



OSBA Events

Labor & Employment Regional Conferences

February 4-7, 2013

OSBA Board of Directors meeting

March 15-16, 2013

OSBA Legislative Policy Committee meeting

March 16-17, 2013

Oregon School Employees Wellness Conference

March 24-26, 2013

Finance Campaign Regional

April 4, 2013

OSBA/COSA Legislative Day

April 18, 2013

PACE Day

April 26, 2013

Summer Board Conference

July 19-21, 2013

www.osba.org

Oregon School Employees Wellness Conference - It Starts with YOU!

- Improve your own health and learn new skills
- Learn how to create a culture of wellness
- Develop a plan of action for employee wellness
- Access resources to support your efforts



March 24-26, 2013
The Riverhouse
Bend, Oregon

www.oeachoice.com/news-events/

Sponsored by: OEA Choice Trust, ODS, Oregon Public Health, OEA, COSA, OEBC, Oregon ASCD, OSBA

PRESIDENT'S POST

School issues provide a full plate for lawmakers

Well, folks, it's that time again—the legislative elections are a fading memory, the losers have lost and the winners have won. The Legislature has set up shop in Oregon's Capitol, lawmakers have settled into their offices, and committees are scheduling meetings. And the lobbyists are warming up their Smart phones.

Outward appearances suggest that this legislative session won't be much different from any other. Like past sessions, this one will provide an arena for competition among constituencies for slices



Terry Lenchitsky
OSBA President

of the state's resource pie. As OSBA's leadership team has pointed out on the op-ed pages of Oregon's major dailies during the past year, public schools have competed with prisons and health care for state support in every legislative session in recent memory. Unfortunately, schools have lost that competition. More taxpayer money has gone to build prisons and provide health care, while proportionately less money has gone to improve public education.

Though we acknowledge that criminal justice and health care are worthy causes, we must point out that Oregon's students are suffering the consequences of past resource allocation. OSBA has called on the Legislature and the governor to change

President's Post cont. on pg 3

OSBA survey reveals members' major concerns

According to a recently conducted survey by DHM Research, OSBA's members' most pressing concern is the budgetary issues that face their respective districts, such as the cost of the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), financial uncertainty and the challenge of meeting their districts' needs with limited resources.

Completed between Sept. 13 and Oct. 4, 2012, the 70-question online survey was emailed to 1,335 board members and superintendents. Among these, 247 board members and 85 superintendents completed the survey, producing a high participation rate and solid reliability in gauging the attitudes and opinions of the targeted group.

Ninety-five percent of respondents said cost drivers are the most relevant issues in their districts, while PERS reform came in a close second at 94 percent. More than nine out of ten, however, said PERS reform is the most important issue facing their districts.

The survey showed high concern over maintaining quality districts despite a challenging economic situation.

Members appreciate OSBA

The results indicate that its members have a positive impression of the association. Nearly nine of ten respondents gave OSBA a grade of C or better, while 83 percent said they would recommend OSBA membership

to their fellow board members.

Members consider OSBA a valuable resource, particularly in training and support. Seventy-two percent of respondents say OSBA is an effective organization, but this is a slight decrease from the 2008 survey (down from 79 percent). In a 2004 survey, 84 percent of respondents declared OSBA to be "effective."

Members believe that OSBA's most important service is representing school boards before the Legislature, according to the survey. But this is also an area that shows room for improvement. Among all its services, legislative representation received the highest importance rating from members. Overall, participants were quick to note recent improvements within the organization, especially related to OSBA's leadership. A recurring theme was praise for "long overdue reform efforts [being] underway."

Voter survey is next

OSBA will shortly unveil a statewide survey of Oregon's voters to help strategy development on major education issues, such as state funding and PERS reform. Again, DHM Research handled the polling, this time by telephone, which is the preferred method. We will report the results of this survey in a later issue of *School Leader News* and on the [website](#).

Board members take OSBA's message to Washington

Board members and officers of OSBA recently visited the nation's Capitol to meet with members of Oregon's congressional delegation. In meetings held Jan. 29, board members stressed the following critical points:

- The importance of making Oregon's No Child Left Behind waiver permanent.
- The need for a long-term solution to keep timber payments coming to counties in order to support public schools.
- The devastating impacts on Oregon's schools if Congress does not prevent education cuts slated under "sequestration" provisions.

If the nation plunges over the so-called "fiscal cliff," the OSBA team told congressional representatives, Oregon could lose over \$30 million in federal education dollars. These funds primarily serve students who are low income, have special education needs or are learning to speak English.

The importance of local school boards

An underlying theme of the day on Capitol Hill was the important role that locally elected school board members play in determining how to educate children in their communities. Oregon has a strong tradition of board members leading at the district level. This tradition contrasts with the increasing role that the federal government plays in education, with more mandates and tighter conditions for federal funding. OSBA's delegation made it clear that our districts need federal mandate relief so they can focus on increasing student achievement.

OSBA Board members in Washington, D.C., for the Federal Relations Network conference sponsored by the National School Boards Association included: President **Terry Lenchitsky** (Oregon Trail SD), Past President **Kris Howatt** (Gresham-Barlow SD), Vice President **Dave**



OSBA Board members met with US Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden (center) on Jan. 29.

Krumbein (Pendleton SD), Secretary-Treasurer **Bobbie Regan** (Portland Public Schools), **David Beeson** (Silver Falls SD), **Greg Kintz** (Vernonia SD), and **Samuel Lee** (Winston-Dillard SD). Hillsboro School Board member **Carolyn Ortman** also joined the delegation.

Listen to OSBA Board members discuss their trip (links found on www.osba.org).

- Samuel Lee's interviews on KQEN News Radio 1240 - **Jan. 25 & Feb. 5**
- Bobbie Regan's interview on KXL News Radio 101 - **Jan. 28**



Save the Date
April 4, 2013
Portland metro area

Watch OSBA's website,
www.osba.org
for details and registration.

Safety is prominent theme of this year's PACE Day

Plan now to attend "PACE Day" at the Doubletree Lloyd Center on April 26. This year's event emphasizes an issue on everyone's mind in the aftermath of recent school shootings and a string of student suicides: school safety.

One person from each participating PACE member entity will receive:

- One night of lodging—FREE!
- Registration, including continental breakfast and lunch—FREE!

The full-day agenda kicks off with an introduction to PACE—Oregon's leader in property and liability insurance for education—with tips that will help you make the most of your PACE membership.

'I Love U Guys'

John-Michael Keyes, co-founder of the I Love U Guys Foundation, will speak about bullying and school violence. Inspiration for the foundation sprang from the death of Keyes' daughter, Emily, during a hostage-taking and shooting incident at Platte Canyon HS in 2006 in Bailey, CO. Emily's final text message to her family was, "I love u guys."

PACE

DAY

April 26, 2013

The foundation's mission is to promote collaboration with families, schools, communities, government entities and organizations to protect young people. They developed the **Standard Response Protocol**, a classroom response to any school incident. Schools and government agencies in several states have adopted the protocol and hail it as a simple, effective way to cope with dangerous situations.

The sponsor of Keyes' presentation is Genesis Management and Insurance Services Corporation, a longtime partner of PACE. Genesis provides general liability reinsurance services for losses involving damages between \$600,000-\$10 million per PACE member.

Afternoon sessions

The afternoon will feature sessions on recognizing and dealing with boundary invasion and sexual abuse, the dangers and expenses of employment claims, and a year-in-review of claims and risk management.



KEEPING YOU IN THE LOOP

For the past year, I have been the Interim Executive Director of the Oregon School Boards Association. I am very pleased that the OSBA Board decided unanimously to name me as the permanent Executive Director at the January Board of Directors' meeting. I appreciate the faith your OSBA Board representatives have shown in me with this vote, and I will strive to live up to their expectations – and yours – as the OSBA Executive Director. I am looking forward to continuing the work begun in 2012 and moving even more strongly toward providing the best services to you so that we can realize the highest standards of student achievement across Oregon.



Betsy Miller-Jones
Executive Director

We have challenges ahead of us and I look forward to working with you to resolve them. Funding remains at the top of our priorities.

The OSBA legislative team will be working hard on your behalf to ensure that our legislators understand the situa-

tion schools face. We understand that state funding as a whole is difficult. Education can help to create the environment and attract the jobs that this state needs. We must be part of the solution. This year we will be launching an important message across the state with our partners and local districts: *Strong Schools, Strong State*. We plan to launch this campaign in late February. Please join us by watching for a suggested resolution your local school board can pass at your board meeting to support this work. We want you to come to Salem and speak with your legislators here, or meet with them in your local district, to talk about the realities you face in your district. In forming *Strong Schools, Strong State* we have partnered with other education organizations, including the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts, Oregon School Employees Association, Oregon PTA, the Oregon Small Schools Association, the Oregon Association of School Business Officials, the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators and the Oregon Education Association. We will provide you with talking points to raise awareness in your community and inform your legislators so they will make the right decisions this year. We also hope to see you at the OSBA/Confederation of School Administrators Legisla-

tive Day on April 18. There is no charge for this legislative training and information session – put it on your calendar now so you can lobby at your best for your district!

OSBA continues to look for ways to meet your needs to improve education for all children in your district. The Oregon Lighthouse project focuses on student achievement, and our new, on-line '[Gateway to Student Achievement](#)' resources are there to help you be your best for all students. In May, we plan to hold a day focusing on 'Urban Issues' for those boards in urban areas. Help us to identify more ways we can assist you.

I will be visiting members of our OSBA Board of Directors in their home districts this spring, attending board meetings and talking with their fellow board members. If you would like me to visit your board meeting, please let me know at bmillerjones@osba.org.

I look forward to working with you to create the best schools and education for the children of Oregon. We will meet our challenges head on, and – together – we will succeed.

President's Post cont. from pg 1

that allocation, simply because Oregon's ongoing economic recovery depends on strengthening public education. With this basic tenet in mind, OSBA now calls on lawmakers to achieve the following critical goals before the end of the current legislative session:

Support "*Strong Schools, Strong State*"

The Legislature needs to invest in schools to ensure a full school year with adequate staffing levels so class sizes do not grow. Without adequate investment, school districts cannot raise student achievement, close the achievement gap and raise graduation rates. Without strong schools, we cannot hope to achieve a strong state economy over the long term.

Enact PERS reform

The Legislature must give public employers relief from this huge cost burden. Reforming the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) requires a balanced approach that takes into account the effects on school employees, retirees and the overall cost of the system.

Improve and reform schools

The past several decades have brought numerous changes in the way Oregon educates its children, not all of them consistent. CIM/CAM, NCLB, revised common core standards and Smarter Balanced assessments have created a mishmash of requirements that hamper school districts in their cause to raise student achievement. The legislature must stop "moving the goal posts" and provide some needed consistency. Educators care deeply about accountability, and we all want our students to succeed. But constantly changing

requirements make the work of teachers, administrators and school boards even more difficult.

Strengthen safety in schools

In the wake of the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, some people have embraced seemingly simple solutions like banning all guns or arming staff. School safety, however, is a complex issue that defies any simple solution.

We must review our policies on firearms and ensure that nobody who represents a danger should ever receive permission to have a gun. The Legislature should examine Oregon's system of mental health care and address any shortcomings. As school board members, we want to ensure that our schools are the safest possible environments, a place where students can learn and grow without fear. OSBA will work with the Legislature to derive a multi-faceted approach to ensure safety in public schools.



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PROFILE:

New OSBA Board member Doug Nelson

Doug Nelson, the newest member of the OSBA Board of Directors, represents the association’s Central Region. A member of the High Desert Education Service District Board, he brings a wealth of experience and a rich personal history to the OSBA Board.

A former superintendent of Bend-La Pine Schools and Pullman (Washington) Public Schools, Nelson believes in ensuring school boards’ influence over the state’s educational policies. He also believes that among OSBA’s most challenging issues is convincing state leaders to address PERS reform and provide the resources schools need to meet their obligations to students.

“The increased cost of PERS will continue to erode the ability of districts to effectively educate our students,” Nelson says. “Understanding and implementing the necessary structures to meet the new initiatives from our governor is equally important.”

Nelson served as a board member of the Coalition for Schools for five years,

beginning in 2003. He is also a veteran committee member of the Consortium of School Administrators. He served eight years as a member of the Citizens Alliance for Responsible Education Political Action Committee, ending in 2008.

Among his goals as a member of OSBA’s Board is to provide a strong voice for the school boards and schools of the Central Region, and for those outside the I-5 corridor. Throughout his career, he has cultivated the ability to listen and consider competing views.

Nelson received his BA from Whitman College, his master’s degree in education from the University of Puget Sound, and his doctorate from the Seattle University. He also holds a superintendent certificate from the University of Oregon.

He has received an Excellence in Education Award from the Bend Rotary and an Excellence in Education Leadership Award from the University Council of Education Leadership.



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