

December 2013

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OSBA Events

NSBA Pacific Region Winter Meeting

December 14-16, 2013

School Board Recognition Month

January 2014

OSBA Bonds, Ballots and Buildings Conference

January 10, 2014

OSBA Labor and Employment Regional Workshops

February 10-13, 2014

PACE Day: School Safety and Reducing Liability

April 25, 2014

OSBA's Annual Convention celebrates 2013, looks to future

OSBA's Annual Convention wrapped up last month after a nonstop whirl through the challenges facing today's school board members – from campus safety to dual-language immersion to literacy in the digital age.

The 67th annual convention, held once again at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront, attracted more than 800 board members and school administrators.

In addition to offering board members from around the state an opportunity to share concerns and interests, the convention allowed OSBA to recognize how individual



Betsy Miller-Jones recounts the successes of the past year.



Terry Lenchitsky introduces the OSBA Board of Directors.

members contribute to the organization's effectiveness. In her general session address, Executive Director Betsy Miller-Jones recounted the highlights of an "amazing year" that included an additional \$1 billion in funding for K-12 public education and passage of Public Employees Retirement System reform bills.

Those successes would not have been possible, she noted, without the constant stream of emails, calls and personal appeals made by members. She asked individuals to stand and direct a small flashlight on themselves as tribute to their being "shining lights" for education.

"There is nothing easy about the important work you do as a board member," Miller-Jones told the assembly. "It's sometimes maddening. It's frustrating. It's just plain hard."

Much of the convention's focus was on the keynote speakers and dozens of workshops designed to give educators information they need on pressing topics.

For example, one workshop, "Unarmed Response to an Active Shooter," outlined steps school staff can take in the event an armed individual enters a campus.

"You basically have a fight against time, from the first shot," said Clem Spenner, threat assessment coordinator with the Willamette Education Service District.

He and Rob Hatchell and Josh Calef of the Dallas Police Department discussed looking for clues – what Hatchell called "leakage" – that someone intends to bring a weapon to school, and how to react when that happens.

"You have to plan how to initiate an attack because it doesn't come naturally to most people," Hatchell said.

After a discussion of how to disable a shooter, Hatchell led a scenario in which John Barnett, a new board member from Siuslaw, posed as a shooter trying to enter the room. He was mobbed by audience members waiting just inside the door.



Members participate in a scenario during the "Unarmed Response to an Active Shooter" workshop at convention.

In "Effective Biliteracy Instruction," bilingual teacher Nubia Green and other staff from the Salem-Keizer School District showed how teaching Spanish speakers simultaneously in their native language and English helps improve comprehension and test scores.

"What they learn in one language transfers to another language," said Dave Bertholf, principal at Scott Elementary School.

Keynote speakers included author and educator David Warlick, who described how being literate in the digital age requires separating the truth from lies and distortion.

Another keynote speaker, author Paul Tough, talked about research into how young children benefit from nurturing, and how character traits such as hope and resilience are just as important as intelligence.

Doris McEwen, the Oregon Education Investment Board's deputy director for curriculum and instruction, delivered a critical issues address on how willpower is the critical ingredient for erasing the achievement gap.

"You bring hope to our children," she told more than 200 listeners. "You are their surrogate parents."

Honor the school board in January!

January is time to acknowledge the school board and its role in supporting student achievement. Gov. Kitzhaber has proclaimed January 2014 as School Board Recognition Month. OSBA has a list of resources to help you celebrate in your district:

http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Community_Relations/Events_SBMonth.aspx

Vocational education is key to Oregon's economic future

I have to admit it: There's a temptation to spend the words in my last column as OSBA president on a recitation of how far we've come as an organization.

Not that those accomplishments are not worthy of celebration. But having relived those successes through our recent annual convention, I want to once again look ahead to what I believe is a critical challenge facing Oregon's schools: reestablishing our vocational education programs.

As I said in my convention speech, employers across the state are preoccupied with finding skilled employees who can tackle the jobs that need doing now. They need welders, electricians, pipe-fitters and sheet-metal workers.

This is far from a business-only issue. As we move toward our 40/40/20 goals, we cannot abandon young men and women in the 20 percent category – those who will not obtain an advanced degree – to minimum-wage jobs. After all, as author Paul Tough reminded us in his keynote convention speech, I.Q. alone is not the only indicator of future success. Many of our young people have other important attributes – imagination, grit, perseverance – and they are just waiting for the right opportunity to unlock the magic inside them.

I'm a college graduate myself, so I understand how much that advanced degree can be worth. But I also ran my own business for more than 30 years, and I can tell you that without skilled workers our state economy would come to a crashing halt.

Recent news stories cited a new study of Oregon technology leaders and their concerns about finding talent to fill high-paying jobs in the state's important tech sector. More than half of those surveyed said the biggest threats to their business in the next six months were labor costs, talent availability and employee turnover.

To ensure our state's economic well-being and serve our students, we need to re-invest in vocational training programs. Let's create home-grown talent that Oregon employers are looking for, and ensure living-wage jobs for the young people graduating from our schools.

It's been an honor serving as your president in 2013, and it is my fervent hope that OSBA's leadership and you as local board members will embrace this important vocational education issue in 2014 and beyond.



Terry Lenchitsky
OSBA President

OSBA Common Core Webinar features Miller-Jones, Saxton

As full implementation of the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics approach, school board members across Oregon are

receiving questions from parents and community members at an increasing rate.

OSBA hosted a webinar Dec. 2 with Executive Director Betsy Miller-Jones and Rob Saxton, Oregon's deputy superintendent of public instruction, to help members learn more about the Common Core and the impact this initiative will have on the work of school boards and staff.

Through a series of questions and answers, the two addressed many of the pressing issues – and the misperceptions – on the Common Core State Standards. Among topics discussed were testing, local control over texts and curriculum, board roles in implementing the standards and state participation in their adoption.

You may listen to a replay of the webinar at <http://www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/Webinar-CommonCore-2013-12-02.aspx>.

Annual Convention helps forge connections with members

OSBA's Annual Convention offered a wonderful time last month to celebrate success, share challenges and hear about new ideas with new and old friends. Thanks to all of you who attended and participated in the convention's many events!

We hope to see those of you who could not attend at another OSBA event during the coming year, at a number of sites around the state. For example, we have our Bonds, Ballots and Buildings Conference coming up in Salem on Jan. 10, PACE Day is set for April 25 in Eugene and once again we'll meet in Bend for our Summer Board Conference, set for July 18-20.



Betsy Miller-Jones
Executive Director

Convention 2013 offered attendees another new opportunity: Region Roundtables. The Roundtable sessions allowed board members from each of the OSBA regions to meet with their OSBA and Legislative Policy Committee members to discuss the results of the Fall Regionals, share common concerns and provide feedback on proposed ideas. They were very well received. Next year we will move the time to earlier in the conference with the hope that even more attendees will participate.

As you look ahead to the holidays I hope you include in your celebrations the successes you have had in your district, and we have had statewide this year. There is much for us to do ahead, but don't forget the great things you have helped create in your local schools and in our statewide efforts to improve student achievement and K-12 funding.

As I said in my convention speech, thanks to all of you for being shining lights for public education and Oregon's children.

OSBA elections are continuing – remember to vote

OSBA elections run through Dec. 13. Open this year are all even-numbered positions, Positions 1 and 15 on the OSBA Board of Directors and all Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) positions.

Local boards will be voting on OSBA Board and LPC representatives for each region, as well as any resolutions. Betsy Miller-Jones, OSBA's executive director, reminds members to ask board chairs to place the election on board meeting agendas.

Election materials and a calendar can be found on the OSBA website. From the home page, click on "About OSBA" and "Election Center."

OSBA members identify legislative and service needs during Fall Regionals

One of the high points of OSBA's Fall Regional visits, which wrapped up in late October after 20 stops and 5,000-plus miles of driving, is hearing from our members.

From The Dalles to Vale to Bandon to Seaside, we asked for input in two areas: legislative issues and OSBA services. Attendance was up significantly, to 691 – the highest in a decade. Some common themes emerged.

Legislative issues:

- Universal concern about the pace of change in education and the ability of schools, students and staff to keep up with all the new mandates and data reports – members want OSBA to continue our mandate relief efforts at the Legislature;
- While board members are pleased with the increased funding for K-12, they are concerned



Terry Lenchitsky listens to members' input at OSBA's Fall Regional Meeting in Condon.

our state still hasn't ensured adequacy or stability in tough economic times by taking on revenue reforms;

- Although they are satisfied with our work during the Special Session, OSBA members want our association to keep pressing the Legislature to control the growing costs of PERS;
- Districts need state matching funds and grants to address the need for capital construction, deferred maintenance and technology improvements;
- Funding to pay for the true costs of full-day kindergarten and needed facilities improvements weighs heavily on the minds of many board members;
- Lack of funding for special education services and the lack of permanent funding streams for small, rural schools are a continued concern; and
- OSBA members want a school board member representing their interests on the Oregon Education Investment Board.

OSBA services:

- In general, OSBA members are very pleased about the increased emphasis on customer service over the past year or so;
- Our core services (Legal/Labor/PACE/Policy) and extra programs such as NewsClips, Lighthouse and Ask Betsy are well-liked and frequently accessed by members;
- Our members expressed a strong desire for more online trainings or "on-demand" access to professional development and materials;
- Old and new members want to expand programs such as Leadership Oregon and ask that we provide more trainings, orientations and information for new school board members;
- Many members would like OSBA to help them set up local meetings with legislators and provide more opportunities for local peer-to-peer interactions;
- Our membership would like us to expand our efforts to partner with other education organizations to help counteract all of the negative messages about K-12 education; and
- Most importantly, our members want us to keep coming to them for Fall Regionals, trainings and services.

Betsy Miller-Jones, OSBA's executive director, said legislative staff would use input from the Fall Regionals as a starting point for discussions with the association's Legislative Policy Committee when members meet in January.

Miller-Jones said she would work with OSBA's staff and board members to identify areas in which OSBA can improve services in response to members' suggestions.

"As a member services agency we have to continually look for ways to provide value to school board members," she said. "I'm so thankful for board members who took time to spend an evening with us, and we are taking their suggestions to heart."

A complete summary of Fall Regionals suggestions, by community, can be found on OSBA's website at http://www.osba.org/News%20Center/Announcements/2013-11-25_Fall_Regional_comments.aspx.

PACE trustees hear about improved outlook

Trustees of the Property and Casualty Coverage for Education (PACE) Trust heard a number of indicators this week that fiscal 2012-13 is shaping up to be a much better year than the previous one.

During their regular meeting Dec. 2 in Salem, trustees heard separate reports from an outside actuary and auditor. Paired with reports on the trust's finances, underwriting and investments, the outlook for PACE is moving in a good direction.

"When I look at financial statements I'm more interested in the direction than the position," auditor James Marta told trustees.



Specifically, Marta and Kevin Wick (Price Waterhouse Coopers), who provided the actuarial review, outlined the following:

- Net unpaid claims are estimated at \$21.1 million, with a payment curve extending to 2024. (Some claims incurred this year may not be reported or paid for years to come).
- The pool's gross loss history has varied from \$6 million to \$11 million annually since 2007, but has been shielded from higher volatility by paying for reinsurance.
- About 63 percent of the pool's risk is associated with general liability coverage.
- To be completely funded, the pool would need \$19 million to \$23 million in assets, instead of the \$10 million to \$15 million it has typically had.
- Total net assets for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, were \$12.2 million, a \$1.7 million increase over the previous year.
- Net estimated incurred claims for 2012-13 were \$9.7 million – about \$1 million less than the year before.

Mike Doherty, chief financial officer of the Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO), told trustees that property claims for the current fiscal year have been lower than expected.

"We are heading back in the right direction," he said.

He said staff had solicited insurance quotes for increased coverage for cyber liability, but that premium costs exceeded the potential for benefits.

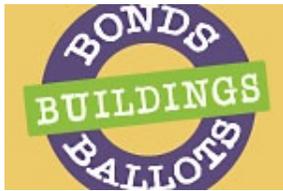
Staff said PACE essentially provides full coverage now for cyber liability.

Lisa Freiley, OSBA's director of legal, labor and PACE services, said planning is proceeding for PACE Day on April 25 in Eugene.

Bonds, Ballots and Buildings Conference set for Jan. 10 in Salem

Recent school bond election results point out the need for effective strategizing, and OSBA has designed a conference with board members and districts in mind.

The Bonds, Ballots and Buildings Conference will be held Jan. 10 in Salem. Workshop offerings include an opportunity to learn from the winners, pre-bond basics, focus on state programs, a team approach to bond planning, survey data, technology, post-election actions, campaigns on the cheap and more.



The keynote address by Secretary of State Kate Brown will provide an update on election law.

After a very successful 2012, when nine of 12 school bonds passed statewide, only seven of 23 have passed in 2013. Some elections have been decided by a hair: Culver passed an \$8.8 million bond in November by only five votes – 590 to 585.

"We're putting together a lineup designed to help boards and districts go from 'almost got there' to victory," said Tricia Yates, OSBA's director of communications.

More information and conference registration materials are available at www.osba.org/bbb.

Members receive Leadership Institute, Master Board awards

Seven locally elected school board members were recognized Nov. 16 with a platinum award for completing course work through OSBA's Leadership Institute.

Platinum awards were earned by **Betty Reynolds**, West Linn-Wilsonville; **Ron Johnson**, Cascade; **Ernie Blatz**, North Wasco County; **Christine Riley**, Northwest Regional ESD; **Bruce McCain**, Reynolds; **Richard Parady**, Rogue River; and **Judy Breeden**, Sheridan.

The awards, presented at OSBA's annual convention in Portland, recognize board members for significant levels of achievement in leadership and development. There are four levels: bronze, silver, gold and platinum. (See accompanying list of all recipients.)

OSBA also awarded the Master Board Award to the Neah-Kah-Nie, Nestucca Valley and Ontario school boards. The Master Board Award is given to boards that meet rigorous standards for individual and organizational training and school governance.

Betsy Miller-Jones, OSBA's executive director, congratulated recipients on their achievement.

"School board members already put in hundreds of hours every year on behalf of Oregon's children," she said. "This is an extra measure of their dedication."

2013 Leadership Institute Award Recipients

Name	District	Award
Vincent Adams	Corvallis	Bronze
Liz Alperin	Lebanon Community Schools	Silver
Ernie Blatz	North Wasco County	Platinum
Judy Breeden	Sheridan	Platinum
Kevin Cassidy	Baker	Bronze
Adrian DeLeon	Coos Bay	Bronze
Linda Eskridge	Molalla River	Silver
Diego Hernandez	Reynolds	Bronze
Ron Johnson	Cascade	Platinum
Bill Kemper	Corvallis	Bronze
Paul Kraft	Ontario	Bronze
Christine Larsen	David Douglas	Bronze
Robert Lee	Reynolds	Gold
Debbie McBee	Pendleton	Bronze
Bruce McCain	Reynolds	Platinum
Tim McElrath	Milton-Freewater	Silver
Don Miller	Milton-Freewater	Bronze
Glenn Miller	Hillsboro	Bronze
Lisa Mitchell	Perrydale	Bronze
Michael Moore	Klamath Falls City Schools	Bronze
Larry Nicholson	Medford	Bronze
Patti Norris	Crook County	Silver
Richard Parady	Rogue River	Platinum
Don Rankin	Hermiston	Silver
Shannon Raybold	David Douglas	Bronze
Betty Reynolds	West Linn-Wilsonville	Platinum
Christine Riley	Northwest Regional ESD	Platinum
Cindy Sapp	Knappa	Bronze
Donn Wahl	Central	Bronze
Diane Wilkinson	Nestucca Valley	Silver
Kathy Zehner	Central	Gold

Teacher contract database unveiled from OSBA member data

Last month the Chalkboard Project unveiled the Teacher Contract Database (oregonteachercontracts.org), based primarily on data provided by OSBA members.

"This is an important tool that will allow school board members, parents and other interested parties to compare districts side-by-side in a variety of areas such as the number of student school days," said Betsy Miller-Jones, OSBA's executive director. "As always, OSBA supports the right of locally elected school board members to negotiate contracts for their district."

The database includes such information as number of teachers, teacher contract days, in-service days, holidays, student school days, average teacher salary, annual sick leave, personal leave, layoff procedures and more.

The database allows users to compare as many as four districts at once.

"The more we know about our schools, the more informed our decisions," said Sue Hildick, Chalkboard Project president. "Parents, educators, community members and advocates all deserve easy access to the information that impacts Oregon's classrooms."

Stand for Children's Levin honored by Oregon Business Association



Sue Levin, executive director of Stand for Children Oregon, was honored recently as the Oregon Business Association's Statesman of the Year, and Executive Director Betsy Miller-Jones was part of an OSBA contingent on hand to congratulate her. Levin and her staff worked closely with OSBA, the business association and other coalition partners toward passage of Public Employees Retirement System reform this year.

Labor and Employment Regional Workshops

Need help complying with the Affordable Care Act?

Do you have questions about state and federal changes to OFLA/FMLA?

Expert help is on the way!

During the second week of February, OSBA will send its experienced negotiators and attorneys to a location near you.

These regional workshops will feature informal roundtable discussions in which you can raise issues and ask questions on labor and employment issues.

As leaders charged with making the best investments of your resources to support student achievement, you can't afford to miss hearing the latest on collective bargaining and case law – and highlighted this year: all you need to know about the Affordable Care Act. In our popular "Ask the Attorney" session, you'll get expert guidance and advice on the labor and employment issues most important to you.

More information and conference registration materials are available at:

http://www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/Labor_and_Employment_Regional_Meetings_14.aspx



Labor and Employment Regional Workshop Schedule

All meetings are from 1-8 p.m.

Location	City	Date
InterMountain ESD	Pendleton	February 10
South Coast ESD	Coos Bay	February 10
Southern Oregon ESD	Medford	February 11
High Desert ESD	Redmond	February 11
Lane ESD	Eugene	February 12
Northwest Regional ESD	Hillsboro	February 13
Baker School District	Baker City	February 13