

OSBA Events

Urban Issues Day

May 10, 2013

OSBA Board of Directors Meeting

June 21-23, 2013

Summer Board Conference

July 19-21, 2013

First gathering brings 140-plus to Portland to learn PACE's ins, outs

Before digging too deeply into an all-day seminar on all that PACE is, more than 140 attendees got a quick lesson in what it is not.

"First of all, we are not an insurance company," said Lisa Freiley, OSBA's director of legal, labor and PACE services.



More than 140 people attended the first PACE Day at the DoubleTree by Hilton Portland, including OSBA Executive Director, Betsy Miller-Jones.

The occasion was the first PACE Day, held April 26 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Portland. Those in attendance included school board members, risk managers, business managers, superintendents, insurance representatives, OSBA staff and others.

The day started with an outline of the history and services of PACE, which stands for Property and Casualty Coverage for Education. Other speakers addressed setting up a standard response to dangerous situations, avoiding legal claims for retaliation, reporting and recognizing sexual abuse, and managing claims.

Freiley explained that PACE is a self-insured liability pool. "Everyone sitting in here is an owner in this program," she said. "It's a partnership."

Frank Stratton, executive director of the Special Districts Association of Oregon, joined Freiley in outlining PACE's history and what it offers. Stratton said that under Oregon law only public entities can form such insurance pools.

"A lot of you look at PACE and think it is insurance because it acts a lot like insurance," Stratton said. "But the money doesn't go off to New York."

He also explained that PACE buys reinsurance to cover losses in excess of \$250,000.

The two provided a breakdown of how each dollar contributed to PACE is spent. The biggest expense, at 41 percent, is claims, followed by the cost of reinsurance, commissions and broker services, program administration and other costs. Significant rises in employment and sexual abuse claims over the past year have contributed to an expected rate increase this coming year of between 15 and 25 percent (17 percent on average).

Claims can cost from \$60,000 up into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"If we can prevent just one claim," Stratton said, "that's a significant amount of money."

After that outline of PACE, keynote speaker John-Michael Keyes took those in attendance on a moving description of how he and his wife lost their 16-year-old daughter, Emily, during a school hostage incident in Colorado. From that death was born the I Love U Guys Foundation, whose works including establishing a standard response protocol in the event of a school safety issue arising.



Frank Stratton, executive director of the Special Districts Association of Oregon.

“Who here is in charge of school safety?” Keyes asked. When only one man stood up, Keyes urged the whole crowd on its feet, saying: “We’re going to take the oath. I own school safety.”



OSBA's Peggy Holstedt, director of policy services, chats during a break with keynote speaker John-Michael Keyes.

Other speakers included attorney Dan Lloyd, who described the rapid growth in employment retaliation claims; Det. Micah Smith of the Linn County Sheriff's Department, who spoke about new technology, social media and sex crimes against minors; and Geoff Sinclair and Scott Neufeld of PACE, who described claims case scenarios, how to respond, and the need to consult with pre-loss attorneys before taking action against an employee.

More information can be found on the new PACE website at <http://pace.osba.org>.

President's Post

Legislative Day provides sweet opportunities for board members

I never knew chocolate could be so effective. State Sen. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay) was explaining to a group of us all the ins and outs of the state Legislature. Among other necessities, he said, was liberally passing out candy.



Terry Lenchitsky
OSBA President

“Are you saying chocolate buys favors, Senator?” asked Jim Green, OSBA's deputy executive director.

That was a light moment during an enlightening day at the Capitol. The occasion was OSBA/COSA Legislative Day, put on April 19 by the Oregon School Boards Association and the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA).

After hearing about two hours of bill updates and advice from legislators and staff from both organizations, many board members and administrators met individually with senators and representatives.

Roblan, himself a former principal, said school board members are uniquely qualified for dealing with the compromise and problem-solving that take place in Salem.

“Your work on the school board, which goes unnoticed unless there's some mess, is really appreciated here,”

Roblan said. “The skills you learn in education are really applicable here.”

He said caucuses on both sides of the aisle often look to school board members as possible legislative candidates “because you also have a passion for getting something done.”

He talked about the importance of listening, and the outlook for school funding and reform of the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). With our own budgeting and teacher negotiations in motion, I asked him when we could get a clear idea of the budget numbers for K-12 education.

He said he expected that to happen in the next few weeks. As if that weren't sweet enough, when he was done speaking he walked around handing out chocolates.

We also heard from COSA lobbyist Chuck Bennett, who reminded us that legislators need to hear that their votes are necessary to securing at least \$6.55 billion for K-12 schools in the next biennium.

“Transmit the message – it's about those kids,” he said. “You know those stories way better than we do. It is so important that they understand that message.”

OSBA's legislative team – Deputy Executive Director Jim Green and legislative specialists Morgan Allen and Lori Sattenspiel – outlined some of the pressing issues in this session, starting with PERS reform.

Green outlined Senate Bill 822, and its reliance on delaying payments, which cuts down on immediate rates but adds \$60 million in interest that school districts and other entities have to pay back down the road.

“We've told legislators, and you can tell them, skipping payments to a pension system is not good business – it just doesn't make sense,” Green said.

Other issues outlined by OSBA staff included funding for education service districts, school board representation on the Oregon Education Investment Board, public contracting requirements and concealed weapons in schools.

Rep. Mark Johnson (R-Hood River) also spoke to the group. Johnson and others noted how much OSBA has raised its profile over the past year.

“You've heard some kudos to OSBA for their new relevance in the building,” Johnson said.

Later, he said, “OSBA being out front in the PERS discussion has really raised their status as a serious player.”

More sweet news.

Keeping You in the Loop

Listening, sharing and keeping a focus on local control

The National School Boards Association’s annual convention is an interesting and thought-provoking event at which board members hear what is happening around the country in education. The reactions of attendees range from “Our issues are the same as those from places far away,” to “I can’t imagine that situation happening in our district or state.” It is a time for learning, listening and sharing information and ideas.

This year I had the opportunity to spend a day with executive directors from around the United States, learning about each state association’s successes and challenges. State policy and education funding issues? Check. Common core state standards? Check. Labor negotiations? Check. Technology in the classroom? Check. But what the heck is this one: School boards



Betsy Miller-Jones
Executive Director

associations and polarized membership? Two years ago, Oregon’s two largest districts, Portland and Salem, withdrew from membership in the Oregon School Boards Association. The loss of their participation and our ability to speak for all school districts in Oregon severely hurt our effectiveness as an association. I am very glad to have them back and we are working hard to keep the conversations open and ongoing. So I assumed that was what this topic involved.

Not so much. Think again. In several of our Midwestern states, competing school boards associations have been formed to challenge the positions of the traditional state school boards associations. Billed as “your conservative alternative to understanding education funding, spending and legislative reform,” these organizations

challenge the status quo as “mouthpieces for the teachers unions and pro-teacher policies.” An “us vs. them” mentality has ensued, based on conservative vs. liberal political philosophies. The idea of a non-partisan association, or one made of boards of education



Bobbie Regan (Portland Public Schools Board Member and secretary-treasurer of the OSBA board), Stan Primozich (McMinnville School Board and OSBA Board member) and OSBA Executive Director Betsy Miller-Jones testify April 5 in favor of local control during a hearing on Senate Bill 347. Samuel Lee III (not pictured; member of the Winston-Dillard School Board and OSBA Board) joined them in testifying. The bill (and its amendments) would establish statewide policy prohibiting carrying a gun inside a K-12 school building, but local districts would have to opt in to put it into effect.

elected in non-partisan elections, seems to have been left in the dust.

Last month we had an example of OSBA’s ability to bridge competing positions and speak with one voice in support of local control of school board decision-making based on community beliefs and values. **Sam Lee** from Winston-Dillard, **Stan Primozich** from McMinnville, and **Bobbie Regan** from Portland all testified in support of legislation to allow local boards to decide whether or not to allow weapons to be permitted in the schools. Sam testified that his district would probably choose to allow weapons, Bobbie testified that hers would not, and Stan told a compelling story that demonstrated why the current status had proven unworkable in his district. The power in our presentation was the focus on permitting local control, not whether or not permitting or forbidding weapons in schools was the right answer. The concept is still alive, in an amended version of the bill that would allow local districts to opt into a new policy prohibiting carrying a gun inside a K-12 school building.

We will not always be able to come to a position as a state association to satisfy every district or every board member. The key is to have all positions heard, all sides represented and make decisions that represent the majority while respecting the minority’s right to be heard. A focus on local control, student achievement and fair and equitable funding for education has kept us on target this year. Your voice is absolutely necessary, however, to keep the conversation going. Without it we aren’t a complete and fully representative association. Tell us we are right, or wrong, or halfway on target, but please keep participating in what is one of the most important conversations in our state today: the future of public education in Oregon.

Leadership Oregon creates another graduating class

Nearly two dozen individuals graduated on May 3 with skills gained from the Oregon School Boards Association’s Leadership Oregon program.

The 21 participants completed four sessions of 1½ days each, gaining skills in communications, goal-setting, collective bargaining, fiscal oversight and more. The program is offered once every two years at no charge.

Joe Wehri, OSBA’s director of board development, said Leadership Oregon provides “a safe and supportive environment” for participants to practice governance scenarios they and their districts are likely to face. To learn more about the program and see comments from past participants, visit

<http://www.osba.org/Buttons/~link.aspx?id=D664D8C15E324FCB9B34D076BF747A99&z=z>.

The graduates and their districts are:

- Bruce McCain, Reynolds
- Ron Johnson, Cascade

- Kim Strelchun, Hillsboro
- Betty Reynolds, West Linn-Wilsonville
- Steve Lowell, Klamath County
- Lisa Frasier, Yoncalla
- Ernie Blatz, North Wasco County
- Lyle Utt, Greater Albany
- Jennifer de Jong, Community Roots Charter
- Kevin Parrish, Pleasant Hill
- Anay Hausner, Oregon Virtual Academy
- Linda Eskridge, Molalla River
- Judy Breeden, Sheridan
- Tass Morrison, North Santiam
- Greg Kintz, Vernonia
- Lisa Corrigan, Corvallis
- Todd Thomas, Newberg
- Tom Sauret, Corvallis
- Dane Nickerson, Reynolds
- Jane Reid, Clackamas CC
- Terry Deacon, Linn Benton Lincoln ESD

Montgomery joins OSBA Board with new outlook

Doug Montgomery won election to the OSBA Board of Directors in December, but open-heart bypass surgery delayed him from attending his first Board meeting until March 15.

The retired management analyst says the surgery experience has changed his outlook on life.

“It’s enabled me to focus on what is important and how I spend my time,” he said.

Montgomery, who lives in Portland but spends about one-third of the year at a second home in Tillamook County, holds the Board’s position 19, representing the Multnomah Region. He is also a member of the Multnomah Education Service District Board.

He has two sons. One teaches international relations and political science at Reed College, and is currently on a two-year appointment to the Pentagon. The other has faced struggles with depression and attention deficit disorder.

“He’s the reason I’m on the ESD,” Montgomery said. “He received outstanding services that enabled him to go to alternative schools, so I’m giving back.”

Montgomery has a bachelor’s degree in government (minor in urban sociology) from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. He also holds a master’s in public administration and a doctoral degree in social science, both from Syracuse University in New York. He retired from the Bonneville Power Administration after a 20-year career in 2002; he currently teaches political science part-time at Tillamook Bay Community College, and says he

enjoys mentoring students and giving advice to Tillamook County’s elected officials.

Montgomery said he wanted to join OSBA’s board because school districts create such vital links – economically, socially and beyond – in communities across Oregon.

“They are critical organizations,” he said, “and I hope to strengthen them.”

Rep. Johnson brings school board perspective to the Capitol

As a general contractor, State Rep. Mark Johnson (R-Hood River) knows how important a firm foundation is to building a sound home.

And in tending to this home we all share in Oregon, Johnson says it’s important to shore up the foundation found in our public education system. That’s why he is advocating increased funding for K-12 education, along with a host of other issues also backed by the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA).

Johnson’s support for OSBA and its members is no surprise: He’s one of two state legislators who concurrently serve on their local school boards (the other is Shemia Fagan, David Douglas School Board and D-Clackamas).

Johnson first ran for school board as an extension of his experience in service clubs and coaching. He is a product of Hood River County public schools, as are his three children.

He also wanted to bring his business experience to bear on decisions made by the school board.

“There have been multiple times when I’ve been able to use my practical knowledge on issues such as construction levies and bond levies,” he said.

Johnson is running unopposed this month for his third term on the Hood River County School Board. Over the past eight years, he said, the challenges facing districts have shifted substantially.

“From a budget standpoint we were so much more stable than we are now,” he said. “It used to be that we could choose the programs we wanted to invest in. Now, with the current economic situation, we’re basically in survival mode trying to maintain the status quo.”

One of the votes he is most proud of during his school board tenure is supporting a transition to a full-day kindergarten throughout the district. Even in the face of recent budget cuts, that’s one asset the district has been able to hang on to.

One of the primary reasons he ran for the Legislature, Johnson says, was that as a school board member he had



State Rep. Mark Johnson (R-Hood River)

“been on the receiving end of a lot of lousy policies from Salem at the local level.”

Johnson, now in his second term in the House, says he wants to ensure that legislators take into account the perspectives from school boards.

He agrees with many of his colleagues in recognizing that reform of the Public Employees Retirement System is the biggest issue before the Legislature this session.

“Until we can address the major cost driver that is eroding school budgets, our students are going to be the victims,” he said.

He originally campaigned on and continues to believe in the notion that Oregon’s economic prosperity and public education system are inextricably linked.

“I think it’s opened the eyes of a lot of folks to see a Republican as an advocate for education,” he said. “But you can’t very well have a competent workforce without a thriving public education system.

“And without a strong economy you can’t sustain that thriving public education system. The key to our state’s economic growth is first and foremost making sure our public education system is performing as it needs to.”



Summer Board Conference is just around the Bend

Board members from across the state representing K-12 school districts, community colleges, education service districts and charter schools will gather in Bend at the Riverhouse Hotel and Convention Center July 19-21 for OSBA’s Summer Board pre-conference and conference.

This year’s agenda is packed with up-to-the-minute information on school funding, legislative activities, and a myriad of other exciting topics such as school law, cyber-bullying, campus safety, board member ethics and student achievement. New this year will be an opening reception at 4:30 p.m. Friday, July 19, hosted by a select group of vendors.

The pre-conference will include an all-day board secretary workshop as well as two pre-conference choices for school board members and superintendents. Find

registration, lodging and event details, http://www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/Summer_board_conference-2013.aspx

Plan your trip well in advance. We look forward to seeing you in Bend in July!

State Board of Education welcomes two new members

Two new members attended their first meetings last month at the State Board of Education.

Anthony Veliz and Miranda Summer will serve two-year terms running through March 15, 2017.

“Our newest board members join us at a time of great transition, energy and excitement in education,” said Deputy Superintendent Rob Saxton.

Veliz is the president of public relations and marketing firm IZO Inc. in Woodburn.

From 2006 to 2008, Veliz served as the director of parent and community relations for Woodburn School District, and he worked as the director of college access programs for Chemeketa Community College from 1999 to 2005. He has also been a member of the Woodburn School Board and Woodburn City Council.

Summer is an attorney at Summer Trainor LLP, focusing on personal injury and family law. Summer previously served as a state administrative law judge.

The seven-member board sets educational policies and standards for Oregon’s 197 public school districts, 17 community college districts, and 19 education service districts. The State Board is appointed by the governor and confirmed by the State Senate.

OSBA resources can help guide new board members

Know someone who is running for a school board opening for the first time? Do that candidate (and your district) a big favor and make sure he or she takes a good look at our “New board member resources” page. http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Board_Operations/NBM_Resources.aspx

There, newly elected board members can find everything they need to hit the ground running after the balloting. They’ll find everything from Boardsmanship 101 (tips for new board members) to important principles to a checklist of what all board members should have at their fingertips.

The page also has guidelines on ethical conduct and links to valuable resources, such as OSBA’s popular “Ask Betsy’s Team” feature.

Recognition programs seek nominees

The Oregon Department of Education is seeking nominations for educator recognition programs including Oregon Teacher of the Year. To nominate a Teacher of the Year, or for other recognition opportunities, fill out the Talent Pool Recommendation Form at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=221>.

To be considered for the 2014 Teacher of the Year, nominees must have their names submitted by May 31, 2013.

Workshop and student entertainment proposals sought for OSBA annual convention

The deadlines are approaching to propose a workshop or student performance group for OSBA's 67th annual convention, Nov. 14-17, at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront Hotel.

OSBA seeks informative and interesting workshops primarily targeting school board members and superintendents. **Workshop proposals are due May 15** and can be found at www.osba.org/ac.

The convention format features workshops in 30-minute and 75-minute sessions. OSBA encourages charter schools, colleges, education service districts, school districts and other organizations to present sessions that showcase successful educational approaches and promote equity and student achievement.

Each year, the convention also showcases student performing arts groups for the 800 attendees. OSBA is looking for three or four student groups (band, orchestra, choir, ensemble, dance or theater) to entertain at general sessions or meals. To be considered, **submit your student performance proposals by May 31**; more information is online at www.osba.org/ac (go to the middle of the page).



Jim Green, OSBA deputy executive director, makes an appearance April 4 on the OPB radio program "Think Out Loud." Green debated Greg Hartman of the PERS Coalition over Senate Bill 822 and the need for meaningful PERS reform. "You need to look at the overall cost of the system and what it does to schools," Green said. "They're at their wits' end."