



## WVSBA Legislative Group Meets Nov. 14

The W. Va. School Boards Association's Committee on Legislation will meet Sunday, November 14, in Charleston (Embassy Suites Hotel). The meeting is slated for 6:30 p.m. and is expected to adjourn by 8:30 p.m. This is the last scheduled COL meeting this calendar year. The committee will meet prior to the opening of the West Virginia Legislature's 2005 regular session.

During the November meeting, the COL will finalize, for WVSBA Executive Board approval, the association's "preliminary" legislative goals for the 2005 regular session, as well as approve the revised Association 2005 *Legislative Philosophies and Priorities*, a document outlining WVSBA's statements of beliefs concerning legislative issues and organizational goals for next year's legislative session.

The committee met October 15 in Davis (Canaan Valley Resort and Conference Center), discussing several legislative matters, a complete listing of which will be included in the October issue of *The Legislature*.

WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D. is chairman of the legislative committee.

The November COL meeting will precede a Nov. 15 leadership conference sponsored by WVSBA, the state County Officials Association, the County Commissioners' Association of West Virginia and the West Virginia Municipal League.

W. Va. Board of Education members are invited to the November 14 and 15 meetings, as are county superintendents. The meeting is open to the public.

The COL is one of the association's flagship committees having first been established in the early 1980s as the "Committee of 55." During the last several years, the organization has intensified its legislative initiatives and session involvement, including a revamped association legislative publication, *The Legislature*, as well as [www.wvsba.org](http://www.wvsba.org), the association's Web site.

W.Va. Board of Education members are invited to attend the Nov. 14 and 15 meetings as are county superintendents and members of the public.

## Presidents Retreat Held October 15 / 16

The annual W. Va. School Boards Association's Presidents Retreat was held October 15 and 16 at Canaan Valley Resort and Conference Center, Davis.

The retreat featured several workshops and seminars for board officers, including a session relating to "effective questioning." Based on three school board-based vignettes, county board officers discussed what type questions should be posed about the purported incidents described, how the questions should be phrased, and, to whom they should be directed. Workshop attendees also learned to phrase questions without resorting to "I" and without "leading the witness" and other effective questioning techniques.

Based on retreat evaluations, the program was successful, with a more elaborate module to be developed for possible use in Orientation or other association training venues. Chuck Stump of The Performance Group Inc. and WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., designed the program, basing it on research which shows that one of the most important responsibilities of elected governing bodies relates to the role of "informed inquiry" — inquiry related to larger questions of policy and priority vis-à-vis issues facing the entity as well as inquiry that is framed through effective questioning of persons who appear or report to the governing body, including the chief executive officer (county superintendent) and administrative staffs (central office administrators).

A revised format will be used in the November 15 leadership academy sponsored by several county governmental leadership groups. (See article elsewhere in this publication.)

Other retreat programs dealt with county board presidents' roles and responsibilities, especially in regard to ethics, meeting management, communications, the state's Open Meetings Law and Freedom of Information Act, as well as information on how to conduct hearings.

WVSBA Counsel Howard E. Seuffer Jr., Esq., Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love, discussed this program segment, based on a model first devised several years ago and expanded to include additional topics such as the ethics discussion.

The Saturday portion of the program featured sessions in which county board presidents shared issues and topics of concern to them and/or their county boards. Several topics were discussed including funding/expansion of the state's Pre-K program, legislative issues, and county board/board presidents' roles and responsibilities.

The final program segment dealt with emerging educational issues. Due to the previous session, it was an abbreviated discussion. Ethics, the state Budget Digest and the work

### INSIDE

- Facilities Reform Committee to Meet.....2
- Educational Leadership Summit Set for Spring.....2
- Project Leadership Attendees to be Surveyed.....3
- Briefly .....4

"Every time you stop a school, you will have to build a jail..." — Samuel Clemens 'Mark Twain'

See **PRESIDENTS RETREAT** on page 3

# Facilities Reform Committee to Meet

The W. Va. School Boards Association's Executive Board has announced that the WWSBA Committee on School Facilities Reform will meet Sunday, November 14, 2004 in Charleston (Embassy Suites Hotel). The meeting will commence at 4:30 p.m., preceding the Committee on Legislation meeting, slated for 6:30 p.m.

During this meeting, Committee members will consider several matters regarding school facilities reform, especially as relating to the School Building Authority of West Virginia and facilities-related legislation adopted in the 2004 session.

Primary committee deliberations will relate to a document which the group will recommend for SBA use in determining project funding. That document has been under consideration during the last several months. If or as approved

by the WWSBA leadership, the information will be readied for legislative consideration in the 2005 regular session and for presentation to the newly-elected governor. Both gubernatorial candidates have told various WWSBA members that SBA reforms are necessary. Additionally, WWSBA leaders see the SBA's \$63 million deficit – and the fact the organization won't be providing major new moneys to county boards this year – as a "window" to suggest various organizational reforms, which will be communicated to W. Va. Board of Education members, including WVBE members who serve on the SBA. (Some WVBE members have expressed interest in the association's work in this regard.)

The committee is headed by Lori Stilley, Ph.D. (Jefferson).

The meeting is open to all association members, county superintendents, WVBE members and the public.

# Educational Leadership Summit Set for Spring

The W. Va. School Boards Association will sponsor an "Educational Leadership Summit" for county board members and other educational officials on May 20/21, 2005 at Lakeview Resort, Morgantown.

This program will include a discussion of legislation adopted during next year's Regular Session – in lieu of a 2005 Annual Spring Training Teleconference, with all county

board members and superintendents to receive a video training tape in advance. (The format will be similar to the superintendent evaluation training videotape and documents recently forwarded to county boards and superintendents).

In addition to the leadership aspects of the program, the summit will feature "practical" segments on subjects such as county board meeting management, a "how-to" on conducting county board hearings, and similar topics. These program portions will be conducted through role play and other interactive venues, according to Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., who is designing the program for review by the WWSBA/W. Va. Board of Education Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC) in their upcoming meeting.

An expanded program segment will relate to effective questioning.

These are among other WWSBA training venues:

- **November 15 County Officials' Leadership Program.**

This session will be held in Charleston (Embassy Suites Hotel). It focuses on informational leadership and county government consolidation, as proposed by a gubernatorial committee.

- **2005 Winter Conference.** This program will be held March 11/12 in Charleston (Embassy Suites Hotel). Doug Eadie, who has written extensively about information-based school leadership and board/superintendent relations, is the program keynote speaker. All participants will receive copies of his book *Eight Keys to an Extraordinary Board-Superintendent Partnership* (2003). His Web site is [www.dougadie.com](http://www.dougadie.com). Other program segments deal with school safety, especially in light of Homeland Security, a session suggested by Wood County Board of Education members, and legislative issues / topics.

- **2005 Fall Conference.** Next year's conference will be held in Morgantown (Radisson) as part of an effort to "travel" association meetings around the state.

- **Local Training.** Several venues are possible, including

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See TRAINING VENUES on page 3

# Project Leadership Attendees to Be Surveyed

W. Va. School Boards Association Executive Director Howard M. O’Cull, Ed.D., has announced that about 130 Project Leadership attendees will be surveyed for the purpose of determining format and content for future programs relating to effective preparation for persons who aspire to become county schools superintendents.

All PL attendees have been asked to participate in the survey, which also will be forwarded to randomly-selected county schools superintendents, county board members, legislators, education officials and W. Va. Board of Education members. Some W. Va. Department of Education officials also will be surveyed. The survey is to be completed online, and will be forwarded within the next three weeks.

Once results are received, a PL advisory committee will be convened. It will include representatives of persons who attended the three Project Leadership sessions as well as representatives of the W. Va. Association of School Administrators, the WVBE and WVDE, among other persons.

As outlined by O’Cull, future PL meetings will center on skills and strengths county executive educational officials

need or should have as well as a multi-disciplinary emphasis on leadership, governance and administrative/executive strategies. The program, to some degree, will emphasize programs relating to the WVDE’s “West Virginia Achieves,” although that is a lesser focus, with PL programming to be

more broadly based on “holistic” leadership needs for county administrators, according to O’Cull. That sentiment also was expressed by some county participants at WVSBA’s Presidents Retreat, many of whom say the WVDE may be placing ‘inordinate’ emphasis on “West Virginia Achieves” to the “exclusion” of other educational matters and issues of concern to county

boards and superintendents. (Association Executive Director Howard M. O’Cull, Ed.D., has been asked to convey this sentiment to WVBE members, although the organization itself supports W.Va. Achieves initiatives.)

PL programs have been underwritten by the Claude E. Worthington Benedum Foundation, the W. Va. Department of Education and WVSBA. An initial program was held in 2002, with follow-up sessions in 2003.



## TRAINING VENUES

*continued from page 2*

customized programs conducted by O’Cull or other individuals.

The association plans to sponsor a “Reception With Legislators” prior to the Winter Conference. (The reception would be co-sponsored with the state Association of School Administrators.) Legislative visitations also are scheduled on the morning of March 11.

The newly-inaugurated governor will be invited to participate in the program, as will the House and Senate Education Committee chairpersons.

All association programs are evaluated by participants to determine how to provide effective programming.

For more information regarding programming, visit [WVSBA.ORG](http://WVSBA.ORG), or contact Shirley Davidson, conference registrar at [sdavidson@wvsba.org](mailto:sdavidson@wvsba.org).

## PRESIDENTS RETREAT

*continued from page 1*

and purpose of advocacy groups such as West Virginia Wants to Know and Challenge West Virginia were among issues reviewed by O’Cull, who led the session.

W. Va. Board of Education President Barbara Fish (Wood) and WVBE Secretary Priscilla Haden (Kanawha) attended the Saturday session, with Fish present for the Friday evening retreat programming. McDowell County Schools Superintendent Mark Manchin, Ed.D., also attended portions of the program.

During the Saturday morning retreat session, Fish and Haden discussed the need for the W. Va. Department of Education to better communicate its goals and initiatives with county board officials and county boards through more direct forms of communication and information. At their request, O’Cull is to meet with W. Va. Department of Education officials concerning this matter, one objective of which is to make county board members more aware of pending state board policies on comment as well as WVBE initiatives such as those in mathematics.

The retreat is open to all WVBE members, county superintendents and the public.

Presidents Retreat programming and related expenses are underwritten by a grant from the W. Va. School Board Effectiveness Project (WVSBEP), which is funded by the Legislature, with moneys being directed to WVSBA through the state department of education.

A total 49 persons attended the meeting.

**Be Informed.**

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

## - BRIEFLY -

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- The W. Va. School Boards Association Executive Board will meet on December 4 in Huntington (Radisson Hotel). During this meeting, the organization will consider several matters, including the W.Va. Legislature's 2005 regular session and related legislative matters. The meeting is open to all county board members and superintendents.

- County board officials should have received information regarding the required county superintendent evaluation process from the W. Va. Department of Education. For more information regarding the evaluation process, refer to the September issue of *WVSBA Monthly*.

- Several county board self-evaluations will be forwarded this week and next week, as they have been completed by WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., who provides an analysis of boards' completed evaluative documents.

- Johanna Rorrer (Mason) has contacted the American Association of School Administrators to determine guidelines regarding selection the state "Superintendent of the Year," and has written several persons about the process used in West Virginia, including the leadership of the W. Va. Association of School Administrators and the state superintendent of schools. This matter was discussed at the WVSBA Presidents Retreat, with O'Cull saying selection was a "mat-

ter internal to WVASA." Several county board presidents expressed sentiment that a "broad-based" committee chose the individual as is the case in some states, according to Rorrer. Currently, a three-member WVASA committee selects the recipient, with the committee including the past recipient as a member. The WVSBA Executive Board does not intend to act on this matter, according to association officials.

- A legislative reception is planned during the 2005 regular session, with WVSBA seeking to co-sponsor the reception, as in the past, with WVASA.

- WVASA has a new Web site: WVASA.ORG, designed and maintained by Keeling Strategic Communications, Cross Lanes, which is also responsible for maintaining the association's site, WVSBA.ORG.

- Several members have had trouble connecting to West Virginia Wants to Know's Web site. According to Wanda Carney, a co-director of the watchdog organization, the Web address is [www.wvwantstoknow.com](http://www.wvwantstoknow.com).

- For the 2005 fiscal year, WVSBA has 100 percent membership. Although the National School Boards Association doesn't keep statistics regarding this aspect of state association participation, few states have 100 percent membership, according to NSBA officials contacted by WVSBA.

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A West Virginia School Boards Association Publication  
P.O. Box 1008  
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