

JOURNAL

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— photo by Bryan Bullock

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New digital edition available!

You can access the *Journal's* new digital edition on the OSBA website at www.ohioschoolboards.org/journal.

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OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.

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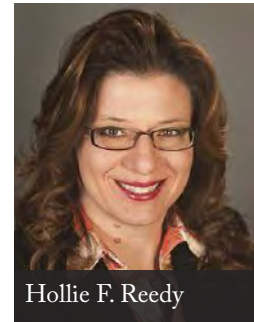
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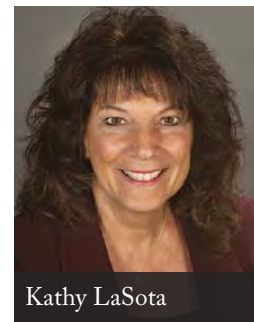
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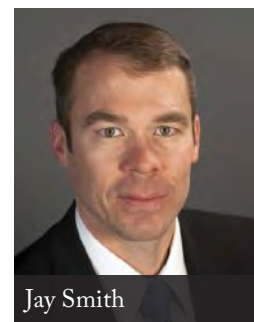
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Defending ‘thorough and efficient’

*Editor’s note: This column was jointly authored by **Richard Lewis**, Ohio School Boards Association executive director; Dr. **R. Kirk Hamilton**, Buckeye Association of School Administrators executive director; and **David A. Varda**, Ohio Association of School Business Officials executive director.*

Article VI, Section 2 of the Ohio Constitution reads, in part: “The General Assembly shall make such provisions, by taxation, or otherwise ... (to) ... secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state.”

Recently, a member of the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission (OCMC) proposed striking the phrase “thorough and efficient” from the sentence. Public education must speak out strongly against any attempts to remove this wording.

OCMC is a 32-member commission authorized in 2012 to study the state’s constitution and recommend any desired changes to the Ohio General Assembly. The commission has an expiration date of July 1, 2021.

This commission consists of 12 members of the General Assembly, with three each appointed by the Senate president, Senate minority leader, the speaker of the House and House minority leader. The remaining 20 individuals are public members appointed by a majority vote of the 12 legislative members.

OCMC is organized into four standing committees and six subcommittees. Of key importance to educators is the Education, Public Institutions and

Miscellaneous and Local Government subcommittee, which hears testimony and offers recommendations on K-12 education.

Any recommendations for a constitutional amendment arising from the various subcommittees must first receive a majority vote from the subcommittee, followed by a two-thirds vote of the full commission. Once passing that hurdle, the recommendation must be approved by a majority vote in both the Ohio House and Senate. Only at that point does any proposed constitutional amendment go to Ohio voters.

The Ohio School Boards Association — along with leaders from the Ohio Association of School Business Officials and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators — monitors monthly OCMC meetings, holds discussions with commission members, prepares talking points and offers recommendations to the commission for consideration. Last year, OSBA’s legislative staff and executive director made a formal presentation to the Education, Public Institutions and Miscellaneous and Local Government subcommittee about traditional public education and its constitutional underpinnings.

At the April meeting of the subcommittee, one of the members proposed a change that would eliminate the “thorough and efficient” clause in Article VI, Section 2 of the Ohio Constitution, which refers to the General Assembly’s responsibility for funding public education. Although the proposed change generated considerable

debate and dissenting opinion, the idea is still before the subcommittee. For that reason, it is important to contact subcommittee members and voice your support to retain the clause in the Ohio Constitution.

It is critical that your opinion be heard. Personal contact through phone calls, emails or written correspondence is essential. Some school districts have passed resolutions on this matter. If you adopt a board resolution, please send copies to the subcommittee members, along with Speaker of the House **William G. Batchelder** (R-Medina); Senate President **Keith Faber** (R-Celina); Senate Minority Leader **Joe Schiavoni** (D-Boardman); House Minority Leader **Tracy Maxwell Heard** (D-Columbus); and your representative and senator. Please send a copy to the OSBA Division of Legislative Services as well.

Committee members and their emails can be found on OSBA’s website at www.ohioschoolboards.org/legislative. This special section also contains OSBA’s testimony before the committee and a template boards can use to adopt resolutions in support of keeping the “thorough and efficient” clause in the constitution.

It is important that public education supporters remain vigilant and personally contact members of the commission and the General Assembly about any proposed changes. We must take the long view, understanding that this is a marathon, not a 100-yard dash. We must keep the public aware of the status of Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission activities and be committed for the entire journey. ■

Courts update: charters, prayer, public records

Hollie F. Reedy, chief legal counsel



News from the bench

OSBA has followed the *Hope Academy v. White Hat* case for four years now, and the case currently is before the Ohio Supreme Court. The OSBA Legal Assistance Fund will submit an amicus curiae brief — also known as a “friend of the court” brief — to present how the case affects all of Ohio’s public schools.

It has taken a long time to get to where we are today. The case was brought in 2010 by a group of community schools that had become involved in a dispute with the management company White Hat. Because the schools wanted changes to the contract, White Hat threatened to remove all of the schools’ computers, materials, desks and other property.

Historically, OSBA and its members have not often been aligned with the governing authorities of community schools not sponsored by a traditional public school. In this case, however, the issue is the one-sided contracts that effectively give all the money, property and control to management companies, which then refuse to account for and be transparent about how public money has been spent.

The issues in the case called for the OSBA Legal Assistance Fund to intervene on behalf of Ohio public schools. Our brief will again argue the pivotal issues in the case — accountability for public funds and financial transparency in disclosing how funds are spent. The management company has strenuously resisted providing that information at each step of the litigation.

According to the contract between Hope Academy and White Hat, the

management company controlled virtually everything, including hiring and firing of teaching, administrators and other staff; the curriculum; and all personal property of the schools. White Hat also acquired nearly every dollar of state and federal funds allocated to the school.

In an amicus brief citing the contract provision, OSBA stated that it believes that Ohio’s public schools and its taxpayers have the right to know how White Hat and other management companies are spending the money the state gives to governing boards, which then turn over almost all of those funds (96% of the revenue from Ohio and 100% of the federal funds, including state and local government grants, in this particular case) to management companies that operate the schools.

The community schools chapter of Ohio Revised Code (RC) requires the management company to provide the community school a detailed accounting of the funds it received, including the nature and cost of the services it provides (RC 3314.024). In addition, another part of the chapter requires the financial records of the community school to be kept in the same manner as other public school records are kept (RC 3314.03). Without detailed accounting, how could the community school keep such records if White Hat refused to provide them? OSBA’s brief argued that since community schools are public schools, the public, and certainly the community school itself, should have the same access to financial accounting of the school as they would a traditional public school.

The first amicus brief submitted by

OSBA in this case noted, “The White Hat management companies have shown an odd and unnerving desperation in this case to avoid explaining how they have spent hundreds of millions of dollars in Ohio public funds.”

Updates on the case will be provided.

Prayer returns to public town meetings — but what about school board meetings?

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on May 5 that prayer occurring at the beginning of a public meeting does not violate the Establishment Clause, which requires separation of church and state. But does this ruling affect prayer at school board meetings? Don’t be too quick to judge.

Here are a few things you should know about the court’s ruling in *Town of Greece, NY v. Galloway*, 572 U.S. ____, 2014 U.S. Lexis 3110 (*the blank space in the citation indicates the case has not yet been published*).

In *Greece*, the prayer occurred after roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance, so it was within the meeting. The court specifically found that this type of “legislative prayer” had a long history in the U.S. and was less about establishing a government religion and more about recognizing the role religion plays in the lives of citizens and guiding legislators to consider what they are about to do with the right frame of mind.

The court extensively analyzed how the public body went about selecting people to offer a prayer to determine if any preference was expressed for a particular religion or whether anyone was excluded. A town employee simply

called the churches in the phone book, later developing a list of those willing to give the benediction. When complaints were raised, the city council offered citizens the opportunity to give the prayer. No one who wished to give a benediction was refused and the town made no prior review of the prayers.

The court also emphasized that the public meeting consisted of adults who were free to participate or not, with no coercion, and who were free to leave. Therefore, it should not be assumed that the door is open any further to student prayer than before. On that note, the court said, “Our tradition assumes that adult citizens, firm in their own beliefs, can tolerate and perhaps appreciate a ceremonial prayer delivered by a person of a different faith.”

Specifically rejected was the idea that the government body had to require nondenominational, or nonsectarian, prayer. The court found that requiring public bodies to choose words or generic expressions referring to a divine being was more of an entanglement with religion than allowing clergy to speak to their particular beliefs without review.

The ruling was 5-4, with separately filed concurrences and dissents, and some justices agreed with the judgment but not all parts of it. The decision is the law of the land for now on the facts presented, but the division on the court speaks to the deeply divisive

and evolving nature of the proper role of religion in government and the evolution of Establishment Clause interpretation.

The court issued a caution, noting even though public bodies may allow chaplains or religious leaders to lead a prayer, exercising no review over its content, there are some limits on the content of the prayers. The court noted, “If the course and practice over time shows that the invocations denigrate nonbelievers or religious minorities, threaten damnation or preach conversion, many present may consider the prayer to fall short of the desire to elevate the purpose of the occasion and to unite lawmakers in their common effort. That circumstance would present a different case than the one presently before the court.”

The 1999 case of *Coles v. Cleveland Bd. of Educ.*, in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit (the federal appeals court governing Ohio), directly addressed the question of school board meeting prayer ((C.A. 6, 1999), 171 F.3d 369). That court analyzed the particulars of a school board meeting, which included the attendance of students for public participation, students serving as representatives to the board of education, addressing student expulsions and suspensions, and students receiving awards. The school board meetings occurred in a school facility and the board was led in

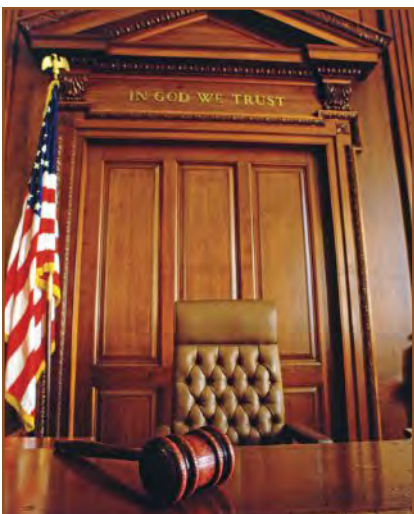
prayer by ministers and the school board president.

In *Coles*, a student and a math teacher sued the board, and the court ruled that the prayer at school board meetings was unconstitutional.

The court analyzed the “legislative prayer” exception in the context of prayer at a school board meeting and found that the school board meeting is “... an integral part of the public school system.” The court compared the history of school prayer cases (*Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602 (1971)), and cases concerning legislative prayer (*Marsh v. Chambers*, 463 U.S. 783 (1983)) in the U.S. Supreme Court.

It found that because the school board meetings were an integral part of the public school system, the case of whether school board meetings could contain prayer should be determined by the principles of the school prayer cases. The court noted that the reality of school board meetings, which concern school-related subject matter in a school facility and regularly involve students and matters of concern to students, makes its constituency different from that of other public bodies.

Specifically, the court found that not only adults are involved in the meetings, which was one of the factors in the legislative prayer cases. The school board’s function of “... setting policies



Are you currently involved in litigation that may have statewide significance?

The OSBA Legal Assistance Fund (LAF) is available to provide financial or legal assistance in matters of statewide importance to local school districts. LAF offers direct financial assistance or other support in the form of amicus curiae briefs.

Call OSBA at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA for information about your member status or to obtain an application if you have a pending matter that may meet the above description. Visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/legal-assistance-fund for more information.

and standards for the education of children within the public school system, a system designed to foster democratic values in the nation's youth ..." was one of the ways the court of appeals noted the board was communicating directly to students.

The federal court found that beginning a school board meeting with a prayer did not fit within the rubric announced in the *Marsh* case, and instead found the Establishment Clause analysis announced in *Lemon* controlling. One of the last sentences of the majority opinion explains it best: "Instead, we find that the policy of the Cleveland school board is so inextricably intertwined with the public schools that it must be evaluated on the same basis as the schools themselves."

The new U.S. Supreme Court case does not automatically overrule the *Coles* case because the facts are different and the issues presented by a school board meeting as outlined in the case may be different than the issues considered in the *Greece* case. Caution is warranted. Consult board counsel for specific guidance if you have questions. The OSBA legal division is available to answer questions about the cases.

Public records case denies attorney's fees, statutory damages

This Ohio Supreme Court public records

case isn't specifically about schools, but the ruling will be of interest to all public entities subject to Ohio's public records law. *State ex rel. DiFranco v. City of South Euclid*, Slip. Op. No. 2014-Ohio-538, has been the subject of newspaper editorials denouncing the decision and calling for legislative change.

A citizen made a public records request to South Euclid for records in 2011 and the city did not respond for two months, until she filed the lawsuit. The citizen filed a mandamus action asking the court to order the public entity to comply with the public records law and produce the records, award statutory damages for the delay and order the public entity to pay the reasonable attorney's fees she spent in pursuing the action.

The public entity, upon filing of the suit, provided the records. The case was resolved when the court dismissed the mandamus action, finding it moot, since the records had been provided and there was nothing more for the court to compel. The case didn't end there, though; the citizen appealed the denial of statutory damages and attorney's fees, and these issues ended before the Ohio Supreme Court.

The court looked to the language of Ohio's public records law, extensively amended in 2007 with the addition of

the statutory damages and changes to the attorney's fees language already in the law. Based on those changes, the court found that fees may be awarded only if the court "rendered a judgment that orders the public office or the person responsible for the record to comply with (the public records law)."

The Ohio Supreme Court found, in a 6-1 decision, that because the lower court did not order the city to comply with the law, the statute's requirement was not met and attorney's fees could not be awarded (RC 149.43(C)(2)(b)). The lower court had dismissed the case based on mootness, since the records already had been provided.

However, the court did remand the case to the court of appeals for a determination of how much statutory damages should be awarded. The statute provides for a \$100 fine for each day a public office is not in compliance with an obligation to produce records, up to a maximum of \$1,000 (RC 149.43(C)(1)). The court specifically found that the public benefit test applied by courts prior to the statutory amendments were not applicable and should not be part of the determination of whether the citizen was entitled to statutory damages and, if so, how much, up to the maximum provided by law.

The OSBA Legal Assistance Fund's involvement with cases affecting Ohio school law is ongoing. OSBA's legal division reviews cases of note to Ohio schools and incorporates these rulings into its outreach efforts to districts — including presentations, articles and the "Legal Ledger" blog — and maintains an up-to-date understanding of legal issues affecting Ohio boards of education. OSBA attorneys are available to provide you with legal information as part of your member service. ■

"According to Law" is designed to provide authoritative general information, sometimes with commentary. It should not be relied upon as legal advice. If legal advice is required, the services of an attorney should be obtained.

Administrative salary analysis

Need help determining how to compensate your administrators? It's more complicated than most people think, and OSBA has considerable experience in this area. We are able to assist school districts with a variety of important initiatives, including:

- compensation/classification system design
- job description creation/modification
- performance evaluation system design

For more information, contact Van D. Keating, director of management services, at (614) 540-4000, ext. 241; or (800) 589-OSBA, ext. 241; or vkeating@ohioschoolboards.org.



OSBA's MTA program: what's it all about?

Van D. Keating, director of management services

At the end of last year, OSBA started to promote a new seminar series called MTA. Ostensibly, it appeared to be training devoted to transportation, but with closer inspection, it is actually much more.

It also has proven popular, drawing a variety of attendees from every aspect of public schools. This fall, the second MTA series will begin and we'll receive numerous questions about it: Whom is it for? What is it about? How do schools benefit from attending? Let's answer some of their common questions.

MTA is short for Master of Transportation Administrator, which is the title OSBA will confer on attendees who not only attend all of the sessions or classes, but also complete three separate projects. These projects are designed to demonstrate the attendee's knowledge or proficiency in specific areas of transportation administration, as well as benefit their school districts.

MTA is a three-year program, then the curriculum starts anew. Participants can start at the beginning of any year, but it will take completing all three years' training modules to be recognized as an MTA. Of course, anyone can attend a single session, just as with any other OSBA seminar, but to earn the MTA designation, you must complete the series.

The first module started in January and ended in May. Subsequent modules will be offered over the course of a school year. The curriculum modules are focused in these areas:

- compliance and safety;
- operations management;
- governance.

Each module consists of five separate training classes, but considered in total, they represent the comprehensive professional knowledge base needed to support student transportation in an Ohio public school district.

The first module's topics include rules and laws governing Ohio student transportation; payment in lieu of transportation; drivers' records, background checks and compliance needs; emergency planning; and fleet compliance. The second module covers personnel and student management; communications and public relations; routing; and staff and student handbooks. Module three tackles state funding/T-reports; budget development; managing maintenance costs; policy development; and routing finances.

Again, with each year's module, MTA students will have to complete a corresponding project involving their own school district, such as developing emergency transportation plans; driver handbooks; efficient routing schemes; department budgets; fleet replacement programs; or presenting at workshops.

The MTA program is designed to be training that can be immediately

beneficial to both an attendee and a school district. Imparting knowledge is often easier than teaching skills, however, people involved in school transportation need to acquire both, which is why MTA is somewhat different than most seminars. It requires active and successful participation to be recognized as a Master Transportation Administrator.

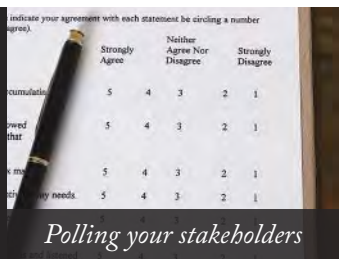
The first module of five classes offered this year had more than 50 participants in each session. This includes a couple of classes that were repeated due to inclement weather. Attendees included superintendents, transportation supervisors, treasurers, secretaries and board members. Thirty-eight have signed up as MTA participants and several have already completed their projects.

Registration for the second module will start shortly. OSBA Senior Transportation Consultant **Pete Japikse** is the MTA series coordinator.

The classes are held at the OSBA office in Columbus. More information is available at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/78314>, or by contacting Japikse at pjapikse@ohioschoolboards.org, (614) 540-4000. ■

Surveys – a critical communication strategy

Kathy LaSota, director of school board services



I regularly hear board members and district administrators reciting the famous quote: “If you always do what you’ve always done, you will always get what you always got.”

Education leaders know that getting “what you always got” is not exactly a recipe for success. So, how does public education — which changes swiftly and frequently — adapt to ever-changing challenges?

Seeking public opinion seems to be the most common approach to figuring out what needs to change or stay the same. In fact, more school districts than ever are taking the pulse of public opinion prior to making changes that impact long-standing district and community traditions.

The challenge is to solicit public opinion in such a way that you not only obtain the information necessary to make the current big decisions, but also learn what will enhance future improvement initiatives. There is no doubt that when

people are asked their opinion before a decision is made, they more often support the decision makers.

A full body of information — good, bad and ugly — should be the goal of any survey. Care must be taken to seek opinions not only from supporters, but from resisters as well. **Bill Gates** supported the idea that all opinions count when he said, “Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.”

When it comes to two-way communication with your community, a survey is a critical instrument that you can use to understand what your community wants, what it knows and what it values. To understand the value a survey can have in making sure you are communicating a message that resonates with your community, consider these myths and facts.

Myth: I already know what my community is thinking. I don’t need a survey to tell me.

Fact: Not necessarily. Experts contend that even though you think you interact with most of your community, typically it is really the 30% that voted for you that you reach. That means 70% of the population does not interact with the district in any way and may not even know who you are. You may know what the most vocal portions of your community are thinking. You may have anecdotal data provided by those in your closest social and professional circles. But for those with whom you do not interact, your perception of what they think and know could be a very unrealistic one.

Myth: We won’t ask the right questions. We won’t get helpful information.

Fact: There are reliable resources, including OSBA, that can help you define questions to get you the information you need. You may have someone in your community with the expertise and willingness to help. A messaging survey will help identify key

Get what *you* want, when *you* want it!

OSBA’s customized workshops allow your school district to schedule and tailor workshops designed to meet your specific needs. OSBA’s highly experienced staff is here to serve you at your convenience. Customized workshops include team-building exercises; goal-setting or strategic-planning activities; conflict-resolution sessions; and topics customized to fit your needs.

To schedule a customized workshop or for further information, contact **Kathy LaSota** at kLasota@ohioschoolboards.org or (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA.



themes that resonate with residents. For example, do community members know the district has cut millions of dollars from its budget? Do they believe the district spends taxpayer money efficiently? How do they feel about a ballot issue that would maintain current programs and keep existing class sizes?

Myth: We can just do an Internet survey through SurveyMonkey and save a lot of money.

Fact: Maybe. SurveyMonkey and other survey options are certainly available. An effective survey is a valuable tool because it saves money, time and resources by hitting the communications mark every time. A professional pollster statistically selects a random subset of your population to gather reliable data from a representative sample of your community. Although using a professional is a good option, cost is sometimes an issue. But remember: The option you choose should be designed with a clear understanding of your demographics to enable you to gather the essential information you are seeking.

Myth: I won't know how to use survey data once I have it.

Fact: You can do this. Your administrative team works with student achievement data every day. If you are fortunate enough to have a communications director or specialist, he or she can help. Reach out to a community member or committee to analyze the data and develop data-driven talking points that hit on key themes that matter to your community. From that, develop a strategic communication plan and communication tools to get the identified message out. It also is important that you report the results. Everyone will then know that his or her voice was heard.

Myth: Survey data won't make a difference in the end.

Fact: That is up to you. If you have major issues that must be addressed, if

you know it's inevitable that the culture of your community will change and if you need supportive data to drive better decisions, a survey may just give you the information that really will make a difference.

The need to reach an increasingly diverse audience of direct and related stakeholders has never been more critical. Survey data is the first step in developing a strategic communication plan that will help the district make sound decisions, build trust and

credibility with the community and increase support at the ballot box.

OSBA can provide many valuable resources for your surveying needs. For more information, contact Deputy Director of School Board Services **Cheryl W. Ryan** at cryan@ohioschoolboards.org or Deputy Director of Communication Services **Crystal Davis** at cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org. They also can be reached at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. ■

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OSBA lobbyists stand firmly in your corner

Jay Smith, deputy director of legislative services

Having a statewide presence is integral to the success of an association. OSBA relies on its Division of Legislative Services to lobby government officeholders and provide a voice to Ohio public school districts and boards of education. From the Statehouse to state agencies to the State Board of Education, your legislative team is speaking up for you, your students and your schools.

On the national level, OSBA collaborates with the National School Boards Association (NSBA) to influence federal legislation and policies that affect local school districts. That work is done through NSBA's Federal Relations Network, which is made up of school board members from every congressional district in the nation. The network brings the power of grassroots advocacy to bear in the nation's capital by keeping elected representatives informed about the local school board perspective on American public education.

Lobbying for education can be very time-consuming and difficult work, but it also is very rewarding — after all, it's our children who benefit the most from a strong public education system. And the better educated our children are, the stronger our state and nation will be. Let's take a look at what it takes to achieve those goals.

What is a lobbyist?

Legislative advocacy may be a well-known service to OSBA members, but many may ask, "What exactly does a lobbyist do?" By definition, a lobbyist is "a person who attempts to influence legislation on behalf of a special interest or a member of a lobby."

Ohio law requires professional lobbyists to register with the state and file reports disclosing any money spent on food, beverages or gifts that benefit legislators or key executive branch decision makers. Lobbyists also have to report to the state legislative inspector general three times a year with details about legislation and executive agency decisions they have been working on and how much they have spent. These reports help ensure the public's trust and discourage illegal or unethical activities. To be successful, lobbyists must build and maintain a reputation for being trustworthy and knowledgeable in what they are lobbying for.

Your legislative team

OSBA is very fortunate to have a strong advocacy team that works daily to lobby Ohio's legislators, along with many other duties. The team, made up of a legislative director, deputy director, lobbyist and administrative assistant, works hard to fulfill a crucial part of OSBA's mission — unwavering advocacy on behalf of public education.

The legislative division's responsibilities include lobbying the Ohio General Assembly, tracking legislation and testifying in committees. Lobbyists monitor activities of the Ohio Department of Education, including State Board of Education meetings. They participate in and coordinate OSBA's involvement in education coalitions. In addition, they direct and supervise the activities of the Federal Relations Network, grassroots networks and *Kids PAC*, OSBA's political action committee.

Director of Legislative Services **Damon Asbury** heads up the legislative team.

With more than 45 years of experience in the education arena, Asbury oversees OSBA's legislative efforts.

This article's author serves as deputy director of legislative services. Lobbyist **Jennifer Hogue** is the most recent addition to the legislative team, having joined OSBA in April. Both have extensive backgrounds in government relations and legislative advocacy. In addition to lobbying, they produce legislative publications such as *The Link* and *Facts in a Flash*, write the *Briefcase* newsletter's "Legislative Report" and coordinate OSBA's grassroots lobbying program.

Senior Administrative Assistant of Legislative Services **Marcella Gonzalez** provides administrative support for the team. Gonzalez also monitors and tracks legislative information on OSBA's website and coordinates seminars and workshops.

The best way to understand legislative advocacy and what OSBA lobbyists do is to see what a typical day might look like.

A day in the life of an OSBA lobbyist

When the General Assembly is in session, the typical daily schedule for OSBA lobbyists includes attending House and Senate sessions and committee hearings, and possibly testifying on education-related bills. They also meet with legislators and their staffs, as well as participate in *Kids PAC* fundraisers. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are especially busy because both the House and Senate Education committees meet, along with numerous other committees that hear legislation impacting public education. Following

is an example of an OSBA lobbyist's schedule on one of those days:

- 7 a.m. — Review newspaper clips and check email
- 8 a.m. — Meeting with senator and/or education organizations
- 9:30 a.m. — Meeting with House representatives about legislation
- 10:30 a.m. — Talk with House representatives before session begins
- 11 a.m. — Attend House session
- Noon — Committee hearing
- 1 p.m. — Talk with senators before session
- 1:30 p.m. — Attend Senate session
- 2:30 p.m. — Return phone calls and respond to emails
- 3:30 p.m. — Attend House Education Committee and testify on legislation
- 4 p.m. — Attend Senate Education Committee
- 5 p.m. — Attend fundraiser for senator
- 6:30 p.m. — Send call to action to OSBA members

What your team does for you

OSBA's Division of Legislative Services produces several publications that cover the General Assembly. One electronic publication, aimed specifically at school board legislative liaisons, is *The Link*. The monthly newsletter provides background information on bills and events before the state legislature. Some legislative liaisons use *The Link* in conjunction with their legislative updates at local board meetings.

The "Legislative Report" is published every other week in the *OSBA Briefcase*. In addition to reports on current legislative matters, it also contains information on new bills and bills that have been passed.

Facts in a Flash, OSBA's weekly legislative update, is emailed to all OSBA members on Friday afternoons when the Ohio General Assembly is in session and, at times, features video as well. This publication keeps you up-to-date on legislative proposals and committee hearings that impact public education. If you are not receiving *Facts*

in a Flash, contact the legislative division.

Calls to action, also distributed via email, are issued when members are requested to take specific actions to bolster the legislative division's efforts on certain pieces of legislation. Calls to action often include key talking points members can use when communicating with local legislators on specific issues.

Legislative issues also are featured in the *OSBA Journal* magazine and other association publications.

The legislative division presents workshops, seminars and webinars throughout the year. Each March, OSBA hosts the State Legislative Conference in conjunction with the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and the Ohio Association of School Business Officials. The conference provides members the latest legislative information on bills impacting education and features a luncheon with legislators and their staffs. This is an opportunity for public education leaders to tell legislators how their districts feel about important education issues such as school funding, special education, accountability, unfunded mandates and more.

Budget Analysis and Discussion is another joint workshop the division offers in August of odd-numbered years to provide members the most comprehensive information on the state's biennial budget. The seminar provides insight and answers on the budget process and final version of the budget bill.

In addition, the division may offer seminars, webinars or regional workshops following significant reform initiatives impacting public education in Ohio.

OSBA also offers valuable resources online on its Issues and Advocacy page, www.ohioschoolboards.org/legislative. There you'll find the OSBA Legislative Platform, which states the association's positions on issues facing public education. Other resources include materials on school levies, featuring

Contacting OSBA's legislative division

- **Damon Asbury**, director of legislative services, dasbury@ohioschoolboards.org
- **Jay Smith**, deputy director of legislative services, jaysmith@ohioschoolboards.org
- **Jennifer Hogue**, lobbyist, jhogue@ohioschoolboards.org
- **Marcella Gonzalez**, senior administrative assistant of legislative services, mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org

All legislative team members can be reached by phone at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA ■

a statewide levy database; the latest state budget information; recent calls to action; and links to information on the OSBA legislative liaison program, grassroots initiatives, the Federal Relations Network and *Kids PAC*.

Another feature of the Issues and Advocacy page is the OSBA BillTracker, found at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/76013>. BillTracker monitors legislation and contains the latest updates, testimony, bullet points and other information on specific bills.

We can't stress enough the importance of local education leaders' efforts in furthering the association's advocacy goals. That support and help are essential to OSBA's lobbying efforts.

In countless ways, decisions made in Columbus affect the decisions you make as a board member. As an elected public official and a constituent, you have the right and duty to do all you can to ensure decisions made at the Statehouse are based on sound education policy.

So, get involved, be informed and stay engaged. And remember, your OSBA lobbying team is just an email or a phone call away. For contact information, see the box above. ■

Who are you?

Ohio public school board members by the numbers

*Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator,
and Angela Penquite, senior communication design manager*

Every two years, OSBA conducts a survey of public school board members. The purpose of this biennial survey is to get an accurate and timely demographic profile of Ohio's boards of education.

This year's survey was emailed to each district treasurer to complete. The results give important demographic information for 3,000-plus board members that serve Ohio districts. More than 320 districts responded to the survey, giving it one of the highest response rates ever and helping ensure its statistical validity.

The following provides a brief demographic synopsis of Ohio board members. Due to rounding, some survey categories do not total 100%. ■



3,435

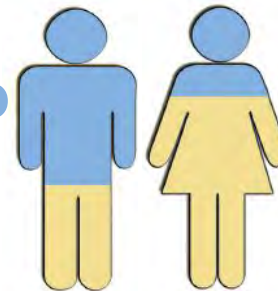
total public school board members in Ohio

973

new board members took office in 2014

66%

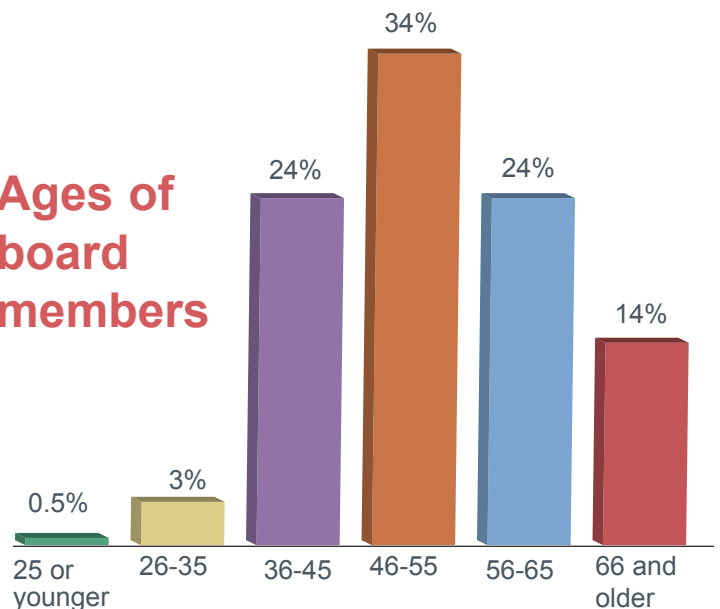
of Ohio board members are men



Percent of women board members in Ohio

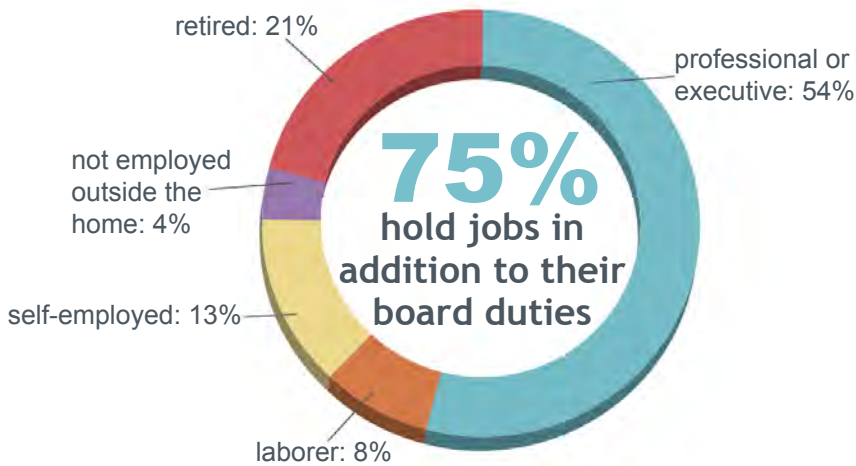
34%

Ages of board members



52%

of Ohio public school board members have children in grades K-12



Diversity of board members

Caucasian	96%
African-American	3%
Asian-American	0.1%
Latin-American	0.02%
Other	0.3%

The business of school boards



Number of boards reporting that meetings last from one to three hours most of the time

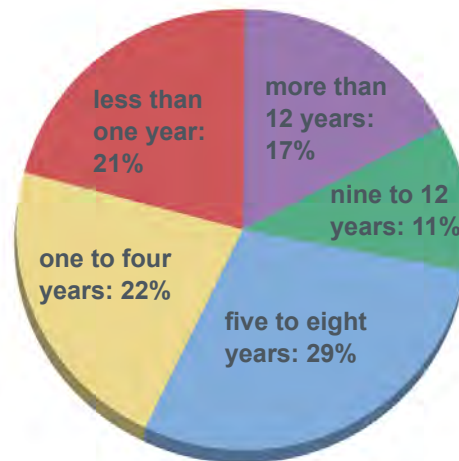
84%



Percent of Ohio public school boards with all-male boards

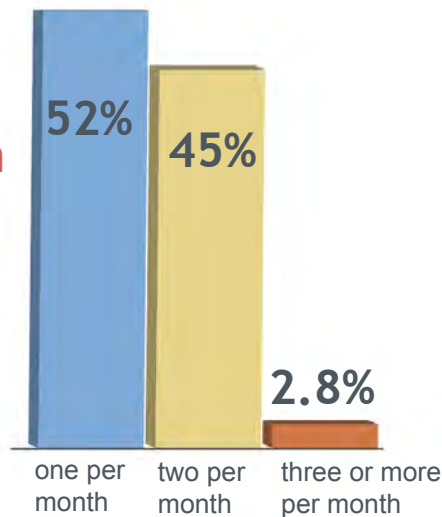
15%

Board members' terms of service



Meetings per month

(includes regular or special meetings)



Districts represented in the survey

Local	54%
City	28%
Exempted village	9%
ESC	7%



Business Honor Roll marks another successful year

OSBA program helps districts thank supporters

Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

More than 40 school districts took advantage of the fourth annual OSBA Business Honor Roll program to recognize local businesses that support their schools. Statewide, more than 100 companies were recognized for providing valuable support to schools and students.

Feedback from participating districts confirms they value the opportunity to recognize local businesses for their support, especially as schools continue to face budget uncertainty. The Business Honor Roll program helps districts say “thank you” to firms for their vital contributions.

Businesses large and small, corporate-owned or family-owned play a key role in supporting the community and local schools. From helping schools with in-kind or financial contributions, donating to scholarship programs and supporting extracurricular activities to offering internship opportunities, volunteering in schools and sponsoring field trips, businesses contribute to their schools in many ways.

OSBA mailed personalized recognition certificates and letters of congratulations for each firm to district superintendents in time for school boards to present them at their May meetings. A full list of honored businesses can be found on OSBA’s website at www.ohioschoolboards.org/business-honor-roll.

Although OSBA cannot list the name of every honored firm in the *Journal* due to space limitations, following is a sampling of comments from districts about their selections.

Dayton City

Standard Register works directly with students at Edison PreK-8 School to provide a fully paid overnight camp for students. The company buys and provides gifts for all students eligible to attend this event.

CareSource supports the parent university series by attending all district events and providing complimentary gifts for parents at the VIP (Very Important Parent) recognition ceremony hosted by the Dayton City Board of Education.

The Dayton Chamber of Commerce works in collaboration with Thurgood Marshall High School to provide a 10-week learning program for students. Each Tuesday, 20 freshmen stay after school for sessions about architecture, engineering or construction.

Participating districts value the opportunity to recognize local businesses for their support, especially as schools continue to face budget uncertainty.

Mentor EV

Trivisonno CPA Inc., Lake Health, Fredon Corporation and Concord Benefits Planning Agency Inc. are part of the district’s Business Advisory Council. Business leaders from these firms joined together to form the Financial Literacy Committee. This committee works with staff members and administrators to develop a financial literacy curriculum to implement in various grade levels throughout the district. Their financial expertise is extremely beneficial in teaching this important topic, along with life lessons, to students. The business leaders volunteered their time to develop the curriculum.

Penta Career Center

Rudolph/Libbe Inc. provides school-to-work employment opportunities for career center seniors in the Construction

Carpentry program.

North Star BlueScope Steel LLC provides steel materials for the welding program.

First Solar Inc. donated a FANUC robot and controller to train Advanced Manufacturing Technologies students in robotic technology.

The Andersons has provided employment opportunities for Marketing Education program students and internship opportunities for students in the career center's Transition-to-Work program.

Reading Community City

General Electric Aviation has partnered with Reading Middle School to increase cultural awareness and technology use in classrooms. A team from the firm worked with middle school teachers to provide virtual field trips for students to India and China.

The General Electric Aviation team also provided the school with some of the technology needed to interact with associates from around the world. The students were exposed to the world in a way that would not have been possible without the company's support.

Southern Ohio ESC

Dr. **David Chestnut**; Wilmington Iron and Metal Co.; attorneys **William** and **Carol Peelle**; and Ferno-Washington Inc. have consistently provided financial support to the district for the last 10 to 15 years. These funds support the Clinton County Schools Business Advisory Council Integrity Scholarship and Career Assistance Grant to encourage local students to pursue careers in Clinton County.

Williamsburg Local (Clermont)

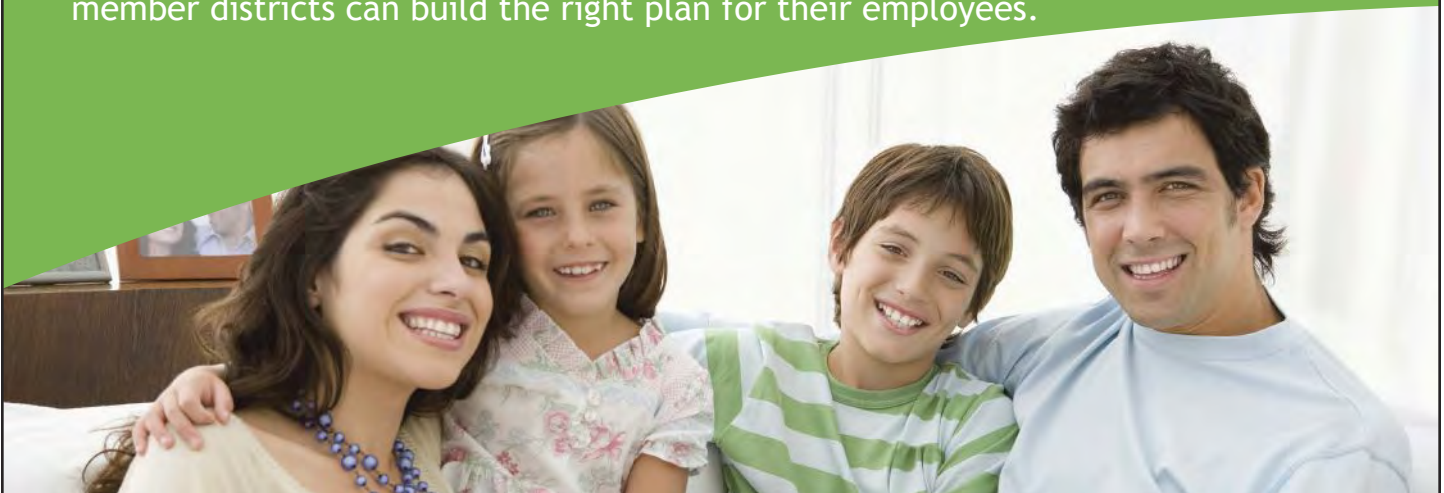
Louiso Trucking is a great supporter of the district's music and drama programs and partially funded the spring musical last year.

The Williamsburg Rotary Club has donated thousands of dollars to athletics and the elementary technology program.

Arch Materials and Tritex Homes have donated countless hours, in-kind advice and equipment, and thousands of dollars in products to several of the district's facility projects over the last three years.

OSBA thanks the 2014 OSBA Business Honor Roll participants and encourages districts to share their feedback, successes and photos on the association's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/OHschoolboards. ■

From a basic group life insurance plan, to one that includes options such as **Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Dependent Life and Voluntary Life**, member districts can build the right plan for their employees.



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Communicating



Whether history will call this the Digital Age, Information Age or something else remains to be seen, but there's no denying we live in an era where technology is rapidly transforming the way we live.

Information is quicker and easier to access than ever. In fact, most Americans — 61%, according to Pew Research Center — own a smartphone, a pocket-sized device more powerful than any computer imaginable decades earlier. Phones, tablets and other mobile devices have put the Internet at our fingertips all the time, which also has changed the way we communicate.

These new communication tools present opportunities for school districts as well as challenges. Districts are looking for manageable and cost-effective ways to embrace these tools — like social media, Web videos and electronic newsletters — at

a time when budgets are stretched thin and communication departments are understaffed or nonexistent.

This issue of the *Journal* takes a look at school communication — both what's new and what hasn't changed. It's packed with tips, resources and information schools can use to bolster their outreach to their communities.

You'll hear how **Nordonia Hills City** is using social media to engage its community as well as successfully leveraging more traditional communication strategies, like reaching out to community leaders and working with a local newspaper. The district is able to do all of these things on a shoestring budget.

Warren County Career Center shares its comprehensive, team-based approach to communication and marketing, providing tips that all schools can learn from.

school success

*Bryan Bullock,
assistant editor*

Communication is critical to career centers because they have to recruit students.

Public Finance Resources Inc. details how school districts can explain their budgets in clear, jargon-free language that's relatable for community members. This information will help your school system communicate its finances and could prove especially valuable the next time your district is on the ballot.

Also in this issue, Battelle for Kids sheds light on how districts can establish their brand and communicate it in order to attract, hire and retain high-quality teachers. The Ohio School Public Relations Association explains the services, resources and professional development it offers school districts, including those without communication staff members. And, you'll also learn about *CommunicationPlus*, an OSBA newsletter that provides school districts a steady stream of tips,

ideas and articles on a wide range of timely communication topics.

Just as districts are working to inform their communities about the success of their schools, OSBA is leading an effort to raise awareness about the achievements of public education across Ohio. The association launched a statewide campaign, Stand Up for Public Schools, to do just that. OSBA needs your help to make the campaign as successful as possible. See "Communicating the value of Ohio public schools," below, to learn more about Stand Up for Public Schools and how you can get involved.

In an age when people are inundated with information, it's more important than ever that public schools — both individually and collectively — tell their stories in a way that cuts through the noise and resonates powerfully. ■

Communicating the value of Ohio public schools

Bryan Bullock, assistant editor

OSBA recently launched a campaign to trumpet the success of public schools across Ohio. The campaign, Stand Up for Public Schools, seeks to raise awareness about the importance of public education and locally elected boards of education.

The campaign website, www.standupforOHpublicschools.org, features success stories that highlight extraordinary public schools, students and graduates. School districts can use an online form on the website to submit stories, photos and videos showing how Ohio public schools and students are making a difference.

"Public schools across Ohio and the nation are better than ever — and we want to get that message out," said OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis**. "School districts and boards of education are dedicated to advancing student achievement and providing innovative instruction to prepare students for an ever-changing, interconnected world."

OSBA is asking districts to help shine a light on all the good things taking place in public schools throughout Ohio. Consider submitting several success stories to the Stand Up for Public Schools website

STAND UP FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

each month or whenever news arises. Don't forget to submit stories this summer about the enrichment programs, activities and events taking place in your district. In addition to appearing on the website, OSBA shares success stories on its social media channels.

The Stand Up for Public Schools website includes more details on the campaign and how you can get involved and take action to support public schools. It features a number of resources, including: talking points; campaign logos; legislative contacts; a sample letter to the editor; and information about the success of public education, including state and national honors awarded to Ohio public schools.

The statewide campaign was launched in coordination with a national effort by the National School Boards Association to advocate for public schools.

Further details about the campaign will be made available throughout the year. For more information, contact OSBA. ■

District communication on a shoestring budget

Dr. Joe Clark, superintendent, Nordonia Hills City

I became interim superintendent of **Nordonia Hills City** on Nov. 1, 2011, promoted from my assistant superintendent position after the sitting superintendent retired abruptly.

The school district was struggling, to say the least. We had lost our past five levy attempts, more than 100 jobs had been cut and our finances had us on the verge of state receivership.

As often happens when levies fail and employees and programs are cut, our community started to become vocal. The community loved our schools and our teachers, but they were upset about a lack of transparency and communication among school administration. In a word, they no longer trusted the leaders charged with educating their children.

Fortunately, a levy passed that November. Unfortunately, the millage was only enough to stop our bleeding; it was not enough to restore cut programs or employees, including our public information officer, who had been in charge of efforts to engage and build relationships with the community.

My interim tag was removed a month later, and I knew

immediately that my top priority was to re-earn the community's trust through communication, visibility and transparency. With a limited budget and limited staff, I knew we were going to have to do this in creative ways.

Tapping the power of Twitter

The very first directive I gave to Nordonia principals when I became superintendent was to become active on Twitter. Twitter is a free social media tool that allows anyone, including school leaders, to share all sorts of information.

I had started a Twitter account myself several months earlier when my district was in the midst of its financial struggles. I began reading letters to the editor suggesting that the assistant superintendent position was superfluous and should be cut. Being the assistant superintendent, and knowing how valuable I was to the school district, I decided to start tweeting to let people know all of the work I did. I used Twitter to show the long hours I was working and the many duties I had.

Ironically, my plan did not work. When I became superintendent, the board eliminated the assistant superintendent position, and I continue to do the work of both offices to this day. However, getting involved with Twitter showed me what a valuable tool it was. Hence my directive to principals to start an account.

Principals and I use Twitter multiple times daily to relay news about events happening in our buildings, share articles related to education, brag about great teachers and students, and give the community a brief glimpse into our personal lives. We do not tweet about arguments we have with our spouses, of course, but we do want the community to know that we are human beings, we have families and we are not just stuffed shirts sitting in ivory towers. Twitter makes us seem real and approachable, and the community loves it.

Twitter also has been a great tool for sharing emergency news, like calamity days. On calamity days, I often ask students to tweet me pictures of the books they are reading, and I choose someone at random to win a small prize (maybe a \$10 Chipotle gift card, for example). Once I asked students to create YouTube videos showing why they love



Nordonia Hills City Superintendent Dr. Joe Clark, left, and Nordonia High School senior Stephen Romanik appear on the district's "Network Nordonia" cable TV show. Romanik was on the show to talk about winning the 2014 Division I state diving championship.

Nordonia schools. These activities keep me engaged with our students, and parents love seeing the interaction. It has done immeasurable good for our district's image. And, of course, Twitter is free.

Superintendents and principals should be on Twitter now. If you do not have experience with Twitter, my advice is start small. Try to post one tweet a day, and keep it positive. Follow some of the great education leaders who are on Twitter, engage in some chats and soon you will see your followers grow and the tool become increasingly valuable to you and your district.

Incidentally, you can follow me on Twitter at @DrJoeClark.

Key communicators

The next major initiative I undertook was the creation of the Nordonia Key Communicators program. You may remember **Jamie Vollmer**, author of *Schools Cannot Do It Alone*, speaking at the OSBA Capital Conference a few years ago. Vollmer's book provides a very prescriptive approach to engaging the community in meaningful dialogue about the changes we need to make in education. I modified the framework of Vollmer's structure to create a way to rebuild communication, transparency and trust in Nordonia schools.

District administrators and I brainstormed a list of more than 130 recognized leaders in our community. These were elected officials; presidents of PTAs and booster clubs; leaders of community organizations; ministers; and so forth. They represented civic clubs, churches, municipalities, homeowners associations and more. I mailed a personal invitation to each of these folks inviting them to become one of my key communicators. I then followed up with emails and phone calls.

I asked the key communicators to do two things. First, I added each person to an email list in which I send them timely information about the district. This is to maintain transparency and give our community leaders facts about the school district. As leaders of community organizations, they meet with community members often. Sending timely information to the key communicators enables them to clarify rumors that their constituents hear about the district. Generally, almost every bit of information I send to the key communicators is then placed on our district website.

Anytime something happens in the district that I think will be a topic of conversation in the community or make the news, I share the facts with my key communicators. This has included the sale of land, an electrical fire on a bus, a student bringing a toy gun to school and more. I share the facts with the key communicators and they share the facts with their constituents, keeping the majority of the community in the loop.

Second, I asked each key communicator to invite me to a

meeting of their group, not for me to talk, but to listen. I called these my "three questions meetings." As the name implies, I went to each group to ask three simple questions: What do you like about Nordonia schools? How can the schools improve? What do you expect of your new superintendent?

I held many meetings and it took a lot of time. But I used the data collected from my three questions meetings to help build our new five-year strategic plan, and I am confident our plan focuses on issues that are important to the community.

My key communicator program has been an overwhelming success and all it cost me was a few stamps.



Superintendent Dr. Joe Clark sits on the set of "Network Nordonia" with Dr. Deborah Wallace, Nordonia High School community intervention coordinator, center, and Staci Ross, the school's guidance department chair. The TV show is one of many innovative ways the district communicates with its community.

The local newspaper

Many school districts have small local papers that are understaffed and begging for news. Nordonia is no different. Upon becoming superintendent, I asked the editor of our local paper, *The Nordonia Hills News Leader*, if I could write a monthly column. He was more than happy to oblige. Indeed, we were doing each other a favor.

I am extremely grateful to editor **Eric Marotta** for giving me the valuable space to help keep my community informed of significant issues or programs affecting schools. Rest assured, I do not use the space to campaign for levies or pontificate about the need for more money. This purpose of the column simply is to provide information about various school programs and legislation that affects schools.

If you have a small local paper, reach out to it to see if you can get some space. We know from survey data in Nordonia

that the vast majority of our community, 80% of whom do not have kids in the schools, get their information from the paper. It is a wonderful tool, and what does it cost me? Nothing.

To see some sample columns, please search at www.the-news-leader.com.

Community cable TV channels

We also are very fortunate in Nordonias to have a local cable channel, Cable 9 (which ironically airs on channel 15). Each month, I record a 28-minute show called "Network Nordonias," in which I invite a guest or two to discuss various aspects of our school district. Guests have included principals, teachers, counselors, central office administrators and students. We talk about changes related to the Common Core and special education. We discuss the upcoming sports season. We have talked to parents about how to discuss drugs with kids. And the highlight show every year is our "Senior Showcase," in which five graduating seniors talk about their positive experiences with the schools.

If you have a local cable channel in your area, contact it to see if you can create your own show. If you do not have a local cable channel, record your own show and put it on your district website. It is another way for you to reach your

community. And it is free.

To see some sample "Network Nordonias" episodes, please search at www.cable9.org.

Not communicating is not an option

As the district's educational leader, I must ensure the entire community engages in the educational process. Community engagement is more than parents attending open houses and fans coming to football games on Friday nights. Having true community engagement means leading the discussion about the purpose of education and the vision the community has for its schools.

Not having a public relations person on staff or not having money for glamorous newsletters is no excuse for not communicating. There are many ways for you to communicate with your public for free. Get on Twitter. Start a key communicator group. Write a newspaper column. Create a TV show. All of these tools will increase your visibility, transparency and trust with your community.

And they won't cost you a cent. ■

Editor's note: To learn more, contact Dr. Joe Clark at (330) 908-6202 or joe.clark@nordoniaschools.org.



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A valuable communication resource

Bryan Bullock, assistant editor

School districts are busy places. It can be difficult to keep track of the daily stream of news, events and information throughout your district, let alone communicate it to your community in a way that is effective and efficient.

OSBA offers a variety of resources to assist districts with their communication needs, including *CommunicationPlus*. The newsletter provides school communication professionals, board members and administrators a steady stream of tips, ideas and articles on a wide range of timely communication topics. It equips districts with ready-to-use news items and professional advice on how to engage the community, inform parents and motivate staff.

“Every issue contains timely and relevant information in a format that is easy to use by any district, including those that do not have a dedicated communication specialist,” said **Jeff Chambers**, OSBA director of communication services. “*CommunicationPlus* is an important tool in staying connected with your community.”

The 10 issues of *CommunicationPlus* published each year feature valuable topics, such as how to:

- communicate your budget;
- use social media effectively;
- build community support;
- recognize staff achievements;
- create districtwide calendars;
- build relationships with the media.

Issues contain news-you-can-use resources like sample graduation speeches, sample letters to parents, crisis communication strategies and tips for improving your district’s customer service.

Every *CommunicationPlus* newsletter starts with a quick summary of all the articles and resources contained in it—think of it as a speed read for the entire issue. The articles are written concisely and clearly, making it easy for busy professionals to find the information they need on a wide

spectrum of issues. The May edition of *CommunicationPlus*, for example, covered:

- how districts can reap the community engagement benefits of classroom civics lessons;
- how to help parents help their children succeed in school;
- how districts can put their vision statements into action;
- how to help new district leaders get started on the right foot;
- key dates for the 2014-15 school year calendar;
- information for parents about why children should consider learning computer code.

The entire May edition of *CommunicationPlus* is available for free to illustrate the value of this resource. To access it, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/23364>.

The electronic subscription rate for *CommunicationPlus* is \$300 per district and the paper subscription rate is \$340 per district. The low rate gives your entire leadership team access to this timely and valuable communication newsletter. As an added benefit, previous editions of the newsletter are posted online, giving subscribers access to a comprehensive library of communication topics. Contact **Melanie Price**, OSBA administrative assistant of communication services, at mprice@ohioschoolboards.org; (614) 540-4000; or (800) 589-OSBA to learn more about subscribing to *CommunicationPlus*. ■

CommunicationPlus

School PR news you can use

from the Ohio School Boards Association

May 2014

This month’s issue includes:

- Districts can reap community engagement benefits through classroom civics lessons

The benefits of civics instruction extend beyond the classroom. Students who understand the decision-making process engage in civic participation starting in the early grades.

Each **CommunicationPlus** issue includes tips and articles on

timely topics.

- Help parents help their children succeed in school

Community outreach promotes student success



WCCC Student Ambassadors speak to Leadership Warren County participants. Career center students often present before community members, who enjoy knowing more about what students are learning.

Peg Allen, public information specialist, Warren County Career Center

A school communicator's day begins with perusing the news for any mentions of education issues, or perhaps a photo or article about his or her school, and checking Google Alerts and social media accounts for any comments or mentions of the school. The immediacy of news is such that a printed daily paper is outdated by the time it reaches your driveway. And most people get their news online, sometimes through social media.

My morning began recently by going through one daily and three weekly newspapers and clipping articles and photos about the **Warren County Career Center (WCCC)**, the district in which I work as the public information specialist.

My total today is eight photos and articles ranging in subject matter from "WCCC Seniors Ready for Work" to "WCCC Community Day Set for May." It's a good day.

Also that morning, I sent out tweets about our students winning a state contest and our upcoming plant sale, and posted news and a photo on our district Facebook page about students winning a gold medal at the state Family Career and Community Leaders of America competition. A school board member replied with congratulations just a few minutes later.

In another chance to communicate with our public, our superintendent is presenting to a group of community

leaders meeting at our school this week. Last week, we had a Rotary club here and teachers and students talked about a construction project they are involved in, building an observatory at a nearby camp.

Regardless of your district's financial resources, effective communication can be had with the right tools, dedication and effort.

Communicating as a team

Marketing is a team effort. It all starts with a focus on student achievement and finding ways to highlight that. A business partner will notice a student project and mention it to others. School staff members are ambassadors for the district. Students succeed and the community notices. It all works together.

School communicators are there to help teachers and administrators get the good news out. Even if your district cannot afford a full-time person devoted to communications, every district needs a plan for communications.

There is value in having someone dedicated to communications if the district can afford it. A school communicator strengthens the district's ability to let the community know about the good things going on. If your district cannot afford it, you can look at ways to pull together a consortium with other districts to contract with a shared communicator or consultant.

"The (communications) plan is a guide detailing what we say and how we say it," said **Jon Weidlich**, Great Oaks ITCD community relations director. "It helps us to be consistent with our messages, and it helps ensure that we're reaching the entire community."

Career-technical school communicators are always finding ways to highlight the successes of their students through the news media, on social media and with in-person presentations. Our goals are to not only promote our schools and gain recognition for our students, but also to get the message out that career-technical education (CTE) is an excellent option for students in high school and beyond to enter the workforce as well as be prepared for further education and training. The concept of CTE is gaining notable mention by legislators lately, which has helped shine the spotlight on what we do.

CTE schools are public schools of choice, and as such, we need to market ourselves to the community. With all the

charter schools, private schools, online schools and home-school options, K-12 schools also are seeing the need to promote the good things going on in their districts. There are many ways to communicate with your public that do not cost a lot of money and that are effective. In fact, word of mouth is statistically shown to be the best method of advertising. That is something that all of us as public school employees can do.

Embracing social media

Social media has many outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Google+ and Pinterest. And, they are constantly changing. It may be Facebook that is used by most of your students and parents today, but it could change to Instagram or Google+ tomorrow. It is a challenge to keep up, but one that is necessary.

Your district also has a presence in the search engine world that can be managed to your advantage. Just do an Internet search on Google for your school district and see what comes up. There should be a map that accurately locates the school. You can add photos and text, hours of operation and contact information, and your customers (students) can write reviews. The reviews can be there whether or not you have set up anything, and they cannot be edited. You should know what people are saying about your school.

Facebook is a great way to communicate with your students and their families. Uploading photo galleries is easy and quick,



At WCCC's annual Community Day, heavy equipment program students talk about the different equipment and let children get in the vehicles.

and students — and their parents — love to see photos of prom, graduation and other events. Short videos also are very popular on Facebook. Alumni and business partners follow our page and comment.

In the six years that WCCC has had a Facebook page, it has grown to almost 1,300 followers and there has never been a negative incident with the page. It is important to respond as soon as possible to any questions that are posted. While social media can be a bit time-consuming to manage, there is no cost to it other than staff time.

Reaching out to the community

Sending photos with captions and short articles to the local papers also is very effective. Many newspaper websites have a section where you can submit your own articles, photos and calendar items. These will sometimes turn up in print in the community news.

Always email plain text and attach JPEG format photos for reporters. Most papers are short staffed and appreciate receiving news and photos ready for print. But occasionally, you can get a reporter interested in doing an article about a student project or a special feature on a student or staff member. Times have changed since we used to fax a press release and hope for a reporter to call. Now we have options to publish our news on our websites and social media channels, as well as send it to the news media.

Community groups such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions and Optimist clubs welcome speakers at their meetings. This is a

great opportunity to get in front of people in your area who care about what you do and want to know more about their tax dollars at work. CTE students are usually involved in some kind of community work-based learning project at our school, and we have found the community enjoys knowing more about what they are learning.

Students from K-12 districts can do a similar presentation and talk about their academic achievements or a classroom learning project, or perform music or drama. If you are fortunate enough to have public meeting space in your school, groups that come in to use the facilities are usually interested in learning more about what you do.

Using the district website

Your district website is the most important communication tool you have. It is your best representative to the public and should have a current look. You don't want your school website to look like it was designed in the 1990s with Microsoft FrontPage. News, photos, calendar events — all kept current — are a must. Easy navigation to where the visitor wants to go also is essential.

Make sure you have lots of photos with smiling faces, too. Websites have gone more visual, with a strong focus on photos rather than just text.

About half of WCCC's website visitors are on mobile devices now, so make sure you have a good mobile version that adjusts automatically to the size of the screen being used. Ours has a message that directs first-time users to "pin it" to their screen, which gives them a bookmark that looks like an app. Nobody wants to search for a school website on a phone screen and then try to find a phone number or other information on a miniature view of your full website. Design your mobile website to reflect what you think your visitors are looking for, be it a phone number, school news, calendar or school closing notice. Make it easy to find.

There are a few companies that help you manage email newsletters at a reasonable cost. You upload your addresses, design your template and then fill in the news and schedule it to go out on a regular basis. WCCC sends a monthly newsletter. Make sure it is mobile friendly, because most of your people will likely be reading the newsletter on their mobile device. The company we use offers a mobile template. Did I say the word mobile often enough? It needs to stick with you, because that is where your audience lives.

Most CTE districts have a dedicated school communicator, either full time or part time. Many K-12 districts do also, but if yours does not, you can begin a discussion on how to create a plan and manage communications with your public. Regardless of your district's financial resources, effective communication can be had with the right tools, dedication and effort. ■



A fire science student helps children aim a fire hose during the annual Community Day.

OHSPRA connects school communicators

Matt Davis, visual communications coordinator, Westerville City, and vice president of communication, OHSPRA

The phone rings, then an email dings, then a text pings, again and again. At that moment, whatever was important is now on the back burner — something unexpected has happened.

This is the life of a board member, superintendent, principal or administrator. Everyone is looking for answers and wanting to give opinions.

When the unexpected happens, the right person with the correct skills and tools can be invaluable to an organization. There are many titles given to this person: public information officer, communications director, communication specialist and district spokesperson, among others. These individuals have the knowledge and skill to help vet opinions, provide answers and serve as the point of contact. And, having one of these individuals as a member of the Ohio School Public Relations Association (OHSPRA) means access to a statewide network of resources.

OHSPRA is an organization of more than 100 members and growing. It represents a mixture of K-12 school districts, career centers, ESCs, state organizations and school communicators. Members of the organization range from those new to school public relations to those who have dedicated their entire careers to education. OHSPRA members know they can count on each other for guidance, no matter the need.

“OHSPRA has given me, a fairly new school public relations professional, the opportunity to learn and grow from some of the best school public relations pros in the state,” said **Kelsey Giesler, Ohio Hi-Point Career Center** communications coordinator. “Their knowledge and support has helped me navigate the sometimes daunting world of educational public relations.”

Throughout its 31-year history, OHSPRA has enjoyed a reputation as one of the largest and most active state school

public relations associations in the country, providing rich experiences and resources to its members. As a member of OHSPRA, skills, tools, talent and support are available to individuals and districts 24/7. The organization’s mission is to facilitate support for and trust in education through comprehensive communications efforts.

Social media

As communication vehicles have changed, OHSPRA has continued to keep pace as an organization and communicate using the latest tools. Whether it’s Facebook,



The OHSPRA Idea Center at the OSBA Capital Conference includes a publication exchange and on-site assistance from school communication professionals.



Twitter or e-newsletters, OHSPRA uses these tools to keep an open dialogue with its membership.

OHSPRA's Facebook (www.facebook.com/ohspra) and Twitter presence (www.twitter.com/ohspra) have gained a strong following this year that includes senators, school board members, superintendents and others staying connected to the organization. Along with a public Facebook presence, a members-only Facebook page provides a forum for members to share ideas and seek advice from other school public relations professionals. OHSPRA's Twitter feed also has evolved into a bulletin board of what is good and right around the state in schools and education.

Professional development

One of OHSPRA's major goals this past year was to increase professional development opportunities to help increase members' skill sets. OHSPRA accomplished this by offering varied opportunities for members to learn new skills or strengthen existing skills throughout the course of this year.

A free mobile apps webinar for members titled "District Mobile Apps: Trends and Best Practices," focused on the latest trends in mobile app development for K-12 institutions, the most popular content types, ideas for app funding and the latest market research.

OHSPRA also partnered with members in **Hilliard City Schools** to host free public records training. The training was provided by representatives from the state auditor's office and focused on equipping attendees with the skills needed to work through public records issues. These skills included responding to public records requests, what is and is not public information or protected information, the basics of records retention and Ohio's Public Records Act.

Each year, OHSPRA partners with OSBA to host fall workshops and sponsor a publications exchange at the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show, where attendees may pick up copies of a variety of school communications materials.

OHSPRA hosts an annual two-day spring conference to provide multiple professional development opportunities focused around a theme important to school public relations. The conference is a way to showcase best practices that have yielded success for other districts throughout the state and nation.

The 2014 spring conference, held in March, focused on engaging stakeholders in an increasingly high-tech world. It offered attendees professional development opportunities in many areas of communications, including e-newsletters, communication audits, social media, engaging stakeholders,

hosting Web chats, measuring engagement and building a strong organizational climate through trust and strong writing.

OHSPRA's commitment to communicators, no matter their title, is strong.

Membership

Comprehensive communications and accessibility is at the heart of OHSPRA.

Membership in OHSPRA provides access to the following benefits:

- Workshops/professional development to build communication skills and knowledge for today and the future.
- An online Idea Exchange and a mentorship program to provide support and resources in the following categories, among others:
 - ◆ crisis communications;
 - ◆ professional development;
 - ◆ social media and Web;
 - ◆ levies;
 - ◆ surveys;
 - ◆ school construction;
 - ◆ event ideas and planning;
 - ◆ school funding;
 - ◆ community outreach;
 - ◆ marketing.
- Achievement awards, where public relations professionals critique and provide feedback on work and projects, allowing benchmarking opportunities in the following categories:
 - ◆ writing;
 - ◆ communication plans;
 - ◆ newsletters;
 - ◆ photography;
 - ◆ marketing;
 - ◆ video;
 - ◆ social media.

OHSPRA members know how vital good communication is to creating support for, and a greater understanding of, the institutions they represent. Current members include public relations and communication professionals, superintendents, board members, community education directors, curriculum specialists, teachers and college professors. OHSPRA's commitment to communicators, no matter their title, is strong.

To learn more about OHSPRA, visit www.ohspra.org and follow the association on social media. Make OHSPRA a vital part of your communications program. ■

What's your school district's HR brand?



How to attract, hire and retain the best teachers

Battelle for Kids

We know good teachers matter. In fact, research suggests that teachers matter more to student achievement than any other aspect of schooling, according to a 2012 RAND Education study.

In most areas of the U.S., however, low-income, minority and students living in rural areas are the least likely to have access to the resources that matter most.

The Aspen Institute's Commission on the No Child Left

Behind Act discovered in 2010 that teacher quality is inequitably distributed in schools. Typically, students with the greatest needs find themselves in classrooms with the least-qualified and least-effective teachers. A 2008 study by The Education Trust found students in high-poverty schools are 50% more likely to have teachers who do not hold certification or academic majors in their fields when compared to students in more affluent schools. And, according to the paper "Recruiting and Retaining High-Quality Teachers in Rural Areas," by **David Monk**, dean of

Pennsylvania State University's College of Education, "rural schools have a below-average share of highly trained teachers."

So how do we find, grow and retain great teachers — especially in areas where students need the most support?

Districts across the country are re-imagining their recruitment and hiring practices, and in the process examining their human resources (HR) brand.

For the districts profiled in this article, the approach to HR branding and recruiting is not solely about creating awareness of open positions — it's centered on reaching talented educators interested in beginning their careers and/or growing professionally and making an impact on students' lives.



Case in point: Tulsa Public Schools, Oklahoma

As the second largest district in Oklahoma, Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) employs more than 7,000 staff across 88 campuses. Nearly 34,500 (or 84%) of the district's 41,000 students qualified for free or reduced-priced lunch as of 2012.

During the 2012–2014 school years, TPS developed a multiyear recruitment campaign to build its brand, showcase the great things happening in the district and find qualified candidates to serve in a growing number of classrooms by:

- creating awareness of career opportunities among pre-service and practicing teachers, associations and partner organizations that recommend candidates;
- building a network of candidates within Oklahoma and surrounding states;
- fostering relationships with student teachers;
- telling TPS' story as the district of choice in Oklahoma, including the advantages of building a life in the greater

Tulsa area;

- building current instructional and noninstructional staff's ability to reinforce this messaging and serve as district ambassadors;
- promoting clear job descriptions and simplifying the online application process;
- streamlining human resources systems and introducing an intentional selection process, including candidate screening, interviewing, evaluating/scoring, hiring, onboarding and retention.

As part of the campaign, TPS created a suite of materials to showcase the district and Tulsa community in a positive light, including:

- a brochure to share with potential teacher candidates, parents, community leaders and foundation representatives (<http://bit.ly/1pla3bj>);
- a poster series to place in education colleges across Oklahoma and surrounding states to attract pre-service teachers considering employment opportunities (<http://bit.ly/1hqkthq>) (<http://bit.ly/potesh>);
- an enhanced careers website with improved functionality and design that builds the case for why educators should consider a career at TPS (the site feeds into the online application process);
- recruitment event materials — traveling banners, signs, promotional pieces and others — that appeal to recent graduates who are passionate about improving student outcomes;
- advertising in local, regional and national education and business publications to reach target candidates and put the district on the map.

These efforts have helped the district introduce a process, be intentional about its efforts and establish a brand, clear voice and cohesive presentation across all recruitment platforms. The recruitment campaign has helped the district:

- build internal morale and pride, and reinforce its commitment to excellence and supporting teachers by displaying recruitment materials featuring TPS educators in every district building;
- establish relationships with 19 colleges and universities in Oklahoma and surrounding states from which TPS' most effective teachers are recruited;
- strengthen existing relationships with four in-state universities that provide student teachers;
- participate in 23 recruitment events during the 2013–14 school year;
- receive 952 applications and hire 420 teachers from September 2012 through August 2013.

In 2014, Battelle for Kids earned awards on Tulsa Public Schools' behalf for the recruiting brochure and marketing campaign from the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts and Ohio School Public Relations Association.

Case in point: South Central Local School District, Ohio

The South Central Local (Huron) School District recently redesigned its brand to attract new hires, put a “face” on the district and create a recruiting and hiring system that is easy to use and helps determine the best candidates for open positions. Perhaps Ohio’s best kept secret, South Central is a small, rural district serving 825 students across 86 square miles. The district is nestled in the countryside surrounded primarily by family farms and light industry. South Central’s diverse course offerings, college credit courses and quality programs match those of much larger districts, while its small size ensures educational opportunities are offered to meet each student’s needs.

Being strategic about recruitment communications helps districts set clear expectations and goals, broaden their reach and find the best candidates.

The district currently is engaged in a transformation process to expand curriculum offerings and recruit new administrators and teachers to replace those retiring or looking for new opportunities. South Central also is ramping up its efforts to attract, recruit and hire graduating and practicing educators interested in growing and improving student outcomes.

Understanding the need to increase awareness among stakeholder groups — especially potential employees — South Central began designing a campaign focused on:

- positioning the district as a place where educators can have a big impact on student success because of its size and culture;
- creating awareness of the district’s diverse, evolving curriculum that prepares students for career, college and life;
- highlighting South Central’s student-focused, close-knit family culture;
- presenting the district as a desirable place to work and live.

South Central’s recruitment system overhaul and communications campaign, which will fully launch in fall 2014:

- provides the district with an online tool designed to improve selection processes for instructional and noninstructional staff using a multiple-data-point approach, including candidate screening, interviewing, evaluating and scoring, and hiring;
- builds awareness of South Central career opportunities among administrators and pre-service and practicing teachers, associations and partner organizations that can

recommend and inform candidates;

- forms a strong network of candidates within Ohio;
- leverages relationships with student teachers who would be interested in careers at South Central;
- uses a testimonial approach featuring staff and students to position South Central as the district of choice in Huron County;
- encourages current instructional and noninstructional staff to reinforce key messaging and serve as district ambassadors.

Sound advice from districts across the country

From these two examples and many others, the results are clear: Being strategic about recruitment communications helps districts set clear expectations and goals, broaden their reach and find the best candidates — which ultimately propels the district forward on its path toward excellence. It’s important to:

- Set clear goals from the beginning. We all need to know what we’re working toward. Decide what you want to accomplish through your re-branding and recruitment efforts so that you can establish goals. Setting clear goals from the beginning will help you create a plan and identify your next steps and time line.
- Create a plan — and stick to it. Have planning conversations with key stakeholders early on to inform the development of your plan. Outline what you need to do, when you need to do it and who is responsible. This will help you get started and stay on track.
- Be aware that if you’re trying to attract teachers, you must partner with them every step of the way. The best way to ensure your materials are well designed, informative, compelling and resonate with your core audience is to include your audience in every step of the process. In this case, engage current teachers from your district (along with other key stakeholders) in planning conversations and share drafts of your materials with them. Teachers’ input and feedback are key.
- Remember that it’s about so much more than the job. People are looking for more than a paycheck. They want to find a sense of community, supportive colleagues, opportunities to network and grow, and a great place to live. Focusing on lifestyle in your materials will boost your recruitment efforts as a whole.
- Decide what makes you unique, and tell that story. We’re all different. Each district must think about what sets it apart and what makes it appealing to prospective candidates. Focus on what you do well and tell that story through your campaign. ■

Editor’s note: Battelle for Kids is an Ohio-based, national, not-for-profit organization that provides counsel and solutions to advance the development of human capital systems, the use of strategic measures, practices for improving educator effectiveness and communication with all stakeholders. For more information, visit www.BattelleforKids.org.



School finance — what is your district's message?

Ernie Strawser, consultant, and Michael G. Strawser, communication consultant, Public Finance Resources Inc.

The world of school finance is complex and made more confusing by things like acronyms, “groundbreaking” funding formulas and casino profits. School board members who work to stay informed about their district’s finances are a great communication resource. It’s important to remember certain communication fundamentals never go out of style.

It isn’t always simple, is it? For example, a district might communicate that, “If it were not for House Bill (HB) 920, all would be fine.”

School districts sometimes use jargon. In addition to the jargon “HB 920,” this message may be challenged. Not everyone understands HB 920. And not every situation would be fine without HB 920. Also challenging — not all agree that HB 920 is a bad thing.

How then are we to communicate financial truths in this climate? Great question. Let’s look at fundamental communication practices in the school finance arena.

A superintendent once remarked that while presenting information about a new levy a taxpayer asked, “Why are you asking me for more money?” Having just delivered a 30-minute levy presentation, the superintendent simply replied, “We’re out of money.” The taxpayer responded with, “Then just tell me.”

Once the jargon, trends and formulas are eliminated or defined, three financial principles remain:

- income;
- expenses;
- savings (cash balance).

These three financial principles are understandable and will resonate with nearly everyone who has a home budget. If you want to be effective, you can successfully communicate your district’s financial information by

remembering three steps:

- *Analyze* your audience.
- *Identify* the message.
- *Apply* the message.

For example, having a \$2 million cash balance requires effective financial messaging. By the way, having a \$2 million negative cash balance presents its own set of challenges. Messaging requires that we first analyze our audience. Taxpayers, teachers, stakeholders and government officials all have different concerns. Following are some individual perspectives on cash balance alone:

- “The district isn’t a bank; they don’t need a balance.”
- “Enough cash is needed to weather any storm.”
- “They have money in the bank and can afford the textbooks or teacher pay raises.”
- “Don’t ask me for a levy increase when you have cash in the bank.”
- “You can’t have too much cash on hand.”
- “Credit agencies will rate us higher if we have high and growing cash balances.”

Messaging your district’s finances in an environment of diverse perspectives is difficult. Yet, it is important to remember that amid the diverse opinions there are financial truths relevant to most interested parties. This leads to our second step, identify the message.

While a credit rating agency may expect increasing cash balances, a taxpayer may want there to be just enough cash at new levy time. Diverse audiences yearn for — and require — different messages, yet fundamental financial principles remain the same.

For example, despite different perspectives, all parties might agree that program and financial stability are good. What does a cash balance accomplish? What purpose does our district cash balance serve? If the goal is to provide program and financial stability, how does a positive cash

balance help achieve this goal?

If the cash balance message is stability, how much cash balance is needed? A district might conclude that an amount equal to two month's expenses achieves the desired stability.

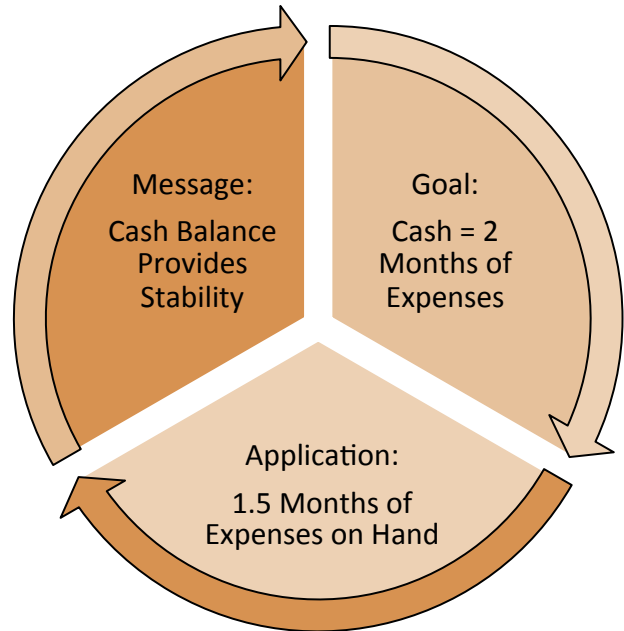
This concept leads to our third point, apply the message. This is the "so what." Cash balance must be communicated in perspective. For example, if the district has cash to meet expenses for one-and-a-half months, how best to address these questions?

- Why do we have a cash balance?
- What amount do we need?
- How are we doing?

Without an appropriate cash balance, we cannot achieve our goals as a district. You've addressed why (message), how much (audience) and progress (application).

Having a \$2 million cash balance can be interpreted from many individual perspectives. Helping your stakeholders understand this amount in relation to your district's needs — and theirs — will only increase your believability.

For a detailed article on "Test Your Cash Balance Policy," visit www.pfrcfo.com. ■



Editor's note: Ernie Strawser is a consultant for Public Finance Resources Inc. with more than 30 years of public finance experience. Michael G. Strawser is a Public Finance Resources Inc. communication consultant and Ph.D. student at the University of Kentucky.



What can PFR do for you?

OSBA is working with Public Finance Resources Inc. (PFR) to offer district financial forecasting services. This is an OSBA service, provided exclusively for OSBA by PFR.

PFR can:

- analyze internal and external data to develop your district's school budget report card;
- develop customized reports to make your financial information understandable and believable;
- provide effective and efficient financial modeling to identify options and results;
- build local capacity that is based on understanding, believing and planning.

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For more information, contact PFR at (614) 732-5948 or visit www.pfrcfo.com.

Where everybody



North Olmsted Middle School Principal Tom Dreiling talks with seventh-graders trying out for the school's mentorship program. Those chosen will become leaders next school year in the Where Everybody Belongs program, in which eighth-graders mentor seventh-graders.

North Olmsted program weaves web of support

The middle school years may be the most challenging time in a child's life. In addition to all the physical and emotional changes, young teens are leaving behind their elementary school days while at the same time standing on the cusp of high school.

They will be taking a different bus to a different building filled with different classmates. They also will be moving among multiple classes, each taught by a different teacher. Students unable to negotiate these challenges will suffer academically

and emotionally, and begin falling behind.

That's why North Olmsted Middle School teachers and administrators have embraced a mentoring initiative designed to keep that from happening. Called Where Everybody Belongs, or WEB, the **North Olmsted City** program strives to do just that by connecting eighth-grade mentors with incoming seventh-graders.

Launched in 2011, WEB is an initiative of The Boomerang

belongs

Gary Motz,
managing editor

Project, a California-based nonprofit organization. It is the sister program of Boomerang's Link Crew for high schools, which assigns student mentors to incoming freshmen.

Boomerang charges from \$2,095 to \$2,570 per person to train adult advisers on how to run WEB. Schools fund subsequent program activities in different ways, said **Tom Dreiling**, North Olmsted Middle School principal and one of several WEB advisers. The middle school's program is funded from the principal's account and through monetary and in-kind donations.

"WEB is a transition program for incoming seventh-grade students that focuses on reducing incidences of bullying, enhancing character and improving student achievement," said teacher and WEB adviser **Erin Mohar**. "Students help students succeed by using older students as peer mentors."

Eighth-grade mentors, known as WEB leaders, make their first contact with the younger students at the northeastern Ohio district's three intermediate schools, Dreiling said. The mentors, along with WEB advisers, introduce themselves to the sixth-graders near the end of the school year and encourage them to attend a special orientation in August.

"The sixth-graders will ask 'what's it like' questions," Dreiling said. "I'll tell them, 'That's a great question, and in August you're going to find that answer out at orientation.' I keep doing that with each question to get them thinking about orientation."

During the summer, WEB leaders send post cards to all incoming seventh-graders, reminding them about orientation and welcoming them to the middle school. Three days before the orientation date, mentors make a personal phone call to every incoming student.

"We really emphasize orientation as the most important day of the school year," Dreiling said, "because it sets the tone and connects them with someone who has their bearings on the entire school, the processes and how to be successful."

Getting to know you

WEB leaders play the most prominent role during the orientation event. After welcoming the entire class of new

seventh-graders, WEB leaders meet in small groups with the students they will be mentoring throughout the school year. The small groups are made up of two mentors and 10 seventh-graders.

"Orientation day includes a loud and cheerful assembly to welcome students with games, dancing and music," said teacher and WEB adviser **Claudia Bestor**. "In the small group sessions, seventh-graders and eighth-graders get to know each other. The day ends with a fun, creative, themed school tour, with themes like superheroes, a day at the beach or sports."



WEB mentorship program leaders share a laugh after posing for a group photo. The program is credited with reducing discipline referrals at North Olmsted Middle School by nearly 50%.

The key to making seventh-graders feel comfortable in their new school and drawing them out is conducting "safe" activities during the small group sessions, Dreiling said.

"They are safe in the sense that they don't really have to put themselves out there and risk much because WEB leaders aren't asking too many purposeful questions," he said.

It begins simply, with the WEB leaders introducing themselves and talking about what their lives are like in school, outside of school and why they chose to become a mentor. Next, the mentor introduces the "straw challenge," in which students put their little fingers inside a straw attached to another student's finger and walk around in a circle.

"It's something so simple, and it's safe, because if you drop the



A seventh-grade WEB leader candidate shows his enthusiasm while trying out to become a mentor in the Where Everybody Belongs program.

straw, so what,” Dreiling said. “You’re not asking anybody to do anything that the others aren’t doing.”

Subsequent activities are designed to challenge the seventh-graders a little further. They learn the names of people in the group by taking a ball, saying their name and passing the ball to the person beside them. Next, they take a ball and say their name and the name of the person next to them. That’s followed by “the tip of my finger” activity, in which a seventh-grader says another student’s name and taps a balloon to that person.

Students continue to learn more about each other — and become more relaxed — with the “My World” exercise. On a world map, WEB leaders ask them to draw things like their favorite toy or pastime. This helps them build connections among each other as they find out what they might have in common.

Along the way, mentors work to build seventh-graders’ confidence and a sense of acceptance with such expressions as “awesome” and “that’s great.”

“One of the pillars of WEB is that you learn through play,” Dreiling said. “We get so focused on reading and memorizing that we don’t play enough, and play is when we learn the most.”

Orientation is just the beginning

WEB leaders plan and conduct most of the program’s activities throughout the school year. These include “social follow-ups” and “academic follow-ups” with seventh-graders.

Two of the social follow-ups are major events involving hundreds of students. One, held in December, is “Gingerbread Wars,” which fills the cafeteria with students vying to make the best gingerbread house. The other is a spring lock-in at the school.

“This year about 240 students showed up for the lock-in, an activity night held from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the school,” Dreiling said. “We had a section for laser tag, and opened up the gym for basketball and cornhole. Kids also played ghost in the graveyard with flashlights, basically hide-seek in the hallways. Local restaurants donate food each year and parent volunteers help staff it.”

“The lock-in is really popular,” said WEB leader **Jamila Najjar**. “I saw people from completely different groups getting together and quiet kids hanging out with more outgoing people. It was nice that they didn’t look at other people as different and they all kind of chilled together.”

Mentors also design and conduct monthly academic follow-up sessions with seventh-graders that focus on different topics.

“WEB leaders provide academic lessons that support academic success and character development through classroom visits,” Mohar said. “The leaders put together the lessons at their monthly meetings.”

A recent academic follow-up session focused on how important it is to make people feel good instead of putting them down. The lesson drew an analogy between hurtful words and toothpaste.

WEB leaders divided a class into two groups, with seventh-graders from one group asked to squeeze toothpaste onto a paper plate. The toothpaste represented negative words.

Next up were seventh-graders from the second group, who tried to put the paste *back* in the tube, first with toothpicks, then their hands. Cheering and laughter accompanied both groups’ efforts.

Afterward, a WEB leader said, “Look how many bad words are left on the plate. What did we learn?”

“It’s a lot easier to say something than to take it back,” a seventh-grader responded.

Najjar, one of the WEB leaders who led the toothpaste lesson, finds the academic follow-ups particularly rewarding.

“It’s great being in front of a class and getting them to laugh and open up and talk,” she said. “It’s cool to know that they can relate to you and you can relate to them and everything’s OK.”

In addition to the social and academic follow-ups, mentors are encouraged to make regular contact with the seventh-graders in their group, Mohar said. During this year’s two-week Stand Up, Stand Out anti-bullying campaign, leaders met with their groups every day. A highlight of that campaign was a video created by three WEB leaders — “Post-It Revolution” — which had a dramatic impact when it was shown at an assembly (see “Teens’ anti-bullying video has big impact,” page 36). The anti-bullying initiative also featured daily lessons mentors led for seventh-graders during study halls.

“Lessons included bully awareness — why bullies bully, how they choose their targets, what targets and bystanders can do to mitigate bullying and what help is available,” Bestor said. “The campaign ended with a challenge to commit random acts

of kindness and an activity called ‘give someone a hand,’ in which students sent encouragements to each other on notes in the shape of a hand.”

WEB leaders’ activities also included staffing a booth featuring the program at the 2013 Student Achievement Fair at the OSBA Capital Conference. School board member **Linda K. Cleary** nominated the group for the fair and was proud students were able to share their program at the state level.

Becoming a WEB leader

A testament to the popularity of the program is that there are more mentor candidates than there are slots available. The reason? Because it’s fun, Mohar said.

“The activities are fun, but have meaning,” she said. “The purpose of the program is something many people want to be a part of and believe in. WEB encompasses so many different aspects of school life with the social follow-ups and academic follow-ups that it speaks to many different types of students.

“WEB isn’t looking for the A+ students, but rather students who can be good role models for their peers. I think this makes WEB very accessible to many students. As we see our (school) culture evolving, more and more students are interested because they have lived the positive culture in our school.”

The selection process for the succeeding year begins in the spring, Dreiling said. For the 2014-15 school year, there were 100 applications for 52 openings. The available positions are based on the number of incoming seventh-graders.

All applicants are invited to a tryout session, in which the program’s advisers observe them interacting with each other as they practice different teamwork scenarios. The advisers look for those who exhibit clear leadership skills, as well as those who initially seem to be holding back but gradually become more engaged and enthusiastic as the scenarios progress. The following week, the school sends letters to those selected and those not chosen notifying them of the outcome.

“We’ll bring those selected back for a May ‘play day,’” Dreiling said. “It will be their first opportunity to lead the activities and, to refresh them, we go through a few of the activities as if they were new seventh-graders again. But, they’ll see it in a different way, because we’ll talk about it from a WEB leader’s perspective and explain the key points and purpose of each activity.”

“The goal is to have a cross section of the student body in order to represent all types of students at the school,” Mohar said. “This allows seventh-graders to find someone they can relate to. WEB leaders receive two, five-hour days of training before orientation and then are expected to run a small group orientation with their WEB group for about an hour-and-a-half on orientation day.”

‘WEB is working’

Some benefits of the program are difficult to immediately quantify, but to Dreiling, several really stand out.

“Since WEB has been implemented at North Olmsted Middle School, our office discipline incidences have decreased by 49.2%,” he said. “We were at roughly 800 discipline referrals in my first year and now that’s down to 400.

“A discipline referral means a loss of class and instructional time. So if I’m only calling kids down 400 times, that’s half the amount of lost time from three years ago. That’s a lot more time kids are spending in class.”

Another statistic Dreiling and his staff take pride in is WEB leaders’ academic success.

“Our average GPA for WEB leaders is typically above 3.75 as a group,” he said.

And one other indicator of success? More noise — and sooner.



A student discovers that trying to put toothpaste back into the tube is a messy endeavor. He was taking part in a lesson designed to illustrate how hard it is to take back hurtful words.

“It used to take until the second semester, on average, for a student to really feel at home here,” Dreiling said. “They’re only here for two years; we don’t have time to waste a whole semester.”

“Now I joke with the teachers that I know WEB is working because the halls are noisier quicker,” Dreiling said. “That means kids are getting comfortable quicker. That window of an entire semester to feel at ease has now shrunk to three weeks. Because of our WEB leaders and the orientation, seventh-graders come to school knowing several new people before they even start classes.”

Dreiling said the strong support of the board of education and district administrators also contribute to WEB’s success. One

board member, **Thomas R. Herbster**, is especially dedicated to the program.

“Mr. Herbster has been very active in our program, not only with monetary donations, but more importantly with his time,” Dreiling said. “He has participated in WEB events over the years and he is greatly appreciated.”

“This has been a home run for our school and community. WEB has been very well received.” ■

Editor’s note: For more information on the WEB program, contact Dreiling at Tom.Dreiling@nocseagles.org. Information also is available on The Boomerang Project website at www.boomerangproject.com.

Teens’ anti-bullying video has big impact

The concept was very simple – and very powerful.

A video showing nothing but written words accompanied by music from bands Imagine Dragons, A Great Big World and One Direction.

No dialog, no faces. Just the hands of teenage girls writing descriptions of themselves on sheets of paper:

“My name is Jasmine. Just your average teenager. I like pizza, One Direction and YouTube. There’s more to me than people think, though.”

Tearing off that sheet she writes on another: “I’ve been picked on, called names and made to feel like an outcast. That’s not what hurts, though. What hurts is that I began to believe the negativity.”

Jasmine tears off that sheet to reveal a yellow Post-it note emblazoned with the word “freak.”

Two more girls do the same to reveal Post-it notes reading “nobody” and “loner.” Later in the video, hands begin filling the screen with Post-its bearing hurtful words.

Later, the negative words are covered up by positive phrases: “stand up for yourself,” “be kind to everyone,” “bullying cannot be tolerated anymore” and “remember, no matter what, you are wonderful.”

The eight-minute “Post-it Revolution” was created by three North Olmsted Middle School eighth-graders: **Jasmine Hasanain, Hannah Caruso and Grace English**. The girls – who had never produced a video before – are mentors in the school’s Where Everybody Belongs program.

The video was shown at an assembly that was part of the Stand Up! Stand Out! anti-bullying challenge. That’s where the girls learned



Student mentors, from left, Jasmine Hasanain, Hannah Caruso and Grace English, talk about the “Post-it Revolution” anti-bullying video they made, while mentor Jamila Najjar, right, looks on.

how powerful it was.

“The auditorium was just dead silent while the video was on, and after it ended you could hear a pin drop,” English said. “Usually at assemblies there’s always someone talking or messing around.”

“One seventh-grader walked out crying,” Hasanain said. “He’s been bullied, so it had a big impact on him.”

Caruso said a girl who picks on other people told her the video made her want to change.

“Nobody knew who had made the video until the end when they had us stand up,” English said. “Everyone was surprised, because they thought it must have been made by the stereotypical bullied student – someone who doesn’t talk and has no friends. But we are just pretty average students who have gone through the same thing.”

North Olmsted Middle School Principal **Tom Dreiling** said The Boomerang Project, the organization that developed the Where Everybody Belongs initiative, wants to use the video in its programs nationally. To view “Post-it Revolution,” visit <http://links.ohio.schoolboards.org/16375>.

Conference plans unfold



The 2014 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show is taking shape

Bryan Bullock, assistant editor

OSBA hosts the second largest education conference in the nation every fall — and organizing the event is a yearlong process. As summer approaches and the school year draws to a close, the association is busy working to finalize plans for the 2014 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show.

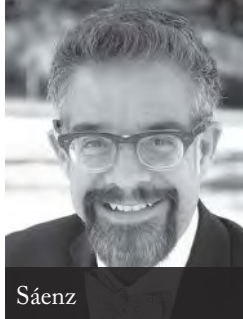
The 59th annual event has grown to the size it is today because of its reputation for providing school board members, administrators and staff the best in timely, comprehensive and high-quality professional development.

The OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show is set for Nov. 9-12 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. The Sunday-through-Wednesday event draws nearly 10,000 attendees each year, and features outstanding keynote speakers, more than 150 learning sessions and many ways for attendees to build their leadership skills to help their school districts elevate student achievement.

“Leadership for Learning” is what the conference is all about — professional development that prepares school district management teams for an ever-changing array of important education issues. Conference education



Capital Conference education sessions cover innovative topics ranging from blended learning and preparing students for the Common Core to legislative updates and safety demonstrations.



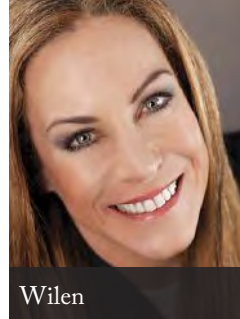
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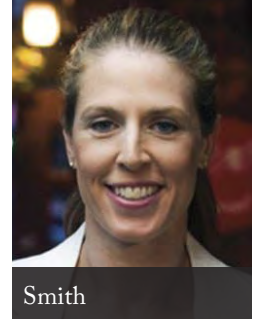
Thurmon



Bailey



Wilen



Smith

sessions range from school law, finance and school safety to blended learning, district leadership and technology in the classroom.

Student success is at the core of the conference. The ever-popular Student Achievement Fair will be held Nov. 11 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Teachers and students from across Ohio will be on-site to share innovative programs that are increasing student achievement and preparing students for the future. The programs featured are intended to provide replicable examples of ways districts can use technology, cultivate student leaders, encourage community service and bolster instruction. An entertainment group from each of OSBA's five regions will perform during the Student Achievement Fair, showing how Ohio students succeed on all levels. The fair also includes a student art exhibition.

Attendees can explore the Trade Show on Nov. 10, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Nov. 11, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The show — the largest exhibition of school equipment, supplies and services in the U.S. — will host nearly 700 vendor booths. Drawings will be held throughout the show to give attendees chances to win valuable prizes for their districts.

The Capital Conference consistently features an outstanding lineup of keynote speakers that will inspire, inform and enlighten attendees. Two of the three General Session speakers have been confirmed for this year's event. They are:

- Nov. 10: Dr. **Adam Sáenz**, a clinical psychologist and education blogger with The Huffington Post. Sáenz says a teacher inspired him to go from juvenile detention to training at Harvard Medical School and Oxford University. Sáenz's story is one The Huffington Post says "will never fail to inspire," a journey through profound lows and soaring highs. At every important juncture, there have been two common elements — lifesavers that appeared when he most needed it: education and teachers. Whether you're searching for a reason to believe or you just need a hope-filled reminder, the bottom line is that you have tremendous power to make a difference in students' lives, and Sáenz's

message will compel you to engage your calling with passion, purpose and vision.

Sáenz earned his Ph.D. in school psychology from Texas A&M University. He currently serves as the clinical director of the Oakwood Collaborative in Bryan, Texas, a counseling and assessment clinic he founded in 2003.

- Nov. 11: **Dan Thurmon**, an author, motivational speaker and peak performance coach. Thurmon has spent his life learning and teaching how to perform under pressure. As president of Motivation Works Inc., he has worked with hundreds of clients and delivered thousands of presentations worldwide. Thurmon helps organizations and individuals implement action plans and move confidently through transitions. A recent inductee to the prestigious Speakers Hall of Fame, Thurmon delivers experiences that go beyond motivation, teaching concepts and skills in a highly engaging and entertaining manner. He incorporates his lifelong performance skills to create high-impact events. His presentations have educated and uplifted Fortune 500 companies, young audiences and even troops on the front lines of Afghanistan and Iraq. Thurmon's philosophy can be summarized by the title of his book, *Off Balance On Purpose*. He believes that we will never achieve "perfect balance" and should, instead, learn to embrace uncertainty and initiate positive changes that lead to growth.

Information about the Nov. 12 General Session speaker will be announced once details are confirmed.

The General Sessions also will shine a spotlight on outstanding student entertainment groups; recognize Ohio's top school board members, administrators, educators and support staff; and welcome special guests.

The Early Bird Workshop speaker on Nov. 9, will be **Simon T. Bailey**, acclaimed speaker, author and consultant. Bailey will explore the many aspects of leadership in this in-depth, interactive session. He is the founder of Imagination Institute Inc., an organization dedicated to developing the world's most precious resource — people. He's an authority in helping individuals and organizations release their brilliance, and has a unique talent for quickly

transforming lives.

Another Nov. 9 highlight will be the OSBA Black Caucus annual dinner. The event runs from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., and is open to all attendees. Information on the keynote speaker will be shared once details are finalized.

Conference Luncheons, which allow attendees to network with colleagues and enjoy outstanding keynote speakers, will be held on Nov. 10 and Nov. 11.

The Nov. 10 speaker will be Dr. **Tracey Wilen**, a prominent expert on the impact of technology on society, work, careers and women's leadership. Wilen has been a scholar at Stanford University and held leadership positions at Apple Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co., Cisco Systems Inc. and the Apollo Education Group Inc.

The author of 11 books, she has appeared on CNN, Fox and CBS news, and is regularly heard on radio shows across the U.S. Wilen also has been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Forbes Magazine*, *Los Angeles Times* and *USA Today*. In 2012, she was honored by the *San Francisco Business Times* as one of the Most Influential Women in Bay Area Business, and in 2002 was named San Francisco Woman of the Year.

The Nov. 11 Conference Luncheon will feature **Katie Smith**, a former Ohio State University (OSU) and professional basketball star, and three-time Olympic medalist. A graduate of **Logan-Hocking Local's**

(Hocking) Logan High School, Smith is one of the most decorated professional basketball players of all time. She is the sport's all-time leading scorer, having notched more than 7,000 points in both her American Basketball League and WNBA careers. In 2011, fans voted to recognize her as one of the Top 15 players in WNBA history.

In her freshman year at OSU, she took the Buckeyes to a Big Ten championship and the national championship game. The university later honored her as the first female Buckeye athlete to have her number retired.

Smith, an assistant coach for the WNBA's New York Liberty, recently received a master's degree in medical dietetics from OSU.

The OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show is known not only for the quality of its programming, but the value it offers attendees. OSBA again is offering a special group registration rate that, in effect, reduces the per-person cost once more than six individuals are registered. Single registration is \$275. Group registration — more than six people — is a flat fee of \$1,700; there is no charge beyond that for an unlimited number of additional registrants. That means that the more people a district registers, the lower the per-person rate. Details will be included in registration packets to be mailed in mid-July.

For more information about the Capital Conference, visit <http://conference.ohioschoolboards.org> or contact OSBA at (614) 540-4000. ■



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Finding the best candidate

OSBA searches blend leadership, expertise

Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

Whether you are a new or veteran school board member, you already know having the right staff in place for your district is vital. When the time comes to consider new candidates for your district's leadership positions, look no further than OSBA to help you find success with this critical task.

With more than 125 years of combined experience and expertise, OSBA's search consultants provide the leadership necessary for an effective executive search from concept through completion. OSBA is *your* association and we understand your district's unique needs.

Why choose OSBA?

The association has completed more than 1,000 searches for key administrators since 1981. OSBA's search services can help your board and administration organize the search process to ensure the most highly qualified candidates are aware of and know the details about your vacancy.

Full-time search consultants will be

pleased to meet with boards to explain their search options, and formal, written proposals can be sent in advance. There is no charge or obligation for this preliminary meeting. Once the board contracts with OSBA, expert consultants will advise, guide and assist throughout the entire process. OSBA's search consultants understand the needs of board members, and have personal experience as educators, administrators and board members.

OSBA is the only search group in Ohio offering use of Achiever, a standards-based, benchmarked leadership assessment tool. All finalists in OSBA superintendent or treasurer searches are asked to complete this assessment. Achiever results provide boards not only behaviorally based interview questions, but also suggestions for customized professional development matched to the individual.

Once the new leadership team member is on board, OSBA offers districts that use its search services the opportunity for a complimentary, facilitated,

customized board development workshop.

"OSBA provides recommendations and guidance. ... It's our core belief that when the board is in control, the district will have the most success."

— Kathy LaSota

Ohio's most cost-effective search services

OSBA's dues structure helps support all the services it provides members, including search services. Because of this, OSBA is able to keep costs relatively low for search services in comparison to for-profit firms.

In the rare and unlikely event an OSBA search does not result in the board finding a candidate of choice, OSBA will repeat the search at no additional consulting cost.

OSBA has a national reach

As the only Ohio member of the National Affiliation of Superintendent Searchers, OSBA has access to candidates from across the country through a national network of more than 100 search consultants in 39 states.

OSBA also is the only Ohio search service to have access to the

No one offers you more.



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SuperProMatch system. This database provides recruiting access to hundreds of qualified candidates nationwide who have an interest in educational administration in Ohio.

Board control is ensured

Another benefit of hiring OSBA is that it maintains a board perspective throughout the process. Since the board will make this key decision, the board remains in control during the search.

“OSBA provides recommendations and guidance,” said **Kathy LaSota**, OSBA director of school board services. “However, we never substitute our judgment for the board’s. It’s our core belief that when the board is in control, the district will have the most success.”

This process also builds a bridge for mutually beneficial board-administrator relationships and reflects OSBA’s commitment to serving members with superior services.

A proven and customized process

The standard search is made up of easy, but successful steps. OSBA’s basic search process includes:

- planning the search, including time line, structure and assignments;
- developing a candidate profile, marketing strategies and advertising materials;
- advertising, actively recruiting and managing the electronic application process;
- professionally screened, highly qualified candidates;
- preparing the board for interviews and providing options for staff and community involvement;
- providing references and coordinating site visits;
- guidance during negotiation and appointment of the chosen candidate;
- optional board leadership team workshop.

Great benefits, superlative services

Additional reasons to consider OSBA for your next search include:

- OSBA facilitates focus groups for staff, the community, administrators and board members during the profile development phase;
- OSBA provides an objective and professional evaluation of potential candidates by highly experienced consultants;
- OSBA’s search consultants have access to legal and policy support;
- OSBA searches will be done on regional and national levels;
- OSBA is *your* association with a long-term commitment to a successful search and a strong and ongoing relationship with your district.

For more information or to arrange a search consultation, contact OSBA at (800) 589-OSBA; (614) 540-4000; or visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/78710>. ■

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Proud Products of Ohio Public Schools

Crystal Davis, editor

Who I am
today began
with **public
education**

STAND UP
FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

From highly successful and high-profile alumni to a long and ever-expanding list of educational achievements, Ohio's public schools have much to be proud of. Year after year, public schools across the state are among the best in the country, earning national recognition, landing on prestigious awards lists and showcasing models of efficiency and achievement.

As Ohio's public schools continue to innovate, it is clear the education they provide is the best in the state, as they consistently and overwhelmingly outperform charter schools. The proof also can be seen in the multitudes of exceptional graduates who have gone on to make a real difference in the world.

For the fourth year, OSBA is featuring Proud Products of Ohio Public Schools in this special section of the *Journal*. As part of OSBA's Stand Up for Public Schools statewide campaign — designed to raise awareness about the importance of public education and locally elected boards of education — the association is presenting living examples that prove public schools are doing a great job preparing Ohio students for bright futures.

Proud Products of Ohio Public Schools highlights graduates who have achieved great success in their chosen fields — people like singer-songwriter, actor and television personality **Nick Lachey**; pilot instructor and record-setting aviator **Martha Rockwood King**; journalist and Pulitzer Prize finalist **Wil Haygood**; state medical director for the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Medical Services, Dr. **Carol A. Cunningham**; and state legislator-turned-chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents, **John A. Carey Jr.**

More Proud Products, including TV news lead anchor **Amber Noggle**, are posted at www.standupforOHpublicschools.org/proudproducts. The Stand Up for Public Schools website also features a compilation of public school success stories at www.standupforohiopublicschools.org/success-stories. OSBA encourages school districts to visit the page and submit stories, photos and videos showing all the good things going on in Ohio public schools and how their students are making a difference.

The Proud Products profiled in the *Journal* and online are just a few examples of the many Ohio students who have used the paths laid by public education as stepping-stones to greatness. ■

Nick Lachey

Host of VH1's 'Big Morning Buzz Live'

Cincinnati's homegrown pop star helps his alma mater take the stage

Nick Lachey graduated from Cincinnati City's School for Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA) in 1992. Just 12 years later, he brought the "Taking the Stage" musical reality show, which documented the lives of SCPA students, to the airwaves of MTV. It's just one of the ways the 40-year-old multi-platinum recording artist, actor and television personality has given back to public education and his alma mater.

Lachey first rose to stardom as the lead singer of the pop band 98 Degrees, selling 10 million albums worldwide and charting several Top-40 hits. Lachey later went on to star in "Newlyweds: Nick and Jessica," one of most successful reality shows in MTV's history. In 2003, Lachey launched a successful solo album career for which his second album, "What's Left of Me," went to No. 2 on the Billboard 200 top albums chart.

In January 2013, Lachey reunited with his group 98 Degrees to produce a new album, and then went on tour with pop bands New Kids on the Block and Boyz II Men. Inspired by the birth of his son **Camden**, Lachey also released a new album, "A Father's Lullaby," in April 2013.

Outside of the studio, Lachey has hosted several major national network programs and specials including "High School Musical: Get In the Picture," "Clash of the Choirs" (where Team Lachey took home the championship and a check for \$250,000 for the Cincinnati Children's Hospital), NBC's "Rockefeller Christmas Spectacular" and the 35th annual "Macy's 4th of July Fireworks Spectacular." Lachey also has starred on several popular TV series including "Hawaii Five-O," "One Tree Hill," "Charmed" and "Hope & Faith."

Behind the scenes, Lachey was executive producer for "Taking the Stage" from 2009 to 2011. In July 2013, Lachey hosted NBC's musical game show "The Winner Is," and in December of that year he returned to host the fourth season of the a cappella show "The Sing-Off." In March, Lachey joined VH1's "Big Morning Buzz Live" as the network's spring 2014 host.

In addition to his success in the music and television industries, Lachey also remains a constant advocate for children's and humanitarian causes through his work with organizations such as VH-1 Save The Music, Feeding America, Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. He is founder and president of The Nick Lachey Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to helping children, families and communities in need throughout the United States.

Education inspiration

"**Deb Centers** was a teacher that made a *huge* impact in my life and career. She was my choir teacher throughout high school. Her passion for music and demand for excellence was a big reason I fell in love with singing."

Giving back

"SCPA was such a special place for me and I wanted to try and share that experience with others through a TV show ("Taking the Stage"). In addition, my band 98 Degrees has performed at fundraisers for SCPA in the past." ■

"Going to a performing arts school was an incredible experience for me. The opportunity to get a great academic education and a first-class arts education at the same school was invaluable. It served me well as I pursued a career in the entertainment business."



Martha Rockwood King

Co-chairman, co-owner, King Schools Inc.

From blimps to jets, she flies it all

When you see a blimp over the Super Bowl, **Martha Rockwood King** might be flying it. However, acting as a backup pilot for the Fujifilm blimp is but a small bullet point on the résumé of this legendary aviator and instructor. King is the first and only woman to hold every category and class of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rating on her pilot certificate, as well as every flight and ground instructor certificate the FAA offers.

She also is co-owner of the world's leading aviation training video company, and flies everything from jets to piston airplanes to helicopters to light sport aircraft. She and her husband, **John**, claim to have taught more pilots via video instruction than anyone in the history of aviation.

The daughter of Brig. Gen. **Ralph** and **Modest Rockwood**, she graduated as class valedictorian in 1963 from **Fairborn City's** Fairborn High School, where she was a member of the National Honor Society and worked on the school's newspaper and literary magazine. She went on to graduate from Indiana University with a bachelor's degree in comparative literature.

In the early 1970s, she and her husband began teaching pilots. Today, their San Diego-based King Schools Inc. is the world's leading producer of aviation training videos and multimedia programs. Over nearly 40 years, King Schools has delivered millions of videotapes, CDs, DVDs and online courses to pilots and mechanics.

King and her husband have won many awards. In 1996, they were named Aviation Educators of the Year by *Professional Pilot* magazine. In 2004, the Kings were awarded the status of Master Air Pilot in recognition of their worldwide contribution to general aviation by the prestigious Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators of London at a ceremony presided over by Britain's Prince Andrew.

In 2008, they were inducted into the International Aerospace Hall of Fame, joining the Wright Brothers and **Charles Lindbergh**. In 2003, the First Flight Centennial Commission honored Martha King as one of the 100 distinguished aviation heroes in the first century of flight. She also was named one of the 100 Most Influential Women in Aviation by Women in Aviation International.

Education inspiration

"Fairborn High School was a wonderful place for me to learn. I loved it. I especially remember how my Latin classes encouraged my exploration of how Western civilization developed, and gave me a rich vocabulary heritage. **Fred Rufener**, my geometry teacher, helped me develop the skills to make and defend a presentation — a skill that I still use to this day. I have been thankful to him ever since."

Giving back

"Through the video courses produced by my company, King Schools Inc., I have helped many thousands of Ohioans achieve the goal of learning to fly. I have returned to Ohio on many occasions to speak to pilot groups, especially regarding aviation safety." ■



"The tools I use in my work, video, computers and the Internet, were not even imagined when I went to high school. It was my learning how to learn at Fairborn High School that helped me master these new disciplines and enabled me to communicate with so many people. Learning how to learn is so critically important because, for many of the students in high school now, their future jobs will be in industries that don't currently exist, using technologies that have not yet been invented."

“Writing gives me the ability to understand and interpret the world as best I can. It is a craft, and requires my constant attention, a job that gives me genuine joy.”



Wil Haygood

Author, Washington Post journalist

From the projects to the Post — Columbus-bred writer has his own rags-to-riches story

Raised in a Columbus housing project, **Wil Haygood** graduated from **South-Western City's** Franklin Heights High School and became the first in his family to attend college. After he graduated from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, he went on to author five nonfiction books. But, it is his achievements as a journalist for *The Washington Post* that have been grabbing national headlines recently, throwing his own rags-to-riches story into the spotlight. His front-page story for the *Post* about longtime White House butler **Eugene Allen** is the inspiration for “Lee Daniels’ *The Butler*,” a feature film released last fall. He also was an associate producer for the movie.

Haygood joined *The Washington Post* in 2002 as a national writer. He was one of the first journalists into New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina struck and he covered the story for 33 consecutive days.

Before his time at the *Post*, he worked as a national and foreign correspondent at *The Boston Globe* for 17 years, where he became a Pulitzer Prize finalist. While covering the civil war in Somalia in 1990, he was taken hostage by rebels and eventually released with the aid of Pakistani troops.

Haygood’s books include several biographies of 20th-century figures: *King of the Cats: The Life and Times of Adam Clayton Powell Jr.*; *In Black and White: The Life of Sammy Davis Jr.*; and *Sweet Thunder: The Life and Times of Sugar Ray Robinson*. His other books are: *The Chicago Tribune, Parade and Mosaic*; *Two on the River*; and *The Haygoods of Columbus: A Family Memoir*. His books have helped him earn a National Headliner Award, Sunday Magazine Editors Award and National Association of Black Journalists Award, among others.

In 2013, Haygood was awarded the Ella Baker Social Justice Award, named after the civil rights pioneer. The judges for that award applauded Haygood’s literary career “for shedding a light on those who give much, but are little noticed.” He also was awarded an honorary doctor of letters by his college alma mater and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship in 2013. Haygood was the first person enshrined in the Lincoln Theatre’s Walk of Fame in Columbus. In November 2013, he was the speaker for the first General Session at OSBA’s Capital Conference and Trade Show.

Education inspiration

“It was at (Columbus City’s) Weinland Park Elementary School on the city’s north side where I first felt the love of streaming words into sentences. A teacher saw my attraction to writing then. It translated to A’s on spelling tests, which encouraged my trips to the local library to check out books about explorers and history.”

Giving back

“I’ve made it a habit to return to the city quite often to speak with schoolchildren, especially those in economically distressed areas. Just a few months ago, I gave a reading at the Neighborhood House on the east side. I have also spoken to the City Readers, a program of young students started by Mayor (**Michael B.**) **Coleman**.” ■

Dr. Carol A. Cunningham, FAAEM, FACEP

State medical director, Ohio Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Medical Services

Ohio's top doc has many 'firsts'

Dr. **Carol A. Cunningham** has had many firsts in her career. In 2004, she was appointed state medical director for the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), making her the nation's first African-American state EMS director. She also was the first emergency medicine physician to complete the Homeland Security Executive Leaders Program, and the first woman to receive the American Academy of Emergency Medicine's James Keane Leadership Award. A practicing physician at Akron General Medical Center and an assistant professor of emergency medicine at Northeast Ohio Medical University, she also serves in a multitude of roles with national agencies.

Cunningham, who earned a bachelor's degree from Case Western Reserve University and a medical degree from the University of Cincinnati, says her love of learning began in **Maple Heights City Schools**.

"When I was 10 or 11 years old, I decided that I wanted to compete in a regional Math Olympiad competition using Boolean algebra as my selected topic. No one batted an eye or tried to convince me to select a less abstract topic. My teachers encouraged my research by showering me with additional resources. I won a medal in the Olympiad and was allowed to repeat my presentation to my fellow classmates the following week. The sky was the limit. I was also blessed with parents who deeply valued education and taught me infinite life lessons, except how to say or think, 'I can't.'"

Education inspiration

"When I was in first grade, Mr. **Elmer Bieler**, our band director, had a bust of a man on his desk. He told us that he would give \$1 to the first student who figured out the identity of this man and what had made him famous. I, along with my fellow band members, spent hours studying every classical composer on the planet trying to identify this man. ... On the last day of band practice before we were to become junior high students ... we asked Mr. Bieler, (who) responded, 'He's Old Grand-Dad.' I ... asked my father who Old Grand-Dad was, he opened up a magazine and showed me the image of the identical bust on Mr. Bieler's desk ... in an ad for bourbon!

"Nevertheless, this was a brilliant ploy by Mr. Bieler. For the price of a dollar and his bust of Old Grand-Dad, we gained more knowledge about classical composers and music than most adults. More importantly, we learned the value of reading and researching topics that may lie outside one's professional realm and becoming a well-rounded individual."

Giving back

"For my high school alma mater, I wanted to offer my thanks to the three teachers I feel have made a significant impact that has facilitated success in my career ... **Vincent Tate**, my physics teacher ... **Sigmund Peck**, an English teacher ... (and) **Al Melfi**, my marching and jazz band director. ... I created the first endowed Maple Education Foundation scholarship of perpetuity, the Melfi-Peck-Tate scholarship." ■



"I have two personal quotes, both of which are actually displayed on plaques in my state EMS office. They certainly have served as my mantras for many years. They are: 'A giggle a day keeps the coroner away,' and 'Never rest your laurels at the feet of mediocrity.'"

“I appreciate growing up in a small town and attending public school. It is important to understand different viewpoints and circumstances while at the same time valuing community.”

John A. Carey Jr.

Ohio Board of Regents chancellor

Chancellor gladly carries on the legacy of public education

John A. Carey Jr. is an experienced lawmaker and now chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents. But, he also calls himself an advocate of public education.

“I am a fifth-generation (**Wellston City’s**) Wellston High School graduate and my sons (**Justin** and **Jordan**) will be the sixth generation,” Carey said. “I am committed to public schools.”

After graduating from Wellston High School in 1977, Carey became the first in his family to graduate from college when he received a degree in political science from Ohio University. He went on to become an aide to U.S. Rep. **Clarence E. Miller**, a Lancaster Republican, and then mayor in his hometown of Wellston from 1988 to 1994.



He later served nine years in the Ohio House of Representatives and eight years in the Ohio Senate. He is one of the few legislators in history to serve as chairman of both the House Finance and Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance and Financial Institutions Committee.

As a legislator, Carey’s focus on education and job creation led to numerous awards from organizations such as the Ohio Development Association, Ohio Bankers League, National Federation of Independent Businesses and Ohio University School of Osteopathic Medicine.

Before becoming Ohio Board of Regents chancellor in April 2013, Carey served as assistant to the president for government relations and strategic initiatives at Shawnee State University in Portsmouth. He was born in Chillicothe and lives in Wellston with his wife, **Lynley**, and two sons.

Education inspiration

“When I was in the eighth grade at Wellston City’s Coalton School, **Grace Keel** had the class perform a short play I had written upon returning to class after reading to second-graders. It gave me a lot of confidence in my writing ability. **Brian Lintala** was my government teacher in high school. He challenged me and fostered my interest in public service. The content and rigor was excellent.”

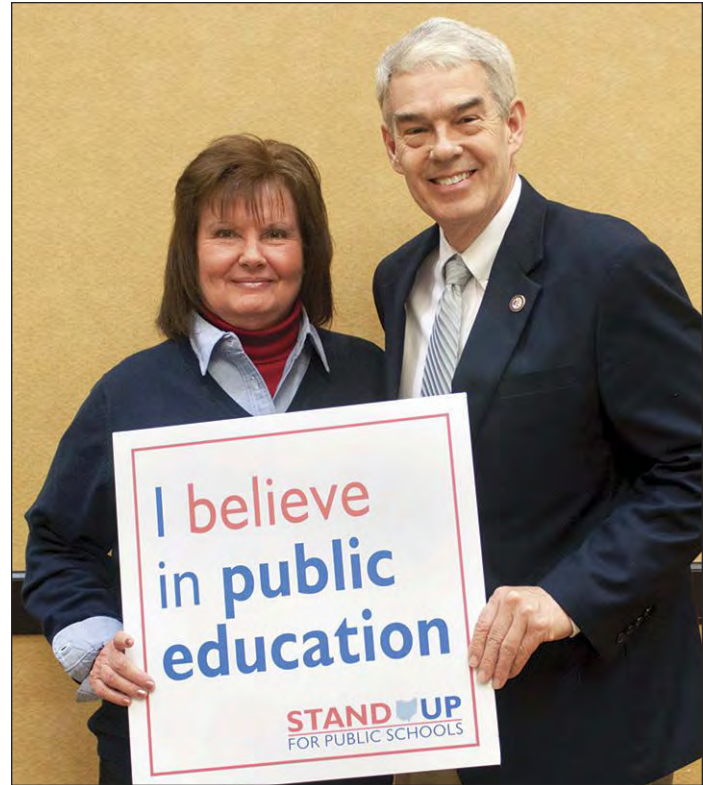
Giving back

“As a legislator for 17 years, I worked very hard to represent the best interest of students in public schools. As chancellor, I am working with the state superintendent to give students the best opportunity to learn and (make the transition) to postsecondary education a seamless experience. As the husband of a public school teacher and the father of two sons, one of which is graduating from Wellston High School this year, I value the public education experience.” ■

Learning and networking at 2014 BLI

► OSBA President Susie Lawson, Tri-County ESC and Wayne County Schools Career Center, and Closing Luncheon speaker Sen. Randy Gardner (R-Bowling Green) show their support for public schools.

▼ Mark Ewing, Batavia Local (Clermont) and Great Oaks ITCD, meets with OSBA Director of School Board Services Kathy LaSota during the Board Leadership Institute (BLI).



▲ Kimberly M. Brown, Berkshire Local (Geauga), makes a point during a BLI session.

► Donna J. Myers, Northwestern Local (Clark), left, speaks with Ohio Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor following Taylor's speech during the Friday luncheon. Visit OSBA's Flickr page at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/35551> to view more photos from BLI.





◀ Attendees greet each other during Dr. Mike Thomson's Opening General Session presentation.

◀◀ Attendees enjoy networking breaks between breakout sessions.

▼ Ruth M. Nau, Noble Local (Noble), greets Opening General Session keynote speaker Dr. Mike Thomson.

▼▼ OSBA Sales Associate Debbie Burda, right, helps an attendee at the on-site OSBA Bookstore.



◀ Standing up for public schools are, from left, Hazel G. Rountree, Dayton City; William Spahr, Xenia Community City and Greene County Career Center; and Sue Steele, Gosben Local (Clermont) and Great Oaks ITCD. The signs are part of OSBA's statewide campaign to highlight the success of public education. Learn more at www.standupforOHpublicschools.org.

2014 Treasurers' Clinics

*Sharing knowledge, developing solutions
and growing professionally*

- ◆ *Designed for treasurers, business managers, board members, administrators and treasurer's office personnel*
- ◆ *Six convenient locations across Ohio*
- ◆ *Fulfill local and state professional development needs, including CPE and auditor of state in-service credits*

Choose the date and location that best fits your schedule:

Friday, Sept. 5	Northeast Ohio Medical University, Rootstown
Friday, Sept. 26	Embassy Suites, Columbus
Tuesday, Sept. 30	Hilton Garden Inn, Perrysburg
Thursday, Oct. 2	Hilton Garden Inn Dayton South, Miamisburg
Friday, Oct. 3	Kent State University at Tuscarawas, New Philadelphia
Tuesday, Oct. 7	Ohio University Inn and Conference Center, Athens

Plan now to attend the 2014 OSBA Treasurers' Clinics to be held in six locations around the state. These clinics provide the most current information on school district fiscal issues. Treasurers, business managers, board members, administrators and treasurer's office personnel are all encouraged to attend.

The Treasurers' Clinics offer timely information on a multitude of topics relevant to all members of a district's management team. Attendees also can fulfill their local and state professional development needs, including in-service, LPDC and continuing professional education credits.

Registration and continental breakfast begin at 8 a.m. The fee is \$150, which includes registration, continental breakfast, lunch and materials. You can register by contacting OSBA Senior Events Manager **Laurie Miller** at (614) 540-4000; (800) 589-OSBA; or Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org.