



## November Meeting wrap-up

### Committees making progress, plans for 2006

By Debbie Thompson, WVSBA president

I am pleased to report that about 110 county board members, county superintendents and county office administrators attended the West Virginia School Boards Association's Nov. 5 training session, otherwise known as "The November Meeting." The meeting was held amid the fall color beauty at Stonewall Resort near Roanoke, W.Va.

It was so good to see the many of you who attended to learn more about developments in school law as well as to learn about the "elusive" parts of the state's school funding formula. We, as board members, must know about School Aid Formula particulars as elected educational officials.

#### School law, finance are solid sessions

I want to commend our two presenters. Howard E. Seuffer Jr., Esq., Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love, did an excellent job bringing us up to speed on school law issues such as grievances and he answered individual questions. Some participants said we should have allowed more time for questions. For the next program, we'll be sure that is the overriding component.

Joe Panetta from the state Department of Education's Office of School Finance did an excellent job explaining how school funding works in West Virginia. I was impressed that our members showed such an interest in this topic, and thank Dr. Steven Paine, state superintendent of schools, for recommending Mr. Panetta for this session. I learned so much, especially that the SAF is more than money we receive. SAF also is about equity, declining enrollments and the county's ability to finance above and beyond the formula through excess levies. These factors alone made this workshop invaluable.

#### Committees report progress

In terms of our committee meetings, most committees met, although the time was compressed. I am recommending in the future committees determine their own meeting times. Some will meet in conjunction with major association meetings, such as the fall and winter conferences.

Kudos to the county board members who are working on our committees. The staff is pleased at the direction you are providing for suggested programs and services and, as I have said on numerous occasions, the committees will energize our organization. I especially want to thank Jean Westfall (Ritchie) for her excellent committee report that was provided to the WVSBA Executive Board.

Based on Jean's committee's work, the staff is planning major new communication strategies you will learn about in December.

In terms of the Executive Board Meeting held Nov. 5, we also received committee reports from the West Virginia Board of Education Advisory Committee; the Committee on Policy and Resolutions; the Committee on Fiscal Integrity; the Committee on Handbook Revision; and the ad hoc Committee on School Facilities.

In terms of the restructuring of the Committee on Legislation, we concurred with Executive Director Dr. Howard M. O'Cull's recommendation that we keep the original (Committee of 55) structure, but add a regional steering committee. The regional steering committee will work with the Executive Committee during the legislative session to provide "fast responses" to legislative issues, although Dr. O'Cull said they will make every effort to involve the COL as in the past. If you have questions about this revamping, please contact me. Again, it lets everyone on the COL become involved while providing necessary centralization. Dr. O'Cull serves as COL chairperson, based on association policy and directives.

#### Saving money on insurance

The association staff learned we can save a considerable amount of money on our state Board of Risk and Insurance Management (BRIM) coverage by creating a safety committee, among other BRIM recommendations. This committee, which Bill Raglin (Kanawha) will chair, will meet Dec. 10 in Charleston. Their work must be completed by Jan. 1.

The Executive Board discussed a number of other items. Please contact me or the staff for more information.

#### Board members make a difference

As we enter this Thanksgiving season, we all have so much for which to be thankful. Sometimes, as we go about our board work, it may seem no one thinks county board members really make a difference.

Yet, attend one of your upcoming holiday programs and watch the beaming faces of young kids, the work of dedicated teachers and, most of all, proud parents. Then you can take pride that you, as a county board member, and we, as county boards of education, provide the policy, direction and

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## NOVEMBER MEETING

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support for programming that allows our youth to shine and to grow into well-educated adults.

When I recently attended the award ceremony for the 127 schools of excellence, I was so proud of what we, in West Virginia, do. I commend Dr. Paine for his leadership as we are about to embrace new resources to prepare our students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We also must thank our governor for embracing this program.

I encourage you to work with your legislators before the legislative session begins in January. WVSBA's staff is now working on the legislative package, which is especially framed around SAF changes. Please take part in this survey.

Finally, I hope you enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday. The year is winding down and I think of Christmas Carols, holiday festivities, gifts – and the new year.

Let's hope 2006 is WVSBA's best year. I know you, just as I am, are resolved to making that proposition come true.

Until next time, be kind to each other...and remember TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves MORE!

*Debbie*



**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 WVSBA, unless specifically stated.


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# Briefly...

- **Online training.** The West Virginia School Boards Association online training module regarding the state's Open Governmental Proceedings Act (OGPA) again will be available on the WVSBA Web site ([www.wvsba.org](http://www.wvsba.org)). Board members who need additional credit training hours may access the module Nov. 28 through Dec. 12. The WVSBA staff encourages all members to participate in the OGPA training module. Members will receive one (1) hour of training for participating.
- **Self-assessments.** County board member self-assessments must be completed by Dec. 31. Legislation enacted in 2003 requires county boards of education to conduct self-assessments annually using an instrument approved by the state Board of Education. To date, 30 counties have completed the self-evaluation. If county board members or superintendents have questions regarding the assessment instrument, please contact WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., at [hocull@wvsba.org](mailto:hocull@wvsba.org).
- **Superintendent evaluations.** Superintendents may obtain a copy of the superintendent evaluation instrument from WVSBA by contacting Shirley Davidson, administrative assistant, at [sdavidson@wvsba.org](mailto:sdavidson@wvsba.org). The evaluation requires the county board and superintendent to set goals for the superintendent's performance by Sept. 15. If your board has not met these requirements, please contact Dr. O'Cull at [hocull@wvsba.org](mailto:hocull@wvsba.org).
- **Winter Conference.** The WVSBA Winter Conference will be Feb. 17-18 at the Marriott in Charleston. A joint legislative reception with the West Virginia Association of School Administrators will be at 6 p.m. on Feb. 16 (Thursday) at the Marriott. Friday, Feb. 17, has been set aside for a legislative visit to the Capitol. Board member must make their own appointments with their legislators. The conference sessions begin Friday, Feb. 17 at 1 p.m. Registration information for the conference will be forwarded to county board offices in mid-December. Board members are encouraged to submit suggestions for agenda content to Dr. O'Cull at [hocull@wvsba.org](mailto:hocull@wvsba.org).
- **WVSBA-West Virginia Board of Education School Board Member Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC).** The next TSRC meeting will be Dec. 14 in Charleston at the state board office conference room. TSRC members will review the WVSBA Winter Conference agenda for approval and discuss the online training module success and training hour approval requests.
- **Switch to E-News.** Beginning in 2006, electronic editions of *WVSBA Monthly* and *The Legislature* will be in HTML format for easy online reading. This format also will allow site visitors to immediately access a copy of the bill

or legislative proposal being reviewed. The WVSBA staff encourages members with Internet access to use this method to receive the publications. If you want to join our electronic mailing list, please notify Shirley Davidson at [sdavidson@wvsba.org](mailto:sdavidson@wvsba.org) before Jan. 1, 2006.

- **Web site fixer-upper.** The Association's Web site, [www.wvsba.org](http://www.wvsba.org), is usually updated twice a week with state, regional and local news. The site also has information on grant sources, educational resources and programming. A second online training module is being developed for use next spring. The training is underwritten by the West Virginia School Boards Effectiveness Project (WVSBEP), an initiative of the Legislature, the West Virginia Board of Education, the state Department of Education and WVSBA. The site is scheduled for upgrades – including format changes for publications – by the end of this year. Please send your suggestions to improve the site to Dr. O'Cull at [hocull@wvsba.org](mailto:hocull@wvsba.org).

**WVSBA/WVASA**

## **Reception with Legislators**

**Feb. 16, 2006**

**6 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
Charleston Marriott**

# WVSBA Online Training

**Open Governmental  
Proceedings Act**  
(One Hour Training Credit)

*Available Only:*  
*Nov. 28 – Dec. 12, 2005*

**[www.wvsba.org](http://www.wvsba.org)**

## Future Meetings

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**WVSBA Winter Conference '06**

February 17-18, 2006  
Charleston Marriott

**Orientation '06**

June 14-16, 2006  
Stonewall Resort, Roanoke

**WVSBA Fall Conference '06**

Sept. 22-23, 2006  
Charleston Marriott

**President's Retreat '07**

Nov. 2-3, 2007  
Oglebay Resort & Conference Center, Wheeling

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