

Oct. 7-8 Presidents Retreat agenda set

Mock board meeting to cover tricky issues counties often face

By Debbie Thompson

The West Virginia School Boards Association Executive Board and WVSBA staff have finalized the program for the 2005 Presidents Retreat at Stonewall Resort on Oct. 7-8.

The resort is in Roanoke, W.Va., just off I-79 and about 95 miles from either Charleston or Morgantown.

The program provides members six clock hours of approved county board training credits. To acquire seven hours' training, attendees should participate in the WVSBA online training about the Open Governmental Proceedings Act (commonly referred to as the "Sunshine Law") at <http://www.wvsba.org/>.

I'm really excited about the retreat agenda. (The full agenda is listed on page 3.) We have a role-playing exercise written by Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., executive director. It is titled "Smell the Coffee" and includes exploits of a mock school board whose members amble through a complicated, controversial meeting agenda — fraught with everything from executive sessions about allegations of a principal's dereliction of duty to the chance to receive a 60-acre plot of prized property. The property includes an oil well for \$99 but the will includes some stipulations, of course.

I am asking various Presidents Retreat attendees to "act" as one of the 11 characters in the four-act "play." Don't be surprised if I call on you.

Following the role-playing exercise, Kim Croyle of our law firm, Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love, will discuss the mock board's successes and "areas to work on" in their meeting. She also will briefly discuss the role of board presidents in meeting management and legal issues raised in Dr. O'Cull's script.

This session is set for 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 7.

At 7 p.m. that evening, I've arranged three cracker barrel (no agenda) sessions. If you'd like to run one of the sessions, please contact Dr. O'Cull so he can provide a briefing about what the sessions should cover.

Steven L. Paine, Ed.D., state superintendent of schools, will open the retreat at 1 p.m. on Friday, followed by a presentation by Pat Kushimo, Ph.D., the new director of the state Center for Professional Development.

I'd like to try something new for the Saturday program: A "Showcase of Counties." One person from each county board should provide information about an important program, service or initiative the board has undertaken or with which it is involved.

Feel free to bring brochures, handouts or other materials. This session is scheduled for Oct. 8 at 9 a.m. The program concludes at 11:30 a.m.

Hope to see you at the Presidents Retreat. Remember: We are a TEAM and *Together Everyone Achieves More!*

Editor's note: Thompson (Pleasants County) is WVSBA president.

Fall conference 'A success thanks to you'

President seeks input for future meeting and conference locations

By Debbie Thompson

As president, I am proud of the success of our recent West Virginia School Boards Association Conference '05.

Our annual Fall Conference, which was Sept. 16-17 at the Radisson Waterfront Hotel in Morgantown, attracted about 225 attendees, including county board members, county superintendents and other administrators.

Attendees give sessions high marks

Not surprisingly, the sessions with R. Lynn Canady, Ed.D., received the highest marks, prompting attendees to

realize they do have a role — a significant role — in terms of district student achievement policies.

Like many of you, I was pleased with Dr. Canady's no-nonsense, down-to-earth, practical approach to things such as student grading policies, class scheduling and accountability for achievement.

Several members said they would like Dr. Canady to work in their school districts.

The school security session also received high marks, with members saying they want more on this topic, which is, unfortunately, one of persistent concern.

Paul Timm, bolstered by the presentation by Harrison County Schools Superintendent Carl Friebel, Ed.D., and Marcel Malfregeot, did an excellent job. Timm was a professional at outlining issues relating to keeping our kids — and our schools safe. His strategies are good and easily practiced by county boards.

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FALL CONFERENCE

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Evaluations from attendees will be used by the WWSBA Executive Board to help plan future programs. The cracker barrel workshops received top grades, especially the child welfare workshop by Maureen Runyon of the state's Office of Chief Medical Examiner (Child Fatality Review Team). Several attendees asked that she and other child advocates return for presentations at future conferences.

Runyon also received high marks for opening her presentation to issues participants wanted to discuss, including school board roles and responsibilities in child abuse reporting. This certainly is not a pleasant topic, but one for which we have responsibilities.

As always, Claudia Bentley, Esq., Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love, had an excellent session about another school safety topic – the definition of a weapon.

Attendees were impressed by the conciseness of her presentation and that she remained for several minutes after the session to answer questions about safe schools.

Several participants who attended the session relating to the Education Alliance asked that this program be a general session at the Winter Conference or that we incorporate EA presenters or reports in future conference programming. Our staff will examine the latter option.

Our committee meetings went very well. I was pleased to see so many people working in their small groups. I attended all the sessions and can report that our association is alive and well, with energy, enthusiasm, and good purpose.

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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The staff is working on the committee reports received, including the revamped Committee on Legislation (formerly Committee of 55). The mailing regarding this committee should go out next week.

Briefly, let me say that we've streamlined the committee but retained input from each county as part of the COL's work.

Provide thoughts about meeting sites

The Executive Board has discussed holding our meetings at sites such as Jackson's Mill, Cedar Lakes, college/university campuses and the like. I know there are mixed emotions about this notion – outright opposition from some of you – especially about lodging and other accommodations if we were to direct the staff to utilize those facilities.

Moreover, our two statewide meetings – fall and winter (legislative) conferences – are so large only the larger hotels in the state can accommodate us. As for colleges and universities, there are scheduling considerations and other logistical concerns. These sites, however, can be used for smaller association meetings, including the board Presidents Retreat, committee meetings and smaller meetings such as "The November Meeting."

If you have thoughts on this suggestion, or if you have suggestions regarding sites for our conferences, please contact me before we schedule the 2007 conferences, which is early in 2006.

The WWSBA staff has received several comments on this topic, with the chief sentiment being to continue our meetings in Charleston or in larger hotels that can accommodate us.

Again, I need your input here. Please contact me at 304-665-2187 or debthom@charter.net.

Congratulations to Region V directors

On another note, on behalf of the association, I want to congratulate Donna Davis for being elected as Region V director and Carolyn Bowie (Ritchie) for being elected as Region V associate director. Donna is from Pleasants County and has served on the executive board the past several years.

Lastly, the WWSBA Executive Board will meet Nov. 5 at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, W.Va., following "The November Meeting" on school finance and school law.

At the executive board meeting, we will consider committee reports, a staff budget deficit proposal that would eliminate our budget deficit by June 30, 2007, as anticipated and scheduled; a proposal to provide salary enhancements for our staff, and a funded retirement program for our staff.

(Staff salaries are tied to those of Kanawha County Schools and may be increased when the Legislature provides salary increases or to 'keep pace' with KCS' salary schedules.)

As usual, an agenda for this meeting will be published via the Web site, in mid-October. As school board members, please attend this session if you can.

I'd like to hear your thoughts about issues the Executive Board should consider.

Remember – TEAM. *Together We Accomplish More!* And, until next time: Be kind to each other.

Thompson is WWSBA president.

Nov. 5 topics: school finance and law

Registration deadline is Oct. 4

If you haven't registered for the West Virginia School Boards Association's upcoming meeting on school finance and school law – dubbed "The November Meeting" – please do so before the Oct. 4 deadline.

Shirley Davidson, WVSBA administrative assistant and conference registrar, said association members can still register for the Nov. 5 meeting but lodging space is limited.

"We have a few rooms left at Stonewall Resort, where this meeting is being held," she said. "Members should contact me for registration information."

WVSBA President Debbie Thompson (Pleasants) urged members to attend the session.

"These topics are critical – school law and school finance – especially the latter in that the Legislature is considering a review of the current school aid formula," she said.

Thompson said both programs have been approved by the West Virginia School Boards Association and the West Virginia Board of Education Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC).

Joe Panetta, executive director of the state Department of Education's Office of School Finance, will present the school finance program at 10 a.m. That session runs until noon, with an additional session from 12:45 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The school law workshop is from 1:45 p.m. to 4 p.m. and will be led by WVSBA attorney Howard E. Seufer, Jr. In addition to a question-and-answer format, Seufer will brief members on recent court cases, grievance decisions and 2005 Regular and Special Session legislation.

"These topics are critical – school law and school finance – especially the latter in that the Legislature is considering a review of the current school aid formula." – Debbie Thompson, WVSBA president

Members may receive one additional hour of training by utilizing WVSBA's online training module about the state's Open Governmental Proceedings Act ("Sunshine Law"). That module is at <http://www.wvsba.org/>.

To register for the November meeting or if you have questions or comments, please contact the WVSBA staff at 304-346-0571.

WVSBA Presidents Retreat Agenda

Stonewall Resort
Roanoke, W. Va.

Friday, Oct. 7, 2005

- 1 p.m. Call to Order – President Debbie Thompson
Introductions
Greetings/Remarks – Steven L. Paine, State Superintendent of Schools
- 1:30 p.m. "CPD: Visions and Expectations"
Pat Kushimo, Ph.D., CPD Executive Director and Lori Stilley, Ph.D. (Jefferson), Member CPD (Representing County Boards)
- 2:30 p.m. Break
- 2:45 p.m. "Smell the Coffee"
Role-playing exercise about meeting management, Open Governmental Proceedings Act (Sunshine Law) and corporate board functions
Discussion concerning points made in "Smell the Coffee" and related topics, including Open Governmental Proceedings Act — Kim Croyle, Esq., Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love
Questions-and-Answers
- 4:30 p.m. Adjournment
- 7 p.m. Cracker Barrel (No agenda sessions)
- 8 p.m. Adjournment

Saturday, October 8, 2005

- 9 a.m.* Showcase of Counties (Oral reports from participants)
- 11:30 a.m. Adjournment

* Includes break

Training Committee reports findings

Board members average 14.5 of required 7 hours of annual training

By Ron Spencer

The following report was given to the West Virginia Board of Education regarding the West Virginia School Boards Association/WVBE School Board Member Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC) which I chair.

The meeting was Sept. 8 at the Ramada Inn in Morgantown.

I presented this report to the state board on Sept. 15 at our meeting in Charleston.

On behalf of the WVBE, our members are glad to serve on this important committee and praise county board members for their dedication to professionalism as demonstrated through commitment to professional development.

These are the items I reviewed in my report:

- The TSRC consists of new state board member Priscilla Haden (Kanawha) who joins me and Sheila Hamilton (Jefferson). Haden replaces the late Mr. Paul J. Morris (Kanawha), who was one of the inaugural committee appointees in 1989. Haden is state board secretary. Hamilton is a former WVBE president and was first appointed in 1993. She has served as a TSRC member the last several years.
- The state board will receive the report of county board members' hours of training and the number of credits received during FY05. The "average" county board member received about 14.50 hours of training with 7.00 hours required.

- The TSRC, after considerable deliberation, voted to recommend that the WVBE president and state superintendent of schools write a letter to all county board members – with copies to county superintendents – pointing out the training law requirement and WVSBA's primacy in such as established by state law and as sanctioned by the state board. The letter also will state how members, due to illness (self/family), employment conditions or other hardship circumstances, can be excused from training.
- Due to the nature of the 2004 state board policy regarding county superintendent evaluation, county board members are required to view the state-board approved videotape concerning training before or in order to be part of the superintendent evaluation. The TSRC urges the state board president and state superintendent to emphasize this requirement in their communiqué to board members (and superintendents). A few board members have yet to return verification of having viewed the videotape. (An individual copy was mailed to each county board member/county superintendent and state school board member.)
- The TSRC approved WVSBA's training program for Conference '05. The program was amended so that the safe schools presentations will have subsidiary focus on bullying and communications between modular school

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Board member training available before Dec. 31 deadline

The West Virginia School Boards Association and West Virginia Board of Education School Board Member Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC) reminds county board members whose terms expire June 30, 2006, they must receive their required seven clock hours' training by Dec. 31, 2005.

West Virginia Board of Education member Ron Spencer (Doddridge), who is chairman of the training standards review committee, said county board members who may have difficulty receiving their required hours of training, need to contact WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D.

Thus far, 79 members from 46 counties have not received the required hours of training although most, according to WVSBA Conference Registrar Shirley Davidson, have registered for upcoming training sessions and meetings or other approved training.

Training venues include:

- Online training module. 1.00 hour school board member training credits. Participation deadline ends 4 p.m. on Oct. 14.
- WVSBA Presidents Retreat. Oct. 7-8 at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, W.Va. Provides members six hours of training. An additional hour may be derived from the online training module.
- "The November Meeting." Provides members with five hours training, with an additional hour of training available through the online training module.

For more information on these programs, please contact the WVSBA staff at 304-346-0571. For meeting information, please contact Davidson. Their e-mail addresses are hocull@wvsba.org and sdavidson@wvsba.org.

TRAINING COMMITTEE

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units and main campus buildings. In regard to bullying, the TSRC has asked the association to emphasize the state board's Code of Conduct at its February Winter Meeting (clinic or workshop).

- The TSRC approved, for one hour of training credit, an online training course relating to the state's Open Governmental Proceedings Act ("Sunshine Law"), which can be accessed at <http://www.wvsba.org/>. The training module was developed by WVSBA Counsel Howard E. Seufer Jr., Esq., Bowles Rice McDavid Graff & Love; Lew Brewer, Esq., executive director of the state Ethics Commission; Jim Slaughter, registered parliamentarian and attorney; and WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D. The project was underwritten by the School Board Effectiveness Project, which is a venture between the state Legislature, the state Board of Education and WVSBA. A second module, relating to accreditation and the Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA), will follow, although that module will be more difficult to develop. The Open Meetings Law module will remain on the association Web site until 4 p.m. on Oct. 14 .
- As with past sessions, the annual Presidents Retreat will include, as approved by the TRSC, modules relating to board officers' roles and functions as well as training regarding current educational issues, including pertinent court cases and grievance decisions affecting county boards. The TSRC also has asked the association to develop a "role-playing" exercise regarding school board leadership. The TSRC also wants a concentration on good meeting management (based on the on-site training module presented above). The TSRC agreed that state board members should be invited to this – and all association training meetings.

- The Association's November meeting will focus on the state School Aid Formula and school law. The Formula presentation will be given by Joe Panetta of the state Department of Education's Office of School Finance. It will be geared toward county board members and also will focus on possible changes to the state School Aid Formula as being contemplated by an interim committee. Seufer will present the school law segment.
- O'Cull discussed a multidisciplinary approach to training that uses various disciplines to help board members look or think of different ways of problem-solving. The committee instructed him to continue to develop this module but embedding the components in existing training rather than stand-alone training. The TSRC members also urged the association staff to concentrate on students and student welfare when developing training modules.
- In regard to Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) providing county board member training, the committee effectively deferred action on this item until its December meeting, referring the matter to its primary committee (Committee A), which is chaired by WVBE member Hamilton. There was considerable reluctance and reservations regarding RESAs entering into board member training, with the committee having the consensus that if RESAs are granted this opportunity, additional training guidelines would have to be developed. One formal RESA training request was discussed and another informal request.

The Training Committee will meet Dec. 14 in Charleston (in conjunction with the state Board's meeting). All state and county board members are welcome to attend.

Spencer is chairman of the Training Standards Review Committee. He has served as a WVBE member since 1999 and was WVBE secretary.

WV law requires board self-assessment to be completed by December 31, 2005

Legislation enacted in 2003 requires county boards of education to conduct a self-assessment annually using "an instrument" approved by the state Board of Education.

The Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire has been approved by the WVBE for this purpose. Once the assessment is completed, West Virginia School Boards Association Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., provides a written analysis of evaluation findings and issues recommendations regarding the self-evaluation.

To date, 19 counties have completed the self-evaluation, which must be concluded by December 31, 2005.

The current evaluative instrument will be used for one more year, and then WVSBA will present a new proposal to

the state school board for its consideration. To accomplish this objective, WVSBA President Debbie Thompson (Pleasants) will form a committee that will determine ways to develop a new evaluation instrument. The broad-based committee will develop an instrument that focuses on student achievement.

If you would like to serve on this committee or if you would like to recommend someone to serve on this committee, please contact O'Cull at 304-346-0571 or hocull@wvsba.org.

You also may contact President Thompson at 304-665-2187 or debthom@charter.net.

WVSBA Web site to be upgraded

Online publications should be easier to read and navigate

By Jean Westfall (Ritchie)

The West Virginia School Boards Association's Web site, <http://www.wvsba.org/>, will be upgraded by the end of the year.

The site is updated twice weekly (usually Tuesdays and Fridays) with state, regional and local news, as well as information on grant sources, various educational resources county boards can use, and programming.

The site also hosts the association's first venture into online training, which was underwritten by a grant from the West Virginia School Boards Effectiveness Project, an initiative of the state Legislature, the West Virginia Board of Education/West Virginia Department of Education and WVSBA.

There is no charge to participate in the first series of online training programs, but there likely will be a charge for future programming, depending upon the program's success.

WVSBA Executive Director Howard M. O'Cull, Ed.D., told the Communications Committee that online training could be very effective in terms of pre- and post-conference applications but, as determined by the WVSBA/WVBE Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC), county board members may count no more than two hours of such training toward the seven required hours.

O'Cull said the effectiveness of the current online training program will be evaluated and the results provided to the TSRC at its December meeting in Charleston – and the WVSBA Executive Board next year, depending on the TSRC recommendations.

In other action, the Communications Committee is recommending that all county board members receive copies of WVSBA publications via electronic means rather than hard copy to reduce costs. WVSBA will ask other "external" recipients on the mailing list to switch to electronic versions.

If those external individuals lack e-mail access, they will be charged a fee to defray printing and mailing expenses. According to the WVSBA staff, most of those 30 or so recipients don't have e-mail access.

Beginning in 2006, electronic editions of *WVSBA Monthly* and *The Legislature*, the organization's flagship publication, will be in HTML format for ease in reading online. This format also will allow persons reading *The Legislature's* "bill editions" to immediately access a copy of the bill or legislative proposal being reviewed.

In terms of reporting on county boards facing controversies, the Communications Committee is considering a proposal whereby WVSBA news stories regarding county boards be objective and reflect "balanced" reporting as the underlying rule or tone.

Other considerations would include the stipulation that sources for news articles should be cited and that anonymous sources, to the degree possible, should not be quoted or

used (unless to protect an anonymous source whose circumstances could be compromised by use of printed attribution).

As far as commentary, the editor will have discretion for selecting commentary pieces but also should seek balance in publishing varying viewpoints. The editor is to seek commentaries from the association membership as a matter of priority.

Committee members strongly reiterated that the actions of one county board, especially those in "takeover" counties, affect all county boards of education and merit strong, consistent, diagnostic reporting and commentary, as long as the reportage meets the above guidelines or guidelines ultimately developed by the WVSBA Executive Board.

For more information, please contact me at 304-643-4118 or ljwm1108@ruralnet.org.

Editor's Note: Westfall is president of the Ritchie County Board of Education and chairperson of the WVSBA Committee on Communications.

WVSBA Online Training

On the Web at:
WVSBA.ORG



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Future Meetings

Presidents Retreat '05

October 7/8, 2005
Stonewall Resort, Roanoke

The November Workshop: School Aid Formula & School Law

November 5, 2005
Stonewall Resort, Roanoke

WWSBA Winter Conference '06

February 17/18, 2006
Marriott Hotel, Charleston

Orientation '06

June 14-16, 2006
Stonewall Resort, Roanoke

WWSBA Fall Conference '06

September 22/23, 2006
Marriott Hotel, Charleston

Stay informed.

On the Web at:
WVSBA.ORG

“The November Meeting”

**November 5
Stonewall Resort**

**Room Registration Deadline
October 4**

**Meeting Registration Deadline
October 26**

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