which could include some type "awareness presentation" regarding W. Va. Department of Education initiatives. (Another suggestion was to have a panel discussion regarding NCLB, including federal officials.)

5. Schedule only one evening for the O'Cull session, leaving an evening free. Two (or more) presenters would handle this program segment. Refine this presentation by concentrating on session readings in general.

6. Include a segment on board/superintendent relations – illustrated through role-playing.

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"Education is too important to be left solely to educators." – Francis Keppel

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'House-keeping' Documents on the Way

Within the next few days, county board members will receive the following mailings:

1. The listing of training venues for FY05, as approved by the W. Va. School Boards Association/W. Va. Board of Education Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC). Completed "venues" are due by July 15. As approved by the TSRC, the "venues" information is used in planning association training activities.

2. A "directory" form which will include WVSBA Directory information such as each county board member's name, address, telephone and e-mail addresses, including facsimile numbers. The directory per se is not released to non-association members (except county superintendents, WVBE members and selected W. Va. Department of Education personnel). Association policy permits the executive director to release printed mailing labels to interested organizations and entities as long as there is consistency in regard to releasing of mailing labels. Vendors usually are restricted from receiving the listing, said Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D.

3. A form for listing the association's FY05 voting delegate and alternate voting delegate(s) at the association's Annual Business Meetings and Delegate Assemblies. These persons are chosen in a variety of ways, according to O'Cull. That information is due by July 31, so that a pre-session mailing can be made.

WVSBA administrative assistant Shirley Davidson urges board members to complete the mailings promptly so that follow-ups won't have to be made.

For more information, please contact WVSBA.



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ORIENTATION '04

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"Again, these are preliminary suggestions. Our final findings will be presented to the TSRC in a meeting later this fall," said O'Cull.

According to conference registrar Shirley Davidson, 109 persons attended the program, including all 63 newly elected members, 38 veteran members, eight county schools superintendents and other individuals.

School board member orientation has been required of county board members since 1992, based on a series of school board legislative reforms sponsored by WVSBA.

The first program was five days in length. The current format has been used for the past several years.

As part of the Orientation program, members received five books, including a newly-released association handbook.

The handbook committee was co-chaired by WVBE member Delores Cook (Boone) and Gilbert "Gene" Bailey (Mercer).

For more information regarding Orientation, please contact WVSBA.

Handbook Gets Favorable Review

Each county board member and county schools superintendent will receive a copy of the Association's newly-released school board member handbook by July 7.

Entitled, "2004 – First Edition, 'Leadership Skills' County School Board Handbook" the publication was distributed at Orientation '04. Copies also have been forwarded to W. Va. Board of Education members. Other persons to receive copies include the state's eight Regional Education Service Agency executive directors, legislative staff members, and other interested parties.

A total 375 copies were printed in the first round, including a few replacement copies for persons elected/appointed to county boards between now and 2006, according to W. Va. School Boards Association Administrative Assistant Shirley Davidson.

In regard to the handbook, WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., said, "We've received a few comments, including 'we don't do it that way on our board,' 'our board president said this can't be done,' 'our superintendent has advised us not to do such-and-such,' and 'you mean, we've been doing this wrong all these years.'" O'Cull also said he's been asked if the document is a "legal manual." "I reiterate that it's a handbook. We plainly state that the document per se isn't a substitute for legal advice, legal counsel or legal guidance," he said. O'Cull added that association attorneys have reviewed the document.

The director adds, "We do need your input, specifically regarding what needs to be added; what should be amplified; what should be deleted, as well as all the format questions."

He said the handbook is an "evolving document" and that a subsequent "handbook committee" will work to make

revisions. "This committee will be appointed in September at the Delegate Assembly meeting. Interested persons should contact me if they want to serve."

Members of the 2004 handbook committee included co-chairs Delores Cook (Boone), a member of the W. Va. Board of Education and Gilbert E. "Gene" Bailey, a member of the Mercer County Board of Education. Other active committee members included Debbie Thompson (Pleasants), FY05 association president-elect; Carlene Frederick (Calhoun), Region V director; Missy Smith (Fayette), Region IV associate director; Steve Goffreda, Roane County Schools Superintendent; and William J. Raglin (Kanawha), who provided editorial support.

O'Cull staffed the committee.

The handbook was underwritten through the W. Va. School Boards Effectiveness Project (WVSBEP), an initiative of the state Legislature, funds of which flow to the association through the auspices of the W. Va. Department of Education.

This is the first "state-specific" handbook county board members have received since the early 1980s. RESA VII formerly was responsible for producing the handbook.

Members are encouraged to utilize the handbook in tandem with the National School Boards Association's *Becoming a Better Board Member*.

Other WVSBEP funds cover the annual county board Presidents Retreat, various training-related programming and, this year, the on-line training provided through Duquesne University. (See below article.)

O'Cull has written State Superintendent of Schools David Stewart, thanking the WVBE and state Department of Education for WVSBEP program support.

Online Training Program Reviewed

The W. Va. School Boards Association's foray into online training for county board members will be reviewed by program participants in order to help further define the concept for future offerings, according to WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D.

"This was our inaugural approach to online learning. And, we did some 'learning.' Based on anecdotal comments, online training may be most effective if it is short-term, involves 10-15 participants, has clear goals and expectations, and is directed toward specific 'problems,'" said O'Cull.

He added that the programmatic review will help clarify some of those comments. All persons having participated in the inaugural program are to contact O'Cull by e-mail in order to receive evaluative materials. The e-mail address is hocull@wvsba.org.

O'Cull says online training will not "replace" the current training format or venues, but will be an "add-on." He said it is "very good" for members who cannot easily participate in training due to employment, illness, travel or other factors.

Evaluation Committee To Meet Again

The W. Va. School Boards Association/W. Va. Association of School Administrators ad hoc superintendent evaluation committee will hold its last meeting in mid-July prior to presentation of a model evaluation document to the W. Va. Board of Education. (Site to be determined.)

Committee chairman Carroll Staats (Jackson) is alerting members to the meeting, with notices to be forwarded by association director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., who staffs the committee.

In a committee-related communiqué, state Attorney General Darrell McGraw has issued "guidelines" regarding various aspects of the superintendent evaluation process at the request of the Kanawha County Board of Education. McGraw's "guidelines" letter is addressed to O'Cull. It covers several topics, including whether or not county board members must participate in an executive session if they are to participate in various other aspects of the evaluation (answered in the affirmative with additional, clarifying information). Once a release is given by the AG's Office, that information will be made available to the WVSBA and WVASA membership.

Benedum Awards Third Project Leadership Grant

The W. Va. School Boards Association has received a \$4,115 grant from the Claude E. Worthington Benedum Foundation (Pittsburgh) to “study and implement replication of the Project Leadership (PL) program.” Project Leadership is a program designed for persons who aspire, at some point in their educational career, to become executive-level county school administrators.

To date, three PL sessions have been held. “This grant will allow us to expand our thinking and to design, for subsequent funding, a true induction program for aspiring superintendents,” according to WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O’Cull. “In that we partnered with the state Department of Education for the program and the state School Administrators organization, I’ll be contacting them about how to set-up the replication study effort,” said O’Cull.

He is going to ask Monroe County Schools Superintendent Lyn Guy, Ed.D., Regional Education Service Agency Executive Director Nick Zervos, and Martha Dean, Ed.D., to head the effort as advisers for county superintendents. Guy is the in-coming president of the W. Va. Association of School Administrators, Zervos is the in-coming vice president and Dean is WVASA executive director.

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County board members wishing to receive training credits for this program should contact the W. Va. School Boards Association for further information.

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