



Working together to achieve more

New president outlines goals, importance of communication

By Debbie Thompson

I am very pleased with the productive meeting held by the West Virginia School Boards Association's Committee on Communications on Aug. 13 at the Flatwoods Days Inn.

These county board members have agreed to serve as members of this vitally important committee: Mike Mitchem (McDowell), Jean Westfall (Ritchie), Carlene Frederick (Calhoun), Dee Kaparoules (Mingo), Beth Cercone (Clay), Judi Almond (Raleigh), Robert Duckworth (Taylor), Johanna Rorrer (Mason) and Donald Tuttle (Wetzel). I look forward to their future contributions.

During my tenure as WVSBA president, you will frequently hear me speak of **TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More!** I want to see an increasing number of our state's 275 county board members become more active members of our team.

I want our organization to function like a close-knit community — cohesiveness is very important. There is quite a bit of diversity in our counties' overall structures and operations but I also know there is unity in diversity. If we work together we can really make a difference.

People in organizations typically spend 75 percent of their time in interpersonal situations. Therefore, it is abundantly clear **communication** is essential to an organization's

success. Open, honest, two-way communication is probably the most important team strategy we can employ. WVSBA's productivity will continue to increase as we work hard to ensure effective communication.

At the Aug. 13 meeting, I said communication is the soul of management. Analysis and solid decisions trans-

late into clear messages that influence people to act and feel good about their performance. We oversee the quality of education for all children who attend West Virginia schools.

We hold tomorrow's future in our hands and that's a pretty awesome responsibility!

Our meeting at Flatwoods focused on several important issues: What are we doing well? How can we make things better? How do we reach more of our members to get them to

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"I think we need to involve our regional and associate regional directors in more active, accountable roles."

2005 conference Sept. 16-17 in Morgantown

Sessions include experts in board policy requirements and security

The West Virginia School Boards Association's Conference '05 is Sept. 16-17 at the Radisson Hotel in Morgantown.

All county board members and county superintendents will receive an agenda next week.

Two association meetings precede the conference: The WVSBA Executive Board will meet at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 15, and the organization's Committee on Legislation will hold its semi-annual meeting on Friday, Sept. 16.

The conference begins at 1 p.m., featuring two plenary sessions dealing with county board policy-related "requirements," such as student grading philosophy, testing and

assessment and school scheduling and school security.

Charlottesville, Va.-based consultant R. Lynn Canady, Ed.D., will present that session. His presentation at the May 2005 Leadership Meeting in Morgantown was the highest-rated session during that conference.

"The federal No Child Left Behind Act is good legislation in many respects, especially in that it has been responsible for county boards' focus or renewed focus on items relating to curriculum and instruction," said Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., WVSBA executive director. "These initiatives often have been considered, even in a policy sense, to be within the sole purview of school administrators."

O'Cull said the Canady presentation is welcomed by state-level policy leaders, especially the state board of education. "This group and legislators rightly perceive that county boards have a role in curricular matters and that

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Thompson announces new committees

Jump-start session for all members set for Sept. 17 in Morgantown

By Debbie Thompson

It is my goal, as the new West Virginia School Boards Association President, to engage as many WWSBA members as possible in the operation of our organization.

One of my first responsibilities is to assign members to association committees. These are "working" committees that will meet at least quarterly or more frequently, if necessary.

I wish that every school board in the state be represented on at least one of our standing committees. Therefore, I have appointed at least one board member from each county to serve. If a designated individual cannot serve, please appoint someone else from your board to fill the vacancy.

To get our committee effort off to a good start, each of the following committees will meet at an "all-committee session" during WWSBA's Conference '05 in Morgantown.

That meeting immediately follows the conference at 11:45 a.m. on Sept. 17 and will end no later than 1 p.m.

If you are a committee chairperson, please contact me for more details about committee meeting and function. I've asked Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., to provide you information about committee roles and functions as well as agenda items.

Committee chairpersons will receive these materials before the meeting.

Also note that Executive Committee members should

consider attending as many of the scheduled meetings as possible.

I am appointing the following county board members to committees:

State Board of Education Advisory Committee

Chairperson: Sue King (Greenbrier)
Members: Martha "Susie" Cvechko (Barbour)
Bessie "Bea" Holley (Cabell)
Mary Frame (Doddridge)
Joe Barnabei (Hancock)
Lori Stilley (Jefferson)
Jim Crawford (Kanawha)
Karen Roberts (Nicholas)
Dr. Timothy Miller (Preston)
Linda Hoover (Tyler)
Arnold Harless (Wyoming)

Committee on Policy and Resolutions

Chairperson: Jim Fox (Wood)
Members: Pat Murphy (Berkeley)
Suzie Nettles-Steele (Braxton)
Steve Pilato (Fayette)
Sally Cann (Harrison)
Mike Welty (Marion)
Bob Shook (Mineral)
Charlie Sams (Monroe)
Nick Baker (Ohio)
Debbie Phillips (Putnam)
Carol Cain (Randolph)

Committee on Fiscal Integrity

Chairperson: Bill Raglin (Kanawha)
Members: Gina Stalnaker (Gilmer)
Greg Pennington (Grant)
Steve Chancey (Jackson)
Cline Craig (Lewis)
Melanie Hummel (Marshall)
Laura Smith (Morgan)
David Cooper (Tucker)
Patrick Long (Upshur)
Louise Hamrick (Webster)
Jim Rader (Wirt)

The Legislature provides county board of education members, state policymakers, school administrators, and others information, opinion and commentary regarding West Virginia legislative issues. This publication does not necessarily reflect the official views, opinions or policies of the WWSBA, unless specifically stated.

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Keeping track . . .

Important WVSBA news and deadlines

By Shirley Davidson

Fall Conference Update: It is not too late to register for the West Virginia School Boards Association Conference '05, which is Sept. 16-17 at the Radisson Hotel in Morgantown. Please contact me no later than Aug. 31 if you need room reservations or if you plan to bring a guest for the meals. Also, please let me know if you have special dietary needs.

President's Retreat: The 2005 President's Retreat is Oct. 7-8 at Stonewall Resort & Conference Center in Roanoke, W.Va. The registration form for this meeting will be faxed to secretaries on Aug. 26. Board presidents may attend this conference at no cost to the counties, however additional attendees will be charged \$149 to cover the lodging expenses. Also if you choose to bring your spouse, there is an additional charge of \$70. The deadline to register for this meeting is Sept. 7 (we are unable to extend this deadline). Attendees will receive seven clock hours school board member training credits for participating in this meeting. Those with special dietary needs or additional questions should contact me.

"The November Meeting": This training session is Nov. 5 at Stonewall Resort & Conference Center. Presenters include Office of School Finance Executive Director Joe Panetta (West Virginia Department of Education) and Howard E. Seufer Jr., Esq., WVSBA counsel. Panetta will discuss school finance, including the state School Aid Formula, and Seufer will provide a general discussion – in a strictly questions-and-answers format – regarding school law and related issues. Attendees will receive approximately five credit hours of training at the session, as it is only one day. The registration form will be sent to executive secretaries on Aug. 26. Please contact them no later than Oct. 3 to register for this meeting. Those with special needs or additional questions should contact me.

Directory Information: We have received the requested directory information forms from 40 counties. The following counties (county board members and/or county superintendents) have not returned the forms: Berkeley, Doddridge, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Mason, McDowell, Nicholas, Preston, Randolph, Roane, Upshur, Webster and Wirt. If you do not wish to have your information published in the WVSBA Directory, please contact me. Please return your directory request form to WVSBA before Sept. 9. We plan to mail the directory by Sept. 30.

Deadline for Training: Board members whose term expires on June 30, 2006 are required to have their seven clock hours of training by Dec. 31, 2005. Board members who foresee difficulty in obtaining their hours by the deadline should contact Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D.

Thanks to Secretaries: I have requested a tremendous amount of information since July 1 from the county board

executive secretaries. I greatly appreciate their help in obtaining the information I need and extend a special "Thank You" for their assistance. The executive secretaries are a great value to the county board offices and to WVSBA.

If I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Davidson is WVSBA Administrative Assistant. She may be reached at 304-346-0571 (office) or 304-552-1527 (mobile), or by e-mail at sdavidson@wvsba.org

COMMITTEES

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Committee on Communications

Chairperson: Jean Westfall (Ritchie)
Members: Beth Cercone (Clay)
Hunter Williams (Hardy)
JoHannah Rorrer (Mason)
Mike Mitchem (McDowell)
Dee Kapourales (Mingo)
Nancy Walker (Monongalia)
Judi Almond (Raleigh)
David McCutcheon (Roane)
Bob Duckworth (Taylor)
Don Tuttle (Wetzel)

Committee on Handbook Revision

Chairperson: Gene Bailey (Mercer)
Members: Gary Woodrum (Boone)
Laura Beckelhimer (Brooke)
Joy Starcher (Calhoun)
Brenda Pyles (Hampshire)
Carol Smith (Lincoln)
Phyllis Adkins (Logan)
Jack Vogel (Pendleton)
Betty Bailey (Pleasants)
Kenneth Vance (Pocahontas)
Joseph Blankenship (Summers)

I hope all members will agree to serve on the selected committees, as appointed. If, however, you wish to serve on a different committee, please let me know. I am very flexible and want you to serve where you think you will be most productive.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from each of you soon!

My e-mail address is debthom@charter.net

My home phone is 304-665-2187

Thompson, president of the Pleasants County Board of Education, is WVSBA president.

TEAM

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take more active roles? Is the structure of our organization built right for the 21st century?

The committee fully agreed that WVSBA's training programs are one of our strongest assets. We emphasized the importance of continuing to focus on practical topics and not becoming overly grounded in theory.

Members must be able to incorporate this usable information in their day-to-day operations. Accordingly, school board training should concentrate on county board roles and responsibilities as it relates to "student achievement," which must include the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

We also agreed on the importance of the WVSBA Web site as a communications tool. We urged that the Web site be frequently updated. National or "states-regional" news should be featured regularly. This information might be shared in our regular, more formal publications and also incorporated in our general/plenary sessions or workshops.

Several members of the committee have attended National School Boards Association Southern Regional meetings and are concerned that our state and our operations may not be compatible with the southern states. Some members suggested we focus our national news features on states of similar size or those with demographics comparable to West Virginia.

We also suggested the Web site could become more user-friendly by adding photographs of the WVSBA Executive Committee and board members, as well as including a yearly calendar of events. Dates for committee meetings, agendas and meeting minutes will be incorporated to keep our members better informed.

The group agreed that our formal publication, *The Legislature*, is an outstanding, highly respected, and well-received means of communication. I shared several e-mails I received in relation to *The Legislature* with descriptions such as "first rate," "comprehensive," "easily understood," "second-to-none," "outstanding," and "best of its kind."

Our copy editor, Matt Turner, was asked to offer comments and suggestions for possible journalistic/style changes that might make the publication easier to read or use. Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., our executive director, will take these into consideration. My comment was, "If it's not broke, don't fix it!" If you have suggestions, I am sure Dr. O'Cull would welcome your comments.

The committee decided there is a need to restructure our organization for the 21st century. This is critical for two-way communication. I appointed an ad hoc committee to meet on Sept. 3 at Braxton County Middle School in Sutton to begin this very important task.

Our constitution and by-laws have not changed since 1994. I sent a memorandum earlier this week asking the following members to serve with me to perform this review and possible revisions: Region I - Mike Mitchem, director and Kim Cooper, WVSBA vice president; Region II - Ted Barr, director; Region III - Bill Raglin; Region IV - Lyle Spencer, WVSBA president-elect; Region V - Jean Westfall and Carlene

Frederick, WVSBA financial officer; Region VI - Dr. Mary Ellen Komorowski, director; Region VII - Steve Cook, director; and Region VIII - Todd Beckwith, director.

Following the initial restructuring meeting, a brief report will be made at the FY06 Delegate Assembly in Morgantown on Sept. 16. Executive Director O'Cull will not participate in this inaugural meeting but will attend the subsequent meetings.

I have suggested that the constitution should include more detailed delineation of the responsibilities for each executive officer and regional officers. I think we need to involve our regional and associate regional directors in more active, accountable roles.

The committee agreed that we could increase communications by guiding and training these officers and giving them more responsibility in terms of contact with the boards in their respective regions. I would like to see regional officers post columns on the Web site that point out activities, success stories, concerns, etc. This could do so much to engage our members and better communicate.

I hope everyone has marked their calendars and are planning to attend our Fall Conference on Sept. 16-17 at the Radisson Hotel in Morgantown. I am confident the sessions will offer timely information on issues that concern all board members.

You will receive more information about the training as the agenda is finalized. The executive board will hold its regular quarterly meeting on Thursday, Sept. 15 at 6 pm. Your attendance is welcome.

The Committee on Legislation will meet on Friday, Sept. 16 at 10 a.m. Please make sure that your county's representative attends. Our last few meetings have not been well attended.

Let's step up to the plate and become a valuable member of the **WVSBA TEAM!** Together we will make a tremendous difference in the communities we serve.

Until next time, be kind to each other.

Thompson is president of the Pleasants County Board of Education and WVSBA President for FY06. She assumed office July 1, succeeding Dr. Rodney Thompson from Wayne County. The Thompsons are not related.

Stay informed.

On the Web at:
WVSBA.ORG

FALL CONFERENCE

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they can't abrogate that role — even if it has to be rediscovered."

Canady is a "serious but very humorous" presenter, O'Cull said. "He will discuss the county board policy aspects in such a way that they will be informative, but practical, useful and educational for board members."

O'Cull also said the Canady-type presentations are necessary to bolster requirements of board and superintendent evaluations.

The school security program segment will be presented by Paul Timm, an educational security expert from Illinois, with supplemental information and detail provided by Harrison County Board of Education officials.

The session will focus on ways in which county boards, using security that may be obtained through grants in some cases, can ensure the utmost in school safety. Timm also will discuss recent "forensic-type" findings regarding the Red Lake, Minn., school shooting that occurred earlier in the year.

Harrison County officials have been invited to present at the National School Boards Association 2006 convention in New Orleans. (Refer to article printed below.)

"The school safety presentation grew out of a workshop at the School Boards Association's Winter Conference," O'Cull said. "We decided to expand it and to include some new materials — all relevant to school safety requirements."

Cracker barrel clinics relate to the state's Safe Schools Act, which was enacted 10 years ago; an informational review of programs and services available from the Charleston-based Education Alliance; a program — coordinated with the association's online training program — concerning the state's Open Governmental Proceedings Act (Sunshine Law), and a fourth session concerning board responsibilities in regard to student well-being, especially in regard to sus-

pected child abuse and neglect and the education of foster children in West Virginia.

The program concludes at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 17. The earlier time for adjourning was based on recommendations in numerous county program evaluations, O'Cull said.

An "all-committee" session will follow the 11:30 a.m. adjournment, according to Debbie Thompson (Pleasants), W V S B A president who has been "revitalizing" the organization's committee process. (For a listing of persons recommended for committee service, please refer to article on page 2.)

Additional clinics will cover the Safe Schools Act, student well-being, and the "Sunshine Law."

The organization's Delegate Assembly also will be part of the conference. Designated county voting delegates and alternates will receive their meeting packets 10 days before the session.

Thompson will speak during a buffet dinner banquet, which is a new program feature this year.

Based on a recent recommendation of the WVSBA Executive Board, the association's fall conference will "travel" every other year. Since 1996, conferences have been in Charleston.

For more information on the conference, please contact O'Cull or Thompson. O'Cull's e-mail address is hocull@wvsba.org. Thompson's e-mail address is debthom@charter.net.

Harrison County Schools first to use new security technology

Harrison County Schools is one of 109 National School Boards Association Federation members and/or school districts selected to present breakout sessions (Share the Success and Meet the Experts sessions) at the 2006 NSBA Annual Conference in New Orleans, according to Kanisha R. Williams-Jones, NSBA's senior manager for educational conference programming.

Harrison County will present a program relating to school security, titled "Enhancing Safety: Emergency Responder Access to School Security Cameras."

Aspects of that program also will be featured as part of the West Virginia School Boards Association's Conference '05 on Sept. 16-17 in Morgantown.

The HCBOE initiative is presented in conjunction with Paul Timm of Illinois-based RETA Security.

According to Harrison Schools Superintendent Carl Friebe, Ed.D., the county's NSBA presentation will provide an overview of school safety emergency plans and procedures.

"We'll showcase new school security and safety technology that gives emergency responders visual access inside all middle schools and high schools in Harrison County," Friebe said. "This is technology that has not been used in our schools before. In fact, Harrison County is the first in the country to use this technology."

For more information, contact Friebe at 304-624-3343 or cfriebe@access.k12.wv.us.

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Future Meetings

WVSBA Fall Conference '05

September 16/17, 2005
Radisson Hotel, Morgantown

Presidents Retreat '05

October 7/8, 2005
Stonewall Resort, Roanoke

The November Workshop: School Aid Formula & School Law

November 5, 2005
Stonewall Resort, Roanoke

WVSBA Winter Conference '06

February 17/18, 2006
Marriott Hotel, Charleston

Orientation '06

June 14-16, 2006
Stonewall Resort, Roanoke

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