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Capital Conference 2014 • Volume 58, Issue 6

# JOURNAL

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OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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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](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/journal).

*OSBA Journal* (ISSN 0893-5289) is published bimonthly by the Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 N. High St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43235-6481. Periodicals postage paid at Columbus, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send address changes to *OSBA Journal*, Attn: Mailroom, Ohio School Boards Association, 8050 N. High St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43235-6481.

Comments and articles should be sent to the editor at the above address or email [cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org). The views expressed in articles appearing in *OSBA Journal* are those of writers and do not necessarily represent OSBA policies or positions.

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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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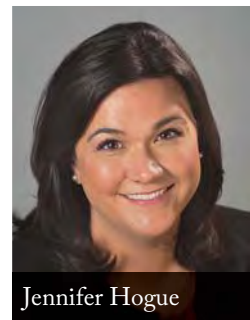
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# 'Cathedral thinkers' shape the future

*Richard Lewis, CAE, executive director*

One day a traveller saw three stonecutters working in a quarry, each cutting a block of stone. Interested in their endeavor, he asked the first stonecutter what he was doing.

"I am making a living," he curtly replied. The second stonecutter, anticipating the question, kept hammering and said, "I am cutting a stone!" Still no wiser, the traveller asked the third stonecutter about his task. He seemed to be the happiest of the three and when asked about his job replied, "I am building a cathedral."

Whether you're simply earning a living, doing your best job or leaving a legacy, there is great value in thinking positively and seeing the bigger picture. We call this "cathedral thinking."

The concept of cathedral thinking stretches back to medieval times. Those who designed the great churches and castles of the day labored to create and construct something they would not see come to fruition. Ohio school board members are cathedral thinkers, understanding that a legacy lives on, whether in the stone of a cathedral or the success of schoolchildren.

Public schools are crucial to an informed, democratic society and the American way of life. You, as members of local school boards, are the nation's pre-eminent expression of grassroots democracy. You help provide the educational foundation that each and every child needs to go on to college and careers — and succeed in life.

Year after year, public schools across

Ohio are among the best in the country, earning national recognition, landing on prestigious awards lists and showcasing models of efficiency and achievement. Far too often schools draw attention for their challenges, not their successes. While these challenges are substantial — poverty, funding uncertainties and ever-changing mandates — it is clear Ohio public schools are thriving.

Under your leadership, public education has made a difference in millions of lives. Yet, as the attacks grow more ferocious, policymakers and many in the media selectively ignore good news such as:

- more Ohio students met or exceeded the SAT College and Career Readiness benchmark — 62.7% of them, compared to 39.1% nationwide;
- the number of minority students taking the SAT increased;
- students made gains in ACT participation and success, particularly those from low-income and minority populations;
- 16% of Ohio 11th- and 12th-graders took an Advanced Placement exam, up from 8.3% in 2004;
- the graduation rate is rising as urban school districts continue to improve;
- districts received more A's overall than any other grade on the new Ohio report cards.

The Ohio School Boards Association represents the collective work of nearly 3,500 school board members. Like the stonecutters, our united efforts have built a strong association that will serve public education for generations to

come. But to remain strong, we need you to be involved in our programs, governance and advocacy. Whatever we accomplish, we must do so as an alliance of more than 700 school boards working together.

But like our stonecutters, we must do more than belong — we must immerse ourselves. We must do more than believe — we must forge a shared vision with everyone we touch. And in the end, we must do more than hope because it takes labor and hard work. You are leading the way for the great things happening in public education and OSBA is proud to play a role in many of those successes. Although enormous challenges loom in the coming year, working together we will make a difference and shape the future of public education.

Your legislative platform works. In 2014, it equipped your Federal Relations Network to carry your concerns to Washington, D.C. It guided the OSBA Board Member Cabinet in conveying school boards' challenges to the state superintendent of public instruction. It directed your legislative liaisons and lobbyists as they worked for positive outcomes at the Ohio Statehouse. Whether the issue was days to hours, calamity days, Common Core, funding formula changes, graduation requirements or myriad other issues, OSBA amplified the voice of its members.

OSBA's Legal Assistance Fund complemented this advocacy, positively influencing school litigation ranging from access to public records, employee termination and construction to student

records, labor issues and school finance.

The influence of your staff and association committees, along with hundreds of engaged school board members, was critical. You spoke up for public education, and your messages were heard. We are indeed the voice of public education.



*Although school board members may not see the end result, they are giving students the tools needed to build a strong future.*

Your voice is being greatly expanded with OSBA's statewide campaign — Stand Up for Public Schools. The campaign's mission is to raise awareness of the value and successes of Ohio public schools and the importance of locally elected school boards. We want to make state, community and business leaders aware of how effective their public schools really are. We want those without children in school to see that public education works. And we want to remind those with children in our schools what a vital resource these institutions are. Visit [www.standupforOHpublicschools.org](http://www.standupforOHpublicschools.org) to learn how you can stand up for Ohio's public schools.

However advanced our schools' achievements, however impressive our association's accomplishments, without collaboration, our mission and passion for public education is diminished. Beyond our role as a conduit for collaboration among school districts, OSBA must promote organizational cooperation.

We are represented on scores of committees around the state, promoting the voice of local school board members. We have participated in vital collaborations with the business community and higher education. We

have increased our visibility with the news media. We have become even more engaged and influential with the National School Boards Association, contributing to association's publications "The School Board of Tomorrow" and "The New Key Work of School Boards."

Recognizing the tough financial times school districts face, OSBA strives to increase the membership value of your dues. Your association staff constantly explores new member services, internal programs and models of effectiveness and efficiency. We expanded our transportation consulting services in 2014. We also unveiled a very affordable survey service as an alternative to the high-priced commercial surveys that only a small percentage of our members can afford.

Any list of highlights can obscure day-to-day accomplishments. In 2014, your staff attorneys continued to answer your legal questions. Your consultants traveled across Ohio to share their expertise in strategic planning, executive searches, labor relations, communication, policy development, transportation and more. Communication staff provided a wealth of information through a variety of high-quality electronic and print publications. In collaboration with Ohio's ESCs, OSBA delivered a record amount of leadership training. OSBA provided webinars and in-person professional development on myriad topics — all to help you better your schools.

It is critical to recognize and thank our longtime partners, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) and the Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO), for their continued collaboration and support. Our partnerships with BASA and OASBO created an alternative for electricity purchasing that saved our members more than \$12 million in the last year alone. Our collaboration has strategically grown to include the Ohio Schools Council, and our combined pools have increased savings across the state.

In the ever-changing field of workers' compensation, one thing is certain — OSBA makes a difference. We have partnered with BASA, OASBO and the Ohio Library Council on a statewide pooling program called SchoolComp — Ohio's largest and most stable workers' compensation pool. Projected savings of \$3.7 million in 2015 will bring SchoolComp's estimated savings to nearly \$28 million — far surpassing all other competing programs.

The OSBA Board of Trustees and the association's many other committees work very hard, often behind the scenes. Beyond their local board work, they travel throughout Ohio devoting many evenings and weekends on behalf of you and your schools. They have earned your support and appreciation. Your association officers deserve a special salute. **Susie Lawson, Tri-County ESC and Wayne County Schools Career Center; Sharon E. Manson, Waverly City and Pike County Career Technology Center; and Ed Penrod, Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking) and Tri-County Career Center**, have done an outstanding job leading OSBA in 2014. You don't see their sacrifice of time, miles and personal life, but they have labored tirelessly, and I thank them.

I have enormous pride in the talented and dedicated OSBA staff. They believe in you and what you are doing. They are proud to serve Ohio's school board members and constantly strive to improve that service.

OSBA looks forward to building on our strengths and embracing opportunities. Together, as cathedral thinkers, we will provide leadership for learning and build a public education for future generations. When history looks back on 2014, it may never fully understand the challenges you faced. But future board members will certainly benefit from the accomplishments of more than 700 united boards of education dedicated to creating an even stronger association and preserving public education. ■

# Drive your district toward success

*Steve Horton, school board services consultant*



On one of my many road trips, I glanced over at the man driving in the lane next to me. There he was, adeptly texting on his phone, his thumb working furiously at typing his message.

For the short time I was next to him, I noticed that he was quite good at multitasking. He maintained his speed and never swerved from his lane. I appreciated that his task was successfully completed.

That experience caused me to think about the number of times I have been guilty of the same indiscretion. It is probably true that the more successful I am at the practice, the more likely I am to do it — until I am unsuccessful. Then it's too late.

The advantages of doing both activities simultaneously are clear in our fast-paced, I-need-to-get-this-done life. In fact, it is advantageous enough that we risk everything to do it. So the dangerous practice becomes a habit,

even a way of life. Enough so that it actually takes discipline to not read the text and respond.

OK, what does this have to do with school board work? While I was thinking about texting and driving, I also had the thought that it is not unlike the way we often approach board work. It is true that much of the work we do is “in the moment” and that is unavoidable.

But it also is true that simply working day to day or month to month can become a way of governing. Just like the guy texting and driving, your attention is diverted away from what is most important, which is where you are going and what is in front of you. If you are not looking, there is a very good chance something bad will happen. It might be relatively minor, or it might be catastrophic.

So with school board work, how do you break the metaphoric habit of texting and driving? Well, the answer is

planning and evaluating.

As a board, take the time spent worrying about the daily stuff and apply it to a bigger, down-the-road vision. Take time to really examine the future financial health of the district and the state report card. Work to understand what is successful and what needs to be worked on. Spend time developing a real plan to make the good grades better and raise the grades that aren't so good. Work on keeping your eyes on the horizon, not on the phone in front of you.

Gee, it all sounds so easy. Well if it *was* easy, everyone would do it. It is not easy and perhaps the most challenging part is that the board is made up of five or seven different members.

The overarching question is always, “How do we all come to the table for a unified purpose?” That question will not be answered here, but I do believe a good place to start is to stop texting and driving — and start looking at what's on the horizon. ■

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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; or other topics customized to fit your needs.

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



# A look at accommodating transgender students

*Sara C. Clark, interim chief legal counsel*

The number of children who openly identify as transgender in U.S. public schools has increased. While districts across the country strive to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for transgender students who attend their schools, many struggle with how best to do that. While this is an ever-evolving area of the law, let's look at common issues and suggestions districts may want to consider when accommodating transgender students in their schools.

## General legal framework

At the federal level, there are no explicit legal protections for transgender students. Title IX addresses discrimination on the basis of sex, but does not specifically prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or gender expression. Title IX is starting to be invoked, however, to address bullying or harassment of transgender individuals as a form of sex discrimination (see "Bullying and harassment," page 8).

Seventeen states and the District of Columbia have laws that provide some sort of protection for individuals on the basis of gender identity or expression. Ohio is not one of the 17 states. However, even in states like Ohio where there is no statutory guidance on the rights of transgender students, districts are encouraged to educate themselves on the issues facing transgender students and begin the process of making decisions as to how those issues will be addressed if and when they arise.

## Common issues for school districts

**Privacy** — Communications and records that are maintained by the district and relate to a student's preferred gender

identity are personally identifiable information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and should not be disclosed without an eligible student or parent/guardian's consent. In some cases, a student may want school staff and students to know, and in other cases, the student may not want this information to be widely known. School staff should take care to follow the student's wishes and not inadvertently disclose information that is intended to be kept private or protected from disclosure.

*Transgender issues are widely misunderstood and can lead to an unwarranted fear on the part of the school community.*

**Official student records** — Frequently, transgender students will change their name to one that more closely aligns with their gender identity. The question then becomes whether the district is required to change the student's name in education records and other documents the district maintains.

Under FERPA, students are permitted to review their educational records and change "inaccurate" information. In 1991, the Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) issued guidance on the issue of allowing transgender alumni to change their name or gender on district records. The compliance office found that FERPA neither prevents

nor compels the district to change the official record because there was no "inaccuracy" in the record. Instead, FPCO suggested that the decision of whether to amend the students' education records was a "substantive decision" that was best left to districts.

In Ohio, there is a legal obligation to maintain true and accurate records for any person subject to the district's personal information system, which would include students. As a result, districts appear to be required under state law to use the student's legal sex, legal name and appropriate corresponding pronouns (for example, he or she) on their official district records. However, districts could distinguish between official records and day-to-day references to the student. For example, teachers, staff and classmates could use a student's chosen name and preferred pronoun in daily use for such things as school IDs, class rosters and other items.

**Restrooms** — One of the most common issues that a district faces is which restroom facility a transgender student will be permitted to use. The issue of bathroom selection recently was the subject of litigation for a school district in Maine. In the recent case of *Doe v. RSU 26*, Me.S.Ct. No. 12-582 (Jan. 30, 2014), the Maine Supreme Judicial Court was asked to consider if a Maine school discriminated against a transgender girl when it permitted her to use a unisex, non-communal bathroom, but denied her access to the communal girls' bathroom out of concern for her well-being. The court, relying on language in the Maine Human Rights Act that prohibited discrimination on



the basis of a person's gender identity or expression, found that the district had engaged in discrimination by denying the student use of the girls' restroom facilities and treating her differently than her peers due to her transgender status.

In 2013, the Colorado Department of Regulatory Affairs Division of Civil Rights found that an elementary school had violated Colorado state law by refusing to provide a transgender girl access to a bathroom consistent with her gender identity. The ruling rejected the school's argument that by providing the student with access to both the boys' and gender-neutral bathroom, it had satisfied its obligation to provide services to the student. The opinion held that "(r)elegating the (student) to a set of restrooms which no other student is likely to use, even if permitted to do so, would prove disruptive to her learning environment and overtly demonstrate her separateness from the other students. Despite having access to other restrooms, by not permitting the (student) to use the girls' restroom, the (district) creates an environment rife with harassment and inapposite to a nurturing school atmosphere."

These two decisions applied and relied on state-specific statutes that are not applicable in Ohio. However, the issue of bathroom selection is still a problem for Ohio's transgender students. Transgender support organizations consistently recommend transgender students be allowed to use the restroom that corresponds to their gender identity, and many districts have successfully implemented such a plan. Other schools have offered an accessible all-gender single stall restroom for use by any student who desires additional privacy, regardless of the underlying reason. The issue requires districts to consider the needs of their transgender students while also doing their best to ensure the safety and comfort of all students.

**Transgender athletes** — In November, the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) released a policy on transgender student participation in

interscholastic sports. Under its policy, a transgender female who is taking medically prescribed hormone treatment related to gender transition may *participate* on a boy's team at any time. However, before a transgender female may *compete* in a girl's sport or on a girl's team, the transgender female must either have completed a minimum of one year of hormone treatment related to gender transition or demonstrate to the OHSAA commissioner's office by way of sound medical evidence that she does not possess physical or physiological advantages over genetic females of the same age group.

A transgender male who has not yet begun medically prescribed testosterone treatment for purposes of gender transition may compete on a boy's team. If, however, the transgender male student athlete is taking medically prescribed testosterone treatment, medical evidence must be submitted to the OHSAA commissioner's office that certifies that the muscle mass developed as a result of this testosterone treatment does not exceed the muscle mass that is typical of an adolescent genetic boy; the student has not started any hormone treatment (or that the testosterone treatment does not cause hormone levels to exceed normal levels); and the student's hormone levels are monitored by a licensed physician every three to six months. A transgender student may seek review of his or her eligibility for participation through an appeal procedure set forth in the OHSAA policy. A copy of the policy is available online at [www.ohsaa.org/eligibility/transgenderpolicy.pdf](http://www.ohsaa.org/eligibility/transgenderpolicy.pdf).

**Dress codes** — Districts that have established dress codes also may question a transgender student's right to dress in accordance with his or her gender identity. Interestingly, one of the leading cases in this area was decided not on the basis of state laws providing protection for gender identity, but rather under more traditional theories.

In Massachusetts, a transgender female student began to express her female

gender identity by wearing girls' clothing and accessories. The district informed the student that she would not be permitted to attend school if she continued to wear female clothing. The student sued the district, alleging a violation of her right to freedom of expression. The court agreed with the student and determined that the student's dress constituted symbolic speech that was protected under the First Amendment (*Doe v. Yunitis*).

Districts may accommodate transgender students by allowing them to dress in accordance with their asserted gender identity, consistent with any applicable requirements in the dress code or school

### Transgender terminology

Although the definitions vary in statutes, case law and policies across the country, the National Center for Transgender Equality offers the following definitions for frequently used transgender terminology:

- **Gender identity** — An individual's internal sense of being male or female. Since gender identity is an emotional, rather than a physical characteristic, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.
- **Transgender person** — Refers to a person whose gender identity does not match his or her assigned sex at birth. A person's status as transgender does not depend on whether that person has undergone (or intends to undergo) any medical treatment for gender reassignment.
- **Transgender female** — A person whose assigned sex at birth is male, but identifies and lives as a female.
- **Transgender male** — A person whose assigned sex at birth is female, but identifies and lives as a male.
- **Cisgender** — A person whose gender identity is the same as his or her assigned sex at birth.

rules. If the district has a dress code, it's important that the dress code policies are enforced fairly and consistently. Districts should be cautious about requiring students to choose between "male" and "female" clothing.

Bullying and harassment — Ohio's anti-bullying law, Section 3313.666 of the Ohio Revised Code, requires schools to have policies in place to prevent and punish bullying and harassment. This would include bullying or harassing behavior directed at a person's gender identity. School staff should be sensitive to the fact that transgender students may be at higher risk for being bullied or harassed.

There is relatively little case law addressing claims of harassment by transgender students. However, at the federal level, the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) recently indicated it may view harassment on the basis of gender identity as a form of sex discrimination that is prohibited under Title IX. In April 2014, OCR issued a Q&A document that specifically included transgender students as among those protected by Title IX.

In July 2014, OCR entered into a resolution agreement with the Arcadia

Unified School District in California after a student alleged that the district violated Title IX when it refused to allow a transgender male student access to the boys' restrooms and locker rooms, as well as boys' accommodations during an overnight trip. Under the resolution agreement, the district agreed, among other things, to provide the student with access to male-designated, sex-specific facilities both at school and at school-sponsored events; to treat the student as a male; and to keep school records with the student's birth name and assigned sex at birth confidential. The agreement seems to speak to OCR's willingness to bring gender identity under the umbrella of sex discrimination.

### A suggested approach

Transgender issues are widely misunderstood and often can lead to an unwarranted fear on the part of school administrators, board members and the school community. As an initial step, districts should provide training to students, parents, administrators, board members, teachers and the community about what gender identity is and what it means to be a transgender student.

Once a transgender student contacts the district, a meeting should be scheduled to discuss the student's particular

circumstances and needs. The district should consider each student's needs and concerns separately. Each transgender student is unique with different needs, and an accommodation that works for one student cannot simply be assumed to work for another. In addition to the student, parent/guardian and building administrator, other participants who can assist in developing a plan for that student may include guidance counselors, teachers and other school staff as well as possible outside providers. In light of the complexity of the issues, legal counsel also should be consulted initially and prior to the implementation of any plans.

A student's plan will not anticipate every possible situation that may occur, so it's important to remain flexible and communicate regularly with transgender students and their families. Ideally, the mutual goals of fostering a learning environment that is safe and assisting in the educational and social integration of the transgender student will be achieved. ■

*"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.*



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# Organizational leadership for tomorrow's schools

Learn what it takes to be an effective school board member during the 2015 Board Leadership Institute. This two-day workshop, planned for May 1–2, is designed specifically for board members and will focus on numerous topics. Participants will have the opportunity to attend the opening general session, multiple breakout sessions and closing luncheon.

Plan now to take advantage of this outstanding learning event. An agenda will be posted on the OSBA website in February.

## Registration and housing

The cost to attend is \$245. Register online at [www.ohioschoolboards.org](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org) or contact **Laurie Miller**, senior events manager, at (614) 540-4000 or email [Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org)

Stay at the Hilton Columbus/Polaris for \$127 per night if booked by April 7. Call (614) 885-1600 and mention OSBA to reserve a room.



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*Transportation decisions*

# Keeping student busing needs in perspective

*Pete Japikse, deputy director of management services*

As public school districts manage financial resources, a regular topic of conversation is student transportation. The discussion typically deals with the cost of bus service, whether the district will provide high school bus service and how far away children must live to be eligible to ride the bus. All of this ultimately is debated in this context: “What can we afford?” While the costs associated with student transportation are high, the investment has a powerful impact on your schools and community.

Last year, the average cost to operate a

bus for the entire school year was just under \$50,000. The cost to buy a new bus is now more than \$80,000, and to add insult to high cost, districts are continuing to find it difficult to keep enough qualified bus drivers on staff to operate the school buses.

School decisions about running buses also have a community impact. Each school bus replaces an average of 35 cars on the roads, according to national studies. When bus service is eliminated for high school students, the immediate result is an increase in the number of cars in use — both on the roads and in school parking lots. With elementary schools, car use increases when eligibility limits are changed and bus ridership is decreased.

In both cases, congestion worsens on roads and school property and fuel consumption increases in the community.

To quantify that cost, based on current fuel prices, the 35 cars it would take to replace one bus would consume \$23,000 in fuel in one year. Annual fuel expenses for the bus would be just \$7,000.

Another benefit of the school bus is the convenience it provides families. In many homes, parents work and have little or no say in what time they start and end work. As a result, there are many children who have no way to get to school and back other than a school bus.

All of these benefits notwithstanding, the most significant advantage of school transportation is passenger safety. This is no accident; creating safe school transportation has been a concerted effort on many fronts. There is extensive engineering that goes into school bus

design, districts perform exhaustive maintenance to keep buses running, drivers are dedicated and participate in advanced training and school district administrative teams continue to provide excellent management within the parameters of Ohio and federal law. Is this inexpensive? Most definitely not, but then again, this is not UPS or FedEx — the packages that ride in school buses all have a name, a family and are someone’s child.

We can quantify the safety record of school buses several different ways. The most significant report on this was published by the Transportation Research Board (TRB), a division of the National Research Council, which serves the National Academy of Sciences. In its 2002 report — “The Relative Risks of School Travel” — TRB studied and analyzed the risks of various modes of transportation for schoolchildren.

The national study found that each year, approximately 800 school-age children are killed in motor vehicle crashes during normal school travel hours. Of these 800, 2% are school bus-related — five school bus passengers and 15 pedestrians. The other 98% of school-age deaths are attributed to pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists or riders in passenger vehicles. To be even more specific, a child riding in a car is 20 times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than one riding in a school bus. If a teenager is driving a car, a child is 50 times more likely to be in a fatal crash than if he or she were on a school bus.

Though the study was completed in 2002, continued monitoring of annual

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fatal accident statistics by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has found the safety ratios continue to be similar.

The American Academy of Pediatricians (AAP) released a study in 2007 that reported on the number of injuries that occur annually on school buses. The study found 152,250 injuries occurred on school buses that year, and researchers' conjecture was that this was a direct result of the lack of seat belts. By comparison, another AAP study reported that 218,851 playground-related injuries were treated in emergency departments each year, with 15 deaths related to playground injuries.

Nationwide, more than 23 million students are transported in school buses each day. Ohio transports more than 700,000 students in a fleet of 15,000 school buses driving 1 million miles per day. The safety record of school buses is second to none.

That said, when buses travel 1 million miles each day, accidents are inevitable. In fact, there are usually between 1,500 and 1,800 school bus crashes reported annually throughout Ohio.

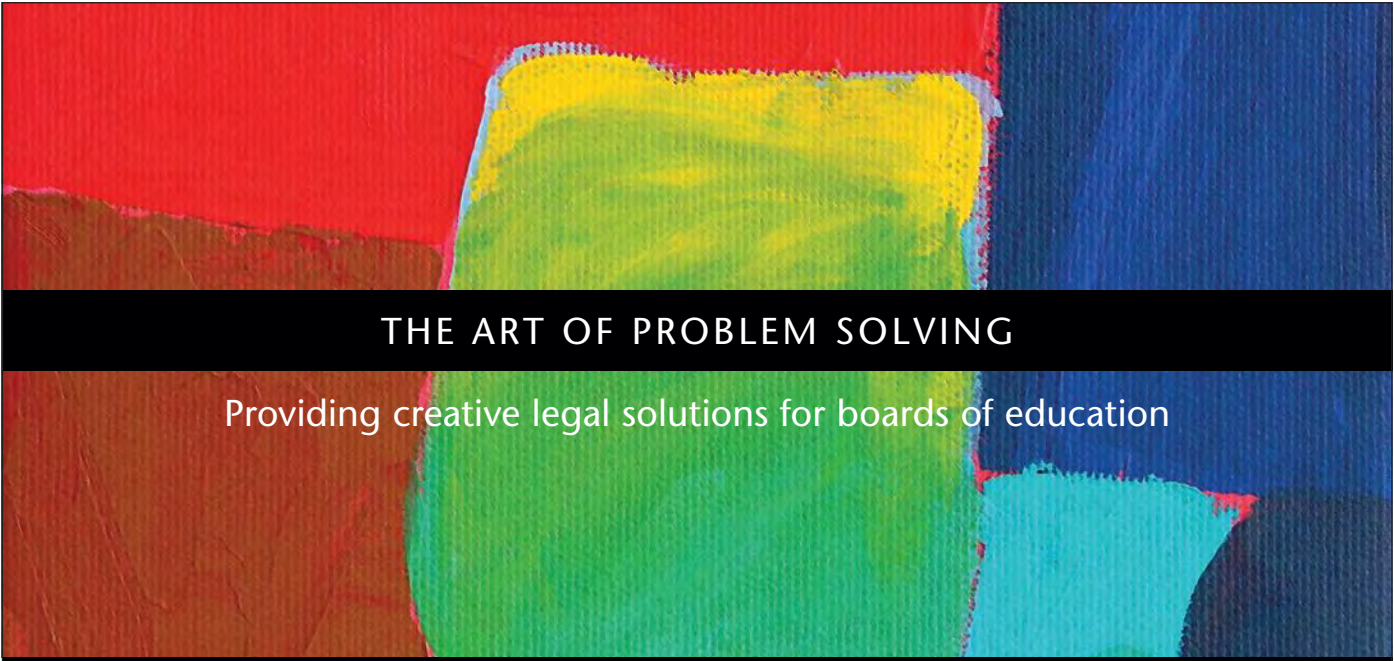
Fortunately, well-designed vehicles and highly skilled drivers have been successful in keeping students safe. Sadly, there is always the potential of a tragedy, and school districts must remain vigilant and take every precaution possible to mitigate that possibility.

We periodically see initiatives to require seat belts on large school buses. (They already are included on small buses.) Repeated studies by many different engineering groups, including government agencies, have found that the current design of school buses, including high-back seats, excellent padding and heavy construction of the vehicle, continues to successfully protect children. Most significantly, the studies have found that even if seat

belts were mandated on every school bus throughout the country, it would be difficult to ensure proper use and the potential increase in safety would be nearly nonexistent.

In addition, adding seat belts to all school buses would be costly and make it even more difficult for districts to replace aging buses. If that cost would increase the safety of our students, certainly there would be no argument; however, with no benefits to be gained, the expense is questionable. The studies aside, practical experience in states that have required passenger restraints have shown that there is no measureable increase in safety to students when seat belts are required.

The bottom line is that for many reasons, the yellow school bus remains the single best way for a child to go to school. School transportation is indeed a strong investment in our children's futures. ■



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*Unanswered questions*

# What will the election results mean to schools?

*Jennifer Hogue, lobbyist*

I don't know about you, but I am glad the elections are over and the votes have been counted. I have had enough robo-calls and campaign commercials to last me until at least the next election cycle. Now that the votes have been cast, folks around Capitol Square are speculating about what this all means for those who care passionately about public education, and what we can expect next year.

## Statewide results

There were no changes in the statewide offices in this election. Gov. **John Kasich**, Lt. Governor **Mary Taylor**, Attorney General **Mike DeWine**, Secretary of State **Jon Husted**, State Treasurer **Josh Mandel** and Auditor of State **Dave Yost** — all Republicans — were re-elected to four-year terms.

Voter turnout was low this year, especially among Democratic voters.

There were 857,000 fewer ballots cast this year when compared to the gubernatorial election in 2010. When compared with the presidential election just two years ago, Ohio saw 2.5 million fewer ballots cast in this election.

Probably the most interesting statistic being tossed around Capitol Square is that 4,650 more votes were cast in the attorney general's race than in the governor's race. People who closely follow Ohio election history believe this is the first time that a down-ticket race has seen more votes than the race at the top.

Also of note is that **Anita Rios**, Green Party candidate for governor, received 3.3% of the vote in that race. This qualifies the Green Party for automatic ballot access as a minor party in the state.

## Ohio House

Ohio House Republicans were able to

pick up five seats during the November election. They will hold a 65-34 majority in the 131st General Assembly. Many have cautioned that this could be “too much of a good thing” for the Republicans. With a small majority, it is much easier for leadership to keep its caucus together on a vote, but when there is a larger majority, members wise up to the fact that more people can stray from party lines when casting a vote. This can lead to factions developing within the majority party, and makes the speaker's job of garnering enough votes to get a bill passed much harder.

Next year, the task of pulling together the House Republican Caucus will fall to Speaker-elect Rep. **Cliff Rosenberger** (R-Clarksville). While Rosenberger has served two terms in the Ohio House, his leadership style is not yet widely known. Some past speakers led by



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tightly controlling the policy positions of the caucus and unilaterally deciding which legislation would make its way through the process. Other speakers have allowed committee chairs and committee members to make those decisions collaboratively.

No matter his leadership style, many are predicting that Rosenberger will have to deal with a faction of conservative members within the House Republican Caucus that could make it challenging to get things done. The newly elected batch of Republican House members is expected to be even more conservative than those currently serving in the chamber. This could prove quite interesting in the coming year, and will certainly keep those of us who advocate for public education on our toes.

**Ohio Senate**

When compared with the House, the Ohio Senate is the picture of stability. The Senate saw no changes to its margins this election cycle. The

Republicans will continue to hold the majority of the chamber, 23-10. Both Senate President **Keith Faber** (R-Celina) and Minority Leader **Joe Schiavoni** (D-Boardman) will be returning in the 131st General Assembly and will continue leading their respective caucuses.

**State Board of Education**

The State Board of Education saw the election of three new members. These new members all support public education and will bring a unique and much-needed perspective to the conversation. State Rep. **Robert F. Hagan** (D-Youngstown) was elected to the open seat in District 8, which is being vacated by the term-limited **Deborah Cain**. In District 5, **Brad W. Lamb** was defeated by **Roslyn Painter-Goffi**, a retired public school educator. **Pat Bruns**, also a retired public school educator, has been elected to fill the open seat in District 4, which is being vacated by President **Debe Terhar**, who chose not to run for re-election.

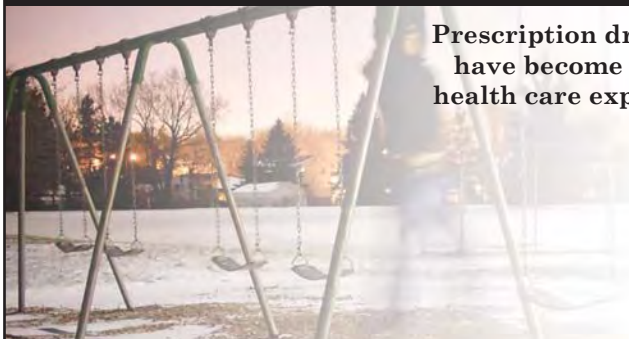
**Looking to next year**

Next year promises to be full of the unknown. The new legislative session will begin in January and the governor is expected to introduce his budget in early February.

The best thing you can do to prepare is to take the next few weeks to reconnect with those legislators and state school board members who were re-elected, and to build relationships with the newly elected members. Invite them to discuss issues at regular or special board meetings. Ask them to visit your schools. Show them special programs, have them meet with staff and share information about issues facing the students and schools in your community.

With a new biennial budget on the horizon, education stakeholders need to be ready to step up and express their views. We must be prepared to share with legislators how each decision will impact our schools and our students. ■

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# OSBA membership offers exceptional benefits

*Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator*

For nearly six decades, OSBA has been the *only* Ohio association working exclusively for school boards and their members. Although many things have changed over the years, OSBA's commitment to its members and public education has stood firm.

Through innovative services and programs, OSBA works hard to offer your school board the highest-quality solutions to meet your district's needs.

Member-driven and governed, OSBA is *your* association and has worked hard to earn a stellar reputation as a leader in the public education arena. Your board's membership in OSBA assures you will be provided with exemplary services that are second to none. The association continues to stand strong, with membership levels remaining at or near 100% of Ohio's public school districts.

Never has OSBA membership been more important. In today's unstable economy, school districts are working hard to keep costs down. That's why the association continually seeks innovative and cost-effective solutions for its members.

Your membership offers benefits you cannot find elsewhere. They include value-driven services ranging from policy development, administrative searches and risk management to training, labor relations and legal information. Dollar for dollar, OSBA membership is by far the best investment that public school districts can make — no other organization offers so much for so little.

OSBA has a professional and

dedicated staff that includes attorneys, lobbyists and specialists in policy, communication, boardmanship, management development and other areas of expertise. In exchange for their membership dues, association members receive a multitude of services. OSBA offers basic membership services that are complimentary, including: access to staff; legislative representation; research and information on school issues; online training; and publications, just to name a few.

*OSBA offers boards of education numerous services for free as part of their membership.*

In addition, fee-based services offer a variety of cost-effective solutions to help districts meet their ever-changing needs. Some fee-based and subscription services include: training; consultation in labor relations, policy development and executive searches; the Legal Assistance Fund; workers' compensation pooling; and subscription publications such as *Briefcase*, *Policy Development Quarterly* and *School Management News*. These services are priced below commercial market costs to provide savings to members.

Furthermore, OSBA selectively endorses outside providers to deliver products and services when the program features a special value or unique benefit to its members. These programs are offered to districts at a lower cost, just for being a

member of OSBA. Some offerings you'll find in the association's suite of endorsed programs include: an online payment program; paperless governance solution; electricity purchasing; and school safety and security software.

The following services are available to all OSBA member boards of education for free as part of their membership:

- accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) insurance — board members are covered by a \$100,000 AD&D insurance policy while on school business;
- All-Ohio School Board — outstanding board members, nominated by their peers and selected by OSBA region members, who represent excellent service in public education;
- amicus curiae briefs — OSBA legal briefs in support of a district's legal actions in conjunction with OSBA's Legal Assistance Fund;
- arbitrator referral service — extensive records of arbitrators and their decisions are maintained to help members select appropriate arbitrators;
- Award of Achievement — an honor given to board members who participate in OSBA workshops, volunteer for service and work on behalf of their own boards and the association;
- OSBA Black Caucus — exchanges information and develops programs to support minority school board members and their students and districts;
- board-superintendent, board-treasurer relations — experienced staff members work with boards of education to improve their



- relationships with superintendents and treasurers;
- brochures — a wide variety of informational literature is distributed to members;
- consultants — access to OSBA experts in labor relations, policy development, legal issues and executive searches;
- Education Management Team — direct communication with the leaders of statewide associations representing public education management organizations;
- “Facts in a Flash” — an electronic legislative newsletter with the latest updates;
- fact sheets and frequently asked questions — fact sheets on a variety of subjects are available on the association website outlining common questions and topics ranging from legal, policy, board development and more;
- Federal Relations Network — provides information, advocacy resources and connections to federal legislative representatives and activities;
- Kids PAC — a political action committee for school board members;
- legal consultation — staff lawyers who have responded to thousands of calls provide information about state and federal regulations, statutes and court decisions;
- legislative directory — a brochure listing elected state and federal representatives and their contact information;
- legislative representation — OSBA’s advocacy team represents members at the state and federal levels, analyzes legislative proposals, drafts amendments and provides testimony and input to legislative and agency deliberations;
- liaison activities — OSBA serves as its members’ liaison to the National School Boards Association; State Board of Education; Ohio Department of Education; State Employment Relations Board; state auditor’s office; county developmental disabilities boards;

- colleges and universities; Coalition of Educational Organizations; School Funding Cooperative; Public Employee Risk Reduction Advisory Committee; and other associations;
- OSBA BillTracker — an online resource that enables members to track legislation as it moves through the Ohio Statehouse;
- OSBA *Journal* — a bimonthly magazine covering OSBA activities and featuring innovative articles and reports of direct interest to school board members and other public school educators;



*Groups such as the OSBA Black Caucus and Small School District Advisory Network ensure members’ diverse needs are at the forefront of OSBA activities.*

- OSBA website ([www.ohioschoolboards.org](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org)) — provides information, including association governance, the latest Ohio education news, legislative activities, frequently asked questions, in-service opportunities, executive searches, a members-only section and more;
- public relations consultation — advice on media, community and staff relations; publication production; and a Stand Up for Public Schools campaign to promote public education in Ohio;
- research reports — a resource library of student achievement; legal, legislative and labor negotiations information; levy results; and other current events as they occur;
- sample policy bank — information to help districts with their board policies;

- school management consultation — management development specialists offer advice on basic labor relations and human resources issues;
- School Board Recognition Month — a program that helps districts recognize their board members for the contributions they make to public education;
- Small School District Advisory Network — exchanges information and develops programs and policies concerning the educational needs of small school districts;
- strike crisis assistance — experts in negotiation, communication and technology are available to prepare district management teams for employee strikes;
- Student Achievement Leadership Team — OSBA’s initiative to focus board members’ attention on ways to improve student achievement; also sponsors the Student Achievement Fair at the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show;
- *Success* — a monthly publication on student achievement;
- *The Link* — a monthly publication for legislative liaisons;
- toll-free telephone line — call (800) 589-OSBA within Ohio;
- Urban School District Advisory Network — provides legislative advocacy, training, research and information on urban educational issues;
- webinars — provides members access to software to participate in online training.

With so many programs and services available to you and your district, the value of an OSBA membership repays the investment in dues many times over. Your district needs a partner for success and OSBA is ready to help you find balance in the ever-changing world of public education. No matter the circumstances, OSBA truly *is* working for you.

For more information on any of OSBA’s programs or services, contact the association at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA, or visit [www.ohioschoolboards.org](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org). ■



# ETPI helps guide districts through the tax policy maze

*Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator*

State-level public policy is complex and ever-changing, with major implications for school districts across Ohio. Fortunately, school districts have a partner in their corner to help them navigate the many challenging issues they face.

The Education Tax Policy Institute (ETPI) was created to

serve public education leaders by helping them understand how public policies impact their districts. How does ETPI do this? By providing valuable resources, including research, analysis and expertise on school funding, education policy, tax policy and other factors that affect schools.

Since its inception, ETPI has successfully delivered credible and insightful information to help policymakers and educators make informed decisions about public education policy. Initially founded to supply data to school districts on property tax issues, the organization has expanded to cover a variety of education funding and policy topics. Using the expertise of the Columbus-based consulting firm Howard Fleeter & Associates, this nonprofit research organization has earned a reputation as the premier school-funding and education public policy resource in Ohio.

ETPI benefits members by publishing timely studies, articles and reports for use by school districts, the media and the public. ETPI also provides the necessary expertise to respond quickly to legislative proposals and evaluate the long-term effects of existing law.

The organization plays a key role during the state budget process. It serves as the “go-to” group for policymakers and was instrumental in analyzing the state’s current biennial budget.

ETPI membership is open to any interested district or organization. Members are provided quarterly newsletters, briefings and special case studies related to tax issues and school funding in Ohio. ETPI is funded by financial support from its member organizations — including school districts — which enables it to conduct studies and analyze legislative proposals.

For more information about ETPI or to become a member, contact OSBA Senior Administrative Assistant of Legislative Services **Marcella Gonzalez** at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or [mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org), or visit the ETPI website at [www.etpi-ohio.org](http://www.etpi-ohio.org). ■



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# Will you stand up for Ohio public schools?

*Bryan Bullock, assistant editor*

People from across Ohio took time during the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show to show support for the association’s Stand Up for Public Schools campaign. Approximately 80 people had their photos taken at the conference with campaign signs touting the importance of public education.

If you missed the chance to have your photo taken, don’t worry — there are plenty of other ways to get involved with the campaign and advocate for Ohio public schools.

OSBA launched Stand Up for Public Schools last spring, in coordination with the National School Boards Association, to raise awareness about the importance of public education and locally elected boards of education.

Public schools across Ohio are among the best in the nation, but too often they receive attention for their challenges rather than their success. Stand Up for Public Schools encourages Ohioans to shine a light on all the good things taking place in their schools, including innovative instruction, outstanding student programs, exemplary staff

and extraordinary acts of citizenship, community service or compassion by students. Sharing these success stories helps define the true narrative about public education in Ohio: That schools are thriving and changing lives each day.

The campaign website, [www.standupforOHpublicschools.org](http://www.standupforOHpublicschools.org), features a number of resources to help you spread the word about the value of public schools, including sample speeches, letters to the editor and talking points. The website also includes images you can use on your personal social media accounts to show your support for public schools. You can even print off campaign signs with messages like “I believe in public education” and take your own photos with them. The Stand Up for Public Schools website features photos of hundreds of people holding the campaign signs. Several boards of education have taken group pictures with everyone holding a campaign sign.

The campaign website also features a section with a steady stream of success stories that highlight extraordinary public schools, students and graduates. School districts can use an online submission form on the website to submit stories,



*OSBA Capital Conference attendees show their support for public schools.*

photos and videos showing how Ohio public schools and students are making a difference.

Here are some recent success stories on the Stand Up for Public Schools website that you may have missed.

- **Little Miami Local (Warren), Cuyahoga Valley Career Center** and **Plain Local (Stark)** were the top three finishers in OSBA's 2014 student video contest (see "Little Miami wins top prize in student video contest" below).
- **Garfield Heights City** made deliveries to three community food pantries, donating more than 4,000 canned or nonperishable food items to help those in need this holiday season. Each of the district's five buildings and employees at the bus garage collected items for distribution. Students and staff were encouraged to help, and each building had adult leaders spearhead the efforts.
- Students at **Forest Hills Local's (Hamilton) Wilson Elementary School** reached beyond the stars with their solar system unit this school year. Through the use of Skype technology, an astronomer from Pasadena, Calif., served as a virtual guest instructor for students

with disabilities. Students participated in an experiment and learned about the constellations. Connecting students to field experts is one of the many ways the district empowers teachers and students to use technology in the classroom.

- **Lorain County JVSD** recently teamed up with the Lorain County Growth Partnership to host panel discussions with local company representatives for students interested in manufacturing careers. The objective of giving JVSD students access to local employers in a question-and-answer format was to share the benefits of a manufacturing career, introduce young talent to the high-tech and high-paying careers of the modern manufacturing industry and discuss the skills needed for these positions.

Visit the Stand Up for Public Schools website regularly for new success stories. OSBA is encouraging school districts to submit several success stories to the Stand Up for Public Schools website each month or whenever news arises. Visit [www.standupforOHpublicschools.org/success-stories](http://www.standupforOHpublicschools.org/success-stories) to view and submit stories, photos and videos. ■

## Little Miami wins top prize in student video contest

Little Miami Local's (Warren) Little Miami High School beat out 30 other entries from across the state to win OSBA's third annual student video contest. A panel of three media professionals judged the school district's video, titled "LMHS – Stand Up for Public Schools," to be the best of the best.

The group, led by Digital Media Arts Instructor Brian Shoff, included seniors Justin Coyle, Tanner Vernon, Kyle Hoerst and Mitchell Sellars.

"Video is the most complicated thing I teach and the hardest thing to learn," Shoff said. "There are so many variables – sound, equipment, actors and actresses, power supplies, video editing, time restrictions, color, flow, storyboard ... it goes on and on. This year, they were up to the challenge."

The 2014 contest drew the most entries ever – 31 videos were submitted by students showcasing how public schools make a difference. The contest is part of OSBA's "Stand Up for Public Schools" campaign, a statewide effort to highlight the importance of public education and locally elected school boards.

Little Miami, along with the contest's second- and third-place winners, were recognized at the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show in Columbus on Nov. 11. Cuyahoga Valley Career Center won second place and Plain Local (Stark) took home third-place honors. The three winning videos were shown during the second General Session at OSBA's 59th annual conference.



*Little Miami Local (Warren) students display the certificate they earned for winning OSBA's student video contest. They are, from left, Tanner Vernon, Mitchell Sellars, Kyle Hoerst and Justin Coyle.*

Contestants were asked to submit 90-second videos showing how their public school district or building is making a difference in students' lives and future success. The winning districts were awarded prizes for their video production programs.

The celebrity judging panel consisted of: Maria Durant, WSYX-TV/ WTTE-TV Columbus reporter/anchor; Hannah Sparling, *Zanesville Times Recorder* reporter; and Ken Stevens, WTVN-AM Columbus assistant news director.

To view the winning videos, go to [www.standupforOHpublicschools.org/student-video-contest](http://www.standupforOHpublicschools.org/student-video-contest). ■

# Dancing to a



# new tune

*Crystal Davis,  
editor*

## *New sessions, campaigns and events shake up the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show*

Each year, there's so much to see and do at the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show that it may make you want to dance.

That's just what school board member **Gail Requardt, East Muskingum Local (Muskingum)** and **Mid-East Career and Technology Centers**, did with two students during the Student Achievement Fair on Nov. 11. The three were grooving to the tunes of East Muskingum Local's PanJGea Steel Drum Band — providing a moving example of how the conference draws board members and students together to celebrate and build on the successes of public education.

As evidence that the Capital Conference continues to hit the right notes for board members, conference attendance was near 10,000 again in 2014.

Ninety-one percent of Ohio's school districts attended the 59th annual conference, which hosted more than 9,700 public education leaders, staff, students and guests from across the state and beyond. Held at the Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC) on Nov. 9-12, engaging keynote speakers like television, film and Broadway actor **Jeffrey Tambor** attracted crowds to the nation's second-largest education conference.

Attendance was up across the board at conference events: 570 people enjoyed the two Conference Luncheons; 139 participants attended the Early Bird Workshop; 100 school groups shared displays in the Student Achievement Fair; and 112 attendees dined and learned at the OSBA Black Caucus dinner.

In addition, 541 Trade Show booths were filled and thousands of attendees listened to keynote speakers during the three General Sessions.

Leadership for learning captures the spirit of the conference, and that message could be heard in workshops, luncheons, networking receptions and other events.

Ensuring the conference continues to resonate with board

members each year is a top priority for the Capital Conference Planning Task Force and OSBA staff. Each year, the association looks at ways to improve the conference and, as a result, several changes were implemented in 2014.

New this year were learning sessions by topic. Based on attendee feedback, the traditional 15 learning session topics were expanded to include more specific interests, such as the New learning standards, Rural schools, Suburban schools, Urban schools and Leadership development.

Another first this year was OSBA mini sessions. These 45-minute seminars were presented by OSBA staff members on topics such as effective governance through board policy, Twitter for school leaders and more. They were designed to be interactive and brief to enhance attendees' conference experience.



*East Muskingum Local (Muskingum) and Mid-East Career and Technology Centers board member Gail Requardt, left, Cleveland Heights-University Heights City senior Ali Manfredi and recent Orange City graduate Jake Rose enjoy the sounds of East Muskingum Local's PanJGea Steel Drum Band.*



*The Trade Show at the Capital Conference features the goods and services school districts need to succeed, including the latest technology.*

In response to attendee feedback, the President’s Reception returned to the Main Concourse, which noticeably boosted participation.

Attendees had an opportunity to have their photos taken to show support for the Stand Up for Public Schools campaign, an OSBA initiative to raise awareness for the value of public education and locally elected school boards in Ohio. During the conference, approximately 80 people had their photos taken with campaign signs showing support for public schools. The photos are posted on the campaign website, [www.standupforOHpublicschools.org](http://www.standupforOHpublicschools.org). See “Will you stand up for Ohio public schools?” on page 18 to learn more about the campaign.

OSBA’s Twitter campaign also was a huge hit at this year’s conference; attendees shared more than twice as many tweets in 2014 as they did in 2013. See the sidebar “Conference is a hit on Twitter” on page 25 for more on the success of the Twitter campaign.

Special Spotlight Sessions drew large crowds for public records training, OSBA legislative updates, a simulation and discussion about whether to arm school staff and more. These sessions take an in-depth look at timely and pressing issues.

Conference General Sessions packed the GCCC Grand Ballroom by featuring motivating and renowned speakers.

This year’s keynote speakers were:

- **Dr. Adam Sáenz**, an author and education blogger with The Huffington Post who says teachers transformed his troubled youth.
- **Dan Thurmon**, an author, renowned speaker and recognized expert in delivering peak performances on stage and in the workplace.
- **Tambor**, a veteran television, film and Broadway actor who is one of the most respected character actors of his generation.

See “General Sessions offer rich blend of keynote speakers” on page 24 for coverage of these inspiring speakers.

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*Capital Conference attendees enter a drawing at the Region Resource Center for a chance to win prizes for their districts. Proceeds from the drawings benefit Kids PAC, a political action committee that supports legislators who advocate for public education.*

Leadership expert and author **Simon T. Bailey** opened the conference at the Early Bird Workshop. For more on Bailey's presentation, see "Seizing the 'vuja de' moment" on page 38.

The OSBA Black Caucus dinner featured keynote speaker Dr. **Brian K. Perkins**, director of the Urban Education Leadership Program at Columbia University Teachers College. Perkins, a former Connecticut school board member, has served on the National School Boards Association (NSBA) Board of Directors and was chair of NSBA's Council of Urban Boards of Education and NSBA's National Black Council of School Board Members.

The dinner also featured entertainment by **Columbus City's** High School Honor Chorus, directed by **Betty Hill-Church**. Unique table arrangements were created by Columbus City's Cosmetology Department. Proceeds from the dinner benefit the caucus' Leo Lucas Stipend Program, which provides graduating seniors funds for college expenses.

The Conference Luncheon speakers were author and information technology expert Dr. **Tracey Wilen** and former WNBA and Ohio State University basketball star **Katie Smith**. See "Luncheon speakers serve up recipes for success" on page 34 to read about the highlights of their presentations.

The Annual Business Meeting of the OSBA Delegate

Assembly is conducted each year at the Capital Conference. This year, delegates approved amendments to the OSBA Legislative Platform; honored past OSBA presidents; heard Executive Director **Richard Lewis'** annual report on the state of the association; and elected **Eric K. Germann, Lincolnview Local (Van Wert)** and **Vantage Career Center**, as OSBA's 2015 president-elect. He will assume the presidency of the association on Jan. 1, 2016. For details on Delegate Assembly action, see "Assembly OKs platform changes, picks president-elect" on page 32.

Although the 2014 Capital Conference just wrapped up, planning for the 2015 Capital Conference already is underway. So, now is the perfect time for you to send us your ideas. Consider applying to present a breakout session or nominating one of your school district's outstanding programs and performing groups for the Student Achievement Fair next year. Workshop moderators also are needed. Watch OSBA's publications, eAlerts and website for more information on various ways you can participate.

Next year's conference is slated for Nov. 8-11, so save the dates now. Because so many high-quality professional development opportunities are offered at an affordable price, attending the Capital Conference pays for itself many times over by passing along ideas that can set your district up for future success. Now that's certainly something to dance about. ■

# General Sessions offer rich blend of keynote speakers



*First General Session speaker Dr. Adam Sáenz greets North College Hill City Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kay Faris at the OSBA Capital Conference Bookstore. Sáenz met with attendees and signed copies of his book following his presentation.*

## *Gary Motz, managing editor*

**T**he three General Session speakers at the 2014 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show brought with them personal stories of struggle and striving, hope and redemption. And all three encouraged attendees to stretch themselves, to move beyond their comfort zones and reach for higher levels of success and service.

Psychologist, teacher and author Dr. **Adam Sáenz** shared the profound lows and highs he experienced on his journey from being a teenager in handcuffs to a scholar at Harvard University. He credits his miraculous transformation to the power of two teachers whose impact wasn't felt until years later.

Peak performance expert **Dan Thurmon** blended acrobatic

and juggling skills with keen insights into motivation, growth and risk. The engaging combination dramatically drove home his message of living "off balance on purpose."

Veteran actor and educator **Jeffrey Tambor** brought humor and wisdom to the stage as he talked about how acting delivered him from being a troubled child with low self-esteem to someone who felt valued and loved for the first time in his life. Although his life continued to present him with many challenges to overcome, he learned to use those experiences to teach and inspire others to pursue their dreams.

All of the General Session speakers hit their mark with the audience, both during their presentations and afterward when

they took the time to meet personally with attendees while signing books and posing for photos. And they sent thousands of public education leaders home with new ideas, fresh perspectives and renewed energy to share with their students, staff and communities.

### The power of a teacher

Things weren't looking good for the Hispanic youngster sitting handcuffed in a Texas policeman's car. He had just been arrested for drug possession. His mother was struggling to raise him on a limited income. He had seen two friends murdered in a drug deal and witnessed a sexual assault on his cousin. He was constantly in trouble at school, and all too familiar with the path between his classroom and the principal's office.

So, how did that young man go from such an abysmal childhood to become a highly educated psychologist, consultant, author and speaker? It was the power of a teacher, Dr. Adam Sáenz told the First General Session audience.

Sáenz, who studied at Harvard Medical School and the University of Oxford, is the founder of a Texas counseling clinic, the Oakwood Collaborative. He also is an education blogger for The Huffington Post and the author of *The Power of a Teacher: Restoring Hope and Well-Being to Change Lives*. He works as a consulting psychologist in public schools.

After his drug arrest, his mother relinquished custody of him and sent him to live with family friends in Katy, Texas, just west of Houston. His school performance improved, although he continued to battle depression and feelings of worthlessness. Throughout it all he wrote in a journal. After graduating from high school, he moved to San Antonio and became a dishwasher.

"All I had were my clothes, a sleeping bag and a box of journals, my prized possessions," Sáenz said. "I'd come home from work, tired, depressed. I was doing drugs again. One night I thought, 'I don't want 60 more years of this.'"

That night he opened his box of journals and found two letters from his former English teachers inserted in one of the booklets. The letters — which he had never seen before — praised his intelligence, talents and insights.

"I thought, 'I know who I am, a 19-year old druggie dishwasher,'" he said. "But in the letters, two women, **Jo Ella Exley** and **Polly McRoberts**, whom I tremendously respected, disagreed with me. This created great internal conflict — I thought about it for weeks. Finally, I decided to apply for college and actually got in."

Sáenz plugged away at school, finally earning a bachelor's degree in English at 26. He went on to graduate school and received doctorates in psychology and pastoral counseling.

He told the stories of two troubled kids to further illustrate the power of a teacher. The first was **Lou**, a sixth-grader.

"Lou knows your buttons and boundaries; all he wants to do is push them," Sáenz said. "He makes you uncomfortable, you feel fight or flight when you see him."

"On his first day of sixth grade, the teacher, a 'Mr. T' type, said there were consequences to breaking his rules. The teacher said, 'I've heard about you and I will not put up with you speaking Spanish. Do you understand me?'"

"Lou answered him in Spanish and was sent to the principal's office. He got locked in a pattern: class to office to class to office."

Sáenz fast-forwarded: "Lou grew up and became a licensed psychologist: me, thanks to Mrs. Exley and Mrs. McRoberts."

The second child was a fourth-grader named **Maya**, who had been in children services custody for two years.

"The base layer of emotion is fear, but street kids know fear is a liability, but anger isn't," he said. "They get hardwired to bypass fear and go straight to anger. Then they suffer depression and grieving when they go to children services."

"Most families are intimidated when they see these kids' case files. Our family wasn't — we adopted her."

After a few rough patches, Maya came to know how much she was loved and respected, and her fear, anger and depression

### Conference is a hit on Twitter

Attendees at the 2014 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show took to social media in record numbers to document their experience and connect with others at the event.

School board members, administrators and educators used Twitter to show what they were learning at the conference. Exhibitors used Twitter to showcase their booths in the Trade Show and teachers highlighted their groups in the Student Achievement Fair. During the four-day event, more than 1,700 tweets were shared using the conference hashtag, #OSBACC. That's more than double the amount of tweets last year and four times the previous year's amount.

OSBA used Twitter to engage attendees, provide event information and share the conference experience with those who could not attend. OSBA's tweets during the event were viewed more than 144,000 times by Twitter users. Visit <http://storify.com/OHschoolboards> to view tweets and photos from the conference.

peeled away. Sáenz shared a moment between them at a father-daughter dance about six months after she was adopted.

“I told her, ‘You don’t make the rules; we do and it’s your job to follow them. My job is to lay my life down for you, to protect and provide for you ... nothing you can do can ever end my love for you.’

“Maya told me she had never been loved that way before. I said I knew how she felt; I had been there. Then I told her the story about a boy named Lou.

“When we impact a child’s life we impact every heartbeat that child will ever experience until they go to the grave,” Sáenz said. “The difference you make in education is generational, it’s lasting. You went into education to make a difference, and my life is living proof of the impact you have on children and the power of a teacher.”

#### How to be your best when it matters most

Dan Thurmon hit the Greater Columbus Convention Center ready to roll — and jump and turn and flip, all of which he did almost as soon he hit the stage.

Thurmon, whose philosophy can be summed up by the title of one of his books — *Off Balance on Purpose* — adroitly merged

juggling, acrobatics and humor to vividly illustrate his points during the Second General Session. In addition to being an author, he is president of Motivation Works Inc., where he has taught and uplifted educators, Fortune 500 companies, youngsters and front-line troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The crux of his Capital Conference message was that people will never achieve perfect balance and should, instead, learn to embrace uncertainty and seek out changes that lead to growth.

“Success in life and success in education depend on action,” he said. “What are you willing to do to demonstrate your commitment to go above and beyond? Effecting change on a broad basis, like in a school system, is not about doing something once and done. It’s about consistency, it’s about small things that begin to multiply over time to create change, which is what you do.”

He shared the story of legendary juggler **Harry Lind**, who as a young man in the late 19th century was partially paralyzed in an elevator accident. Doctors told him he would never regain full use of his injured arm, but gave him an Indian (juggling) club to gently swing for exercise. Working at it every day, Lind not only regained use of his damaged arm, he went on to become a famous vaudeville juggler.



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*Dan Thurmon, the keynote speaker at the Second General Session, rides a unicycle around the audience to demonstrate his “off balance on purpose” philosophy. Thurmon combined his talk with acrobatics and juggling to vividly illustrate his message.*

“Harry pushed beyond what his doctors told him he could do,” Thurmon said as he juggled several balls. “You all are professional jugglers in your daily lives, education is a 24-hour juggling act. What you do to improve schools is enormous.

“Elevate your standards of excellence,” he said, while tossing the balls higher and higher. “Learn, grow and push the boundaries of what is possible.”

He pointed out a prevailing belief that work-life balance should be a goal — then disagreed with it.

“Are you balanced?” he asked. “No, you’re off balance. Perfect balance is unrealistic. You must be off balance to change and grow, off balance in response to what happens, in other words, off balance on purpose, which means you own it.”

To demonstrate, he approached a lectern, tested its stability and quickly hoisted himself into a short-lived handstand that ended with a tumble to the stage. He tried again, and by constantly adjusting his position, maintained the handstand.

“So, as you can see, you can play it safe, or see the opportunities,” he said after he flipped to his feet.

Thurmon came to juggling in a serendipitous way. As a boy he was hyperactive, a fidgety child who broke pencils and frustrated his teachers. When he was 11, he went to a Renaissance festival, where a juggler so transfixed him that he watched the man for six straight shows. Noticing him, the

performer asked Thurmon if he wanted to learn to juggle.

“He must have thought I would be good at it,” Thurmon said, “just as someone must have thought you would be good at serving on a school board.”

Still talking, he went from juggling three balls to four, which required a new throwing pattern. He compared the switch to leaders who must stretch their leadership patterns in response to ever-changing challenges.

“If you think what you are doing is difficult, it’s time to stretch into the uncertainty and the uncertainty stretches you,” he said. “And you learn more from life by dropping than catching, because with dropping, you must figure out what went wrong, be vulnerable and be devoted to picking up the drops.”

He also addressed what he called the myth of multitasking, and drew a parallel to juggling.

When we think we are multitasking, we aren’t; we are just quickly doing things one at a time, he said. Scientists call it a “quick switch” that occurs in the moment between tasks.

“Like in juggling, you slow down just enough to notice spaces between tasks,” Thurmon said. “That’s when you must keep looking up and elevate your vision while others are freaking out.”

Other methods he used to demonstrate his points were riding a unicycle (to remain upright and moving you must look up

and lean forward, or be off balance on purpose); having an audience member toss him an ax and knives, which he caught while riding the unicycle and then juggled (trust and focus); and teaching another audience member to juggle with him (stretching beyond what's comfortable to find out what's possible, or "Letting go in order to get a grip").

"We need to understand the reasons why, the purpose behind our actions, and understand that if we manage our thinking, it's just one thing at a time, and our actions should follow," Thurmon said. "There's space between the throws and catches and yet nothing changes unless you are first willing to let go of thoughts, fears, doubts, uncertainties, the need to be perfect, your past failures or successes, the need to do it all on your own."

"We need to engage with each other, to look up. If we do, we can effect change and we'll make a huge difference in our world."

### Performing your life

Longtime actor and acting teacher Jeffrey Tambor likes a



*Veteran actor Jeffrey Tambor shares his views on families, teaching, careers and the power of education at the Third General Session.*

relaxed stage setting. His requests for his OSBA appearance were simple: a large analog clock, a comfy overstuffed armchair and, in a reflection of the teacher in him, a large whiteboard with markers and an eraser.

He took the stage with his tie loosened, eventually shed his suit coat, snapped a selfie with the audience in the background and mugged for the OSBA photographer. He wrapped up his presentation with an informal Q&A session, chatting with the audience while sitting on the steps leading up to the stage.

The 70-year-old Tambor, a veteran of stage, screen and TV, has been acting since he was an adolescent and teaching for more than 40 years. One of the most respected character actors of his generation, he is well-known for his roles in TV's "The Larry Sanders Show" and "Arrested Development," and is starring in a new series called "Transparent."

His film credits include "And Justice for All," "Meet Joe Black," "The Hangover" movies and "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," with **Jim Carrey**. He also has appeared on Broadway in such productions as "Sly Fox," with **George C. Scott**, and a revival of "Glengarry Glen Ross," with **Alan Alda**.

Closing out the conference at the Third General Session, Tambor talked about families, teaching, his career, the power of education and the challenges he has had to overcome in life. His talk was not unlike an evening at the theater, with Tambor starring in an engaging and insightful one-man show.

"I believe that we are born and come here with a purpose," he said. "We're not trying to find a purpose, the purpose will be revealed, and I think you have to find it and discover it. I think as educators, that's our job, to find that purpose and to bring it out, bring out (students') purpose."

"(But), if they don't like you, you can't teach them. If they don't trust you, you can't teach them. ... If they even sense that you don't respect them, you are done."

Tambor said he grew up the overweight Jewish son of Russian-Hungarian parents in San Francisco. During the day, the family got along great, sharing lots of laughs and stories. However, his mother had a drinking problem and his father often warned him to "not make waves, don't celebrate success, because they will come and take it away."

"With mom, after 5 o'clock, when the ices cubes started to tinkle a little bit, it got rough and a little abusive, verbally," he said. "After a while, it began to hurt. I was a loner, I was an outsider, I had a lisp and no one understood what I said."

Little did the young Tambor know that just across the street his purpose awaited him in a little theater. He stopped in one day to see actors rehearsing on stage. They would rehearse a scene, stop, talk about what they were doing, then continue.

Captivated, he moved closer and closer to the stage each day until, one day, he sat in the front row.

“They saw me sitting there and asked me to come and help strike the set,” Tambor said. “I walked up and thought, ‘Oh, it’s nice up here’ ... I felt so connected, so warm and felt love for the first time in my life. I knew I wanted to be an actor, this is my purpose and this is what I’m going to do for the rest of my life. I’m safe and they can’t get me here.”

He related two teaching moments that have stuck with him since childhood: one bad, the other good. The first came as he was taking a spelling test in elementary school. The test asked students to use the word “no” in a sentence.

“I used to watch ‘The Cisco Kid,’” he said. “Do you remember ‘The Cisco Kid’? Do you remember Pancho? I loved Pancho, so I wrote, ‘It’s a good day, *no*?’ The teacher got mad, tore up my test and humiliated me.”

The other teaching moment came when he was 12 and attending an acting school. He said he decided to stray from the script and improvise a scene. A girl in the class, in tattletale fashion, pointed it out to the teacher.

“The teacher said, ‘Let him alone, he knows what he’s doing,’”

Tambor said. “I had never heard that in my life; no one had ever told me I knew what I was doing. It was life-changing, deep.”

He said that educators and school district leaders must understand that each student has a story that springs from all of their experiences. His story was one of loneliness, put-downs, abuse and scant encouragement.

“To overcome that story, I have to create another story and work to combat it,” he said. “You need to know that about the kids, you need to know their story and what has been ingrained in them.

“Be nice to kids. Let them know they’re safe. Let them know they’re OK. Apologize when appropriate. Keep childhood wonder close at hand, because sophistication is overrated.

“Teach kids like their lives depend on it, because they do.” ■

*Editor’s note:* The General Session sponsors were: Dr. Adam Sáenz — Pepple & Waggoner Ltd.; Ross, Sinclair & Associates LLC; and Walter Haverfield LLP; Dan Thurmon — Peck Shaffer & Williams, a division of Dinsmore & Shohl LLP; Scott, Scriven & Wahoff LLP; and Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP; Jeffrey Tambor — CompManagement Inc.

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# Capital Conference highlights

▶▼ *The North Canton City Hoover High School video team poses for a photo with Third General Session speaker Jeffrey Tambor after interviewing him. The team produced an outstanding video documentary from the four days of footage they shot at the conference.*

▼ *Attendees pick up their conference bags in the convention center's Main Concourse. The bags were sponsored by CompManagement Health Systems Inc.*



▲ *The more than 100 learning sessions at the conference are designed to encourage dialogue among attendees and presenters.*

▶ *Nationally known urban schools expert and former Connecticut school board member Dr. Brian K. Perkins fields a question during the OSBA Black Caucus dinner.*







◀ OSBA Executive Director Richard Lewis spends time with several attendees at the OSBA Pavilion.

◀▼ OSBA President Susie Lawson addresses the Second General Session audience. Lawson is a school board member at Tri-County ESC and Wayne County Schools Career Center.

▼ Bath Local (Allen) school board member Timothy McKinney shares a moment with OSBA Northwest Region Manager Dr. Judy Jackson May.



▲ Kelsey Webb, communications coordinator for Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, talks with an attendee at the OHSPRA/OSBA Idea Center publications exchange.

◀ A Trade Show vendor shares a laugh with board members and administrators visiting her booth, one of more than 540 in this year's exhibition.



# Assembly OKs platform changes, picks president-elect

*Gary Motz, managing editor*

The OSBA Delegate Assembly approved amendments to the OSBA Legislative Platform and selected the association's next president-elect during the 59th annual Capital Conference and Trade Show.

The Annual Business Meeting of the OSBA Delegate Assembly was conducted on Nov. 10 in Columbus. The assembly — made up of representatives from Ohio public school boards — sets the association's policies and approves the OSBA Legislative Platform. The platform informs legislators, policymakers, the public and the media where the association stands on key issues affecting public education.

The meeting also featured several prominent speakers, recognition of 14 OSBA past presidents and reports from the Credentials, Rules, Nominating and Legislative Platform committees. OSBA President **Susie Lawson, Tri-County ESC** and **Wayne County Schools Career Center**, presided over the session.

Delegates elected **Eric K. Germann, Lincolnview Local**

**(Van Wert)** and **Vantage Career Center**, as 2015 OSBA president-elect. Germann will become president in 2016, following his term as president-elect. The president-elect's duties include serving on OSBA's Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, and chairing the Legislative Platform Committee and Federal Relations Network.

Germann is in his fifth year on the Lincolnview school board and first year on the career center board. He is president of the Lincolnview board and serves as the district's legislative liaison and representative in the Delegate Assembly. He has earned multiple OSBA Awards of Achievement as well as Master Board Member status, a lifetime distinction.

The assembly also took action on a number of amendments to the OSBA Legislative Platform. Delegates approved amendments supporting legislation that:

- Provides full state funding for all-day/every-day kindergarten that incorporates a comprehensive curriculum.
- Provides school facilities funding for districts that do not have sufficient space to accommodate an all-day/every-day kindergarten program that incorporates a comprehensive curriculum.
- Stabilizes school funding by limiting the number and frequency of enrollment counts to three or fewer spaced at appropriate intervals.
- Requires transparency in finances and accounting for all funds transferred to management companies by charter/community school governing boards for the purpose of administering and operating a charter/community school (and) requires the management companies to keep all financial records and to make all such documents public records.
- Mandates that any revenues derived from state-authorized gambling operations are set aside for schools and other local government entities and not used to supplant other state funding.
- Requires institutions of higher education for teachers to include in their curriculum courses in technology, classroom management, crisis management and



*OSBA President-elect Ed Penrod, Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking) and Tri-County Career Center, presents the Kids PAC Golden Apple gift award to Karen Dendorfer, Parma City, during the OSBA Delegate Assembly.*

behavior management, including training in appropriate behavioral intervention techniques.

Delegates approved amendments opposing legislation that:

- Does not have funding associated with it.
- Penalizes districts for a parent's refusal to allow his or her student to participate in assessments.

OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis** presented his annual report and discussed Ohio public schools' accomplishments and challenges over the past year.

"Under your leadership, public education has made a difference in millions of lives," Lewis told the delegates. "Yet, as the attacks on this great American institution grow more ferocious, policymakers and many in the media selectively ignore the good news."

"Year after year, public schools across Ohio are among the best in the country, earning national recognition, landing on prestigious awards lists and showcasing models of efficiency and achievement. Far too often, however, schools draw attention for their challenges, not their successes. While these challenges are substantial — poverty, funding uncertainties and ever-changing mandates — it is clear that Ohio public schools are thriving."

Lewis also praised school board members for their commitment and dedication to their schools and communities and pledged OSBA's ongoing support.

"Thank you for everything you do every day, not just for your community, but also for Ohio's public schoolchildren," he said. "OSBA looks forward to building on our strengths and embracing opportunities."

Delegates also heard from:

- **Lindsay Kuhn Blair**, financial literacy officer for the state treasurer's office, who explained financial literacy



resources the office makes available to schools.

- **Thomas J. Gentzel**, National School Boards Association executive director, who stressed the importance of local leadership of public schools and warned against increasing efforts to privatize public education. He also praised OSBA as "one of the most impactful state school boards associations in the country."
- **Dr. Richard A. Ross**, Ohio superintendent of public instruction, who talked about the dramatic pace of education reform in Ohio and how important classroom teachers are to student success. He then introduced **Lori Michalec**, the 2015 Ohio Teacher of the Year from **Tallmadge City's** Tallmadge High School.

The OSBA 2015 Legislative Platform will be distributed to all OSBA members in January. The Legislative Platform also will be available on the OSBA website at [www.ohio-schoolboards.org/legislative-platform](http://www.ohio-schoolboards.org/legislative-platform). For more information on the platform and this year's amendments, contact the OSBA legislative services division. ■



## OSBA Executive Searches

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# Luncheon speakers serve up recipes for success

*Margo Bartlett, freelance correspondent*

**T**wo energetic and inspiring women headlined the Conference Luncheons at the 2014 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show last month. Nearly 300 public education leaders and their guests attended each event.

The Nov. 10 speaker was technology expert Dr. **Tracey Wilen**, whose work focuses on the impact of technology on society, careers and leadership. The event was sponsored by CompManagement Inc. and FirstEnergy Solutions Corp.

Ohio State University, Olympic and WNBA basketball star **Katie Smith** spoke at the Nov. 11 luncheon. A graduate of **Logan-Hocking Local's (Hocking)** Logan High School, Smith stressed how learning the basics and being adaptable helps build the foundation for future success. Sponsors for the event were CompManagement Health Systems Inc.; NaviGate Prepared; and OSBA Insurance Agency in partnership with Assurant Employee Benefits.

## **'Technology has seeped into your lives'**

Technology expert Dr. Tracey Wilen bounded to the Battelle Grand North stage and disarmed her audience with a statement nobody could deny.

"I love technology and I know you do, too," Wilen said. "Most of the time it doesn't work and most of the time it's user error."

Still, she said, "Technology has seeped into your lives."

OSBA Immediate Past President **Sharon E. Manson, Waverly City and Pike County Career Technology Center**, introduced Wilen, a former visiting scholar at Stanford University who has worked at Apple Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co. and Cisco Systems Inc. She also is the author of *Education 3.0: How Technology Is Reshaping Education, Work and Society*.

A frequent speaker on the impact and influence of

technology on all aspects of 21st century life, Wilen said she recently pulled together executives, business leaders, policymakers, economists and educators to discuss the future of work.

"What skills should we be thinking about in a digital world?" she asked.

Among the first ideas the group developed was human longevity, which Wilen called "a big concept." People are living to be 100 years old.

"That can be daunting to some people," Wilen said. Longer lives mean longer work lives. Those who expected to retire in their mid-60s may now be working until age 80. Staying technically proficient enough to keep or find a position in the workplace will be critical.

*"We've really shifted, haven't we, from a classical world to a digital world."*

*— Dr. Tracey Wilen*

Corporations, she said, already are aware of this trend. Three generations occupy the current workforce. Retail settings — such as McDonald's, which hires workers as young as 14 — comprise four generations.

"So it's really here," she said.

The different expectations, goals, educations and backgrounds of multiple age groups and the ever-changing, ever-increasing use of technology in work and society have fueled the formation of what Wilen terms "a VUCA world." Borrowed from the military, VUCA is an acronym for "volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous."

Technology today delivers a churning maelstrom of

information, visually gripping, rife with detail, ripe with opinions and, while often stunningly accurate, sometimes dangerously wrong.

“We need to develop people who can function in a volatile environment,” Wilen said. Increasingly, she said, employers are saying, “I need employees who are leaders, employees who can respond and be agile” in a digital world.

With a series of video clips, Wilen illustrated several workplace changes brought about by technological advances. Google’s driverless car presented a vivid example: No steering wheel, gearshift or pedals. Just software.

Automotive repair also is changing, Wilen said. She played a video of a mechanic donning “smart” goggles that project three-dimensional content onto an actual car’s engine. Step-by-step instructions relayed through ear buds are accompanied by virtual animations of tools, the engine and its parts. The mechanic mimics the overlays to diagnose and repair the engine.

“We’ve really shifted, haven’t we, from a classical world to a digital world,” Wilen told her audience.

Wilen has identified nine forces that have changed today’s workplace. She touched on a few of them, including what she called “superstructuring,” meaning creating a virtual workplace apart from whatever physical space a company occupies. (Startups whose “office” is a table at the corner coffee shop are a case in point.)

She also noted 10 work skills needed in a digital world: sense-making, social intelligence, novel and adaptive thinking, cross-cultural competency, computational thinking, new media literacy, transdisciplinarity, design mindset, cognitive load management and virtual collaboration.

To illustrate sense-making, Wilen described her relationship with the upscale department store Nordstrom, which has identified her shopping habits down to how often she shops there and when. To lure her back after an absence, the store offered a sizeable gift certificate.

“Retail must jump into technology,” she said, because digitally savvy collection and interpretation of customer data increase sales.

The need for cross-cultural fluency is apparent even when looking for someone to copy edit a report. Wilen has written several books describing business do’s and don’ts in other countries and cultures. In today’s world, an employer can hire a freelancer from around the corner or from across the world. Several companies, including the recently merged Elance and oDesk, offer projects to workers who

may charge as little as \$2 per job.

Wilen urged her listeners to enter the future prepared to approach problems and challenges in ways that use both current and future technology. Borrow trends, she said, citing the innovative Cornell University doctor who uses existing technology — the 3-D printer — and living cells to produce human ears.

General knowledge, specialist expertise and an understanding of technology: “... in a Google world, what we really need is all three,” Wilen said. “T-people, transdisciplined people.”

Find more information about Wilen and her work at [www.traceywilen.com](http://www.traceywilen.com).

### **School + sports + support = success**

Former WNBA basketball player Katie Smith grinned at the audience as she took the stage for her presentation.

“How’s lunch?” she asked.

OSBA President **Susie Lawson, Tri-County ESC** and **Wayne County Schools Career Center**, had just introduced Smith by reciting some of her many achievements: she is the all-time this and the leading that; she was voted the top one thing and the greatest other thing. The list, which includes Olympic gold medals in



*Dr. Tracey Wilen discusses the many challenges of teaching, learning, working and living in a digital world during her Capital Conference Luncheon presentation.*



*Katie Smith poses with Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking) school board members and administrators at the Nov. 11 luncheon.*

2000, 2004 and 2008, is both breathtakingly stellar and just plain long for a woman who is only 40.

And still, she thought to ask, “How’s lunch?”

Then, before she began to discuss her youth in Logan and experiences playing basketball for Logan High School, Ohio State University and then, for 14 years, the WNBA, she acknowledged the date — Nov. 11 — and thanked the veterans in the room.

As she launched into her prepared comments, the screens on either side of the lectern displayed four words: School + sports + support = success. (Her teachers would appreciate her use of alliteration, Smith joked.)

She grew up with two brothers, and dinner at home was always a competitive event. Her family’s emphasis on sports and a strong value system started her on the road that would lead to success and the kind of fame that would prompt three early elementary school teachers to attend later games wearing jackets with messages on the back: “I’m

Katie’s kindergarten teacher,” “I’m Katie’s first-grade teacher” and “I’m Katie’s second-grade teacher.”

“They sat in hostile environments, too,” Smith said. “They were brave to admit that they actually knew me.”

When Smith was still a member of that kindergarten teacher’s class, the students participated in a Christmas gift exchange. Each child brought a gift and received a gift. Smith’s gift was a disappointment: It wasn’t new. It wasn’t even clean. Furious, she threw it away.

When she told the story at home, her mother also was disappointed — not because her daughter hadn’t received a “nice” gift, but because she had reacted selfishly. Soon, mom and daughter were back at school, where her teacher explained that not all the children in the class could afford to buy brand-new gifts. What Smith had thrown in the trash might have been the best the giver had.

“That day I learned a lesson about graciousness,” Smith said. The larger lesson — that not everything will go one’s

way in life, but how you react to what happens is the most important thing — would be repeated several times during Smith’s program. (The teacher also gave Smith another gift — a new one.)

Smith spoke briefly of her years taking cattle and sheep to the county fair, singing in the choir and playing basketball.

“It didn’t matter if you were a girl or a boy,” she said. “The important thing was to do it right.”

She said she learned to do it right in part because in her junior high school building, the basketball court was on the auditorium stage. She learned to catch passes and she rarely stepped out of bounds, Smith said, because missed passes had to be retrieved from the auditorium, and going out of bounds meant a hard fall straight down.

Smith stressed the importance of learning the basics — in school, sports and life — because the basics are the foundation on which later knowledge is built. Although tasks involving memorization sometimes reduced her to tears of frustration, she knew even then that “You have to know it. You have to know it to build.”

Beyond school, Smith said, she was all about sports. “That’s what worked for me and that’s what I love.”

On the screens, she listed qualities she developed as a result of her life in sports: Adaptability. Diversity. Time management. Teamwork. Commitment. Accountability. Ability to handle disappointment and failure, to make sacrifices and to persevere. And “tough skin.”

“Fans can be brutal,” she said. “Newspapers can be a little

rough.” As for coaches, she recalled New York Liberty coach **Bill Laimbeer** shouting, “Smith! Make a shot!”

I wanted to yell back “I’m not trying to *miss*,” Smith said.

Smith had a story about adaptability too: She was living in Minnesota early in her professional career, owned a goldendoodle and was taking college classes when she wasn’t traveling with the Minnesota Lynx. One day, her coach summoned her minutes after her team arrived in California to play a game. She’d been traded to Detroit, the coach told her.

“Just like that,” Smith said. “And there you go.”

It might be easy to get angry and find someone to blame when life goes wrong, Smith told her audience, but the best strategy is “being able to look at yourself first. Try to control the things you can, and ultimately, you’ll have success.”

The character trait that emerges when all of these qualities are developed, Smith said, is discipline.

“Discipline pulls everything together,” she said.

She concluded by giving a shout-out to teachers and coaches — the ones who helped her, and the ones who have helped and are helping others.

“Not one thing I did on my own,” she said. She credited her parents, brothers, coaches, teachers, bus drivers, peers, co-workers and, yes, she said, “School board members. You set the vision. You facilitate a successful experience for your students.” ■

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# Seizing the ‘vuja de’ moment

*Early Bird Workshop presenter urges attendees to ‘recognize and embrace their brilliance’*

*Gary Motz, managing editor*

An exuberant **Simon T. Bailey** enthusiastically greeted attendees as they walked into his Early Bird Workshop session at the 2014 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show.

He did the same as they left, shaking hands, giving hugs and sharing laughs. And in between, he inspired, enlightened and energized the education leaders as he encouraged them to “release their brilliance.”

Bailey, a leadership expert, author and internationally respected keynote speaker, is a former sales director at the world-renowned Disney Institute and founder of the Brilliance Institute Inc., a consulting firm that works with the world’s top companies to increase creativity, productivity, accountability and innovation. His best-

selling books include *Release Your Brilliance*, *Success is an Inside Job* and *Simon Says Dream: Live a Passionate Life*. His most recent book, *The Vuja De Moment! — Shift from Average to Brilliant*, is receiving rave reviews.

The Sunday afternoon workshop was a three-hour session, but the time seemed to fly by as Bailey kept his audience of about 140 captivated with his insights, humor and rapid-paced delivery. He interspersed his presentation with small-group exercises in which attendees worked through scenarios on how to unleash the potential in the world’s most important asset — people.

“We all have brilliance inside of us,” Bailey said. “What we must do is recognize and embrace our own brilliance. The brilliance inside is what makes you come alive.”



*Early Bird Workshop presenter and leadership expert Simon T. Bailey encourages attendees to recognize and embrace their brilliance in their careers and personal lives during his Capital Conference session.*





*Speaker Simon T. Bailey listens in on a small group exercise during the Early Bird Workshop. Bailey used the exercises throughout his session to encourage dialogue among attendees.*

Fair enough, but what does that mean?

“Brilliance, as I define it, is your inside, it’s your potential ... it’s what makes you come alive,” Bailey said. “When I’m doing that thing that makes me come alive and I’m fulfilling my potential ... I make an *imprint*, not just an impression. And as I leave an imprint on what I’m doing every day, I am operating in my brilliance.”

To shift from average to brilliant requires a major change in perspective. It’s something Bailey called (with apologies to comedian **George Carlin** who coined the phrase) the “vujade” moment. Everyone is familiar with déjà vu, French for already seen. But, Bailey said, a vujade moment occurs when you envision something you’ve never seen and work to overturn the status quo and create it.

To illustrate the point, he asked attendees to move their watches to the opposite wrist and leave them there for several days.

“You’ll find it to be uncomfortable,” he said. “That’s because you have emotional equity in the way you’ve always worn your watch. To see things differently you have to let go of the emotional equity.”

He drew a parallel to the growing freelance economy in the U.S. that is seen in new business ventures such as the

ride-sharing firms Uber and Lyft, as well as car-sharing programs many cities have implemented. These innovations threaten and shake up traditional transportation systems such as taxis; they have made them *uncomfortable* by seeing and doing something differently. The same is true of food carts and food trucks, which have similarly upset the restaurant industry.

*“What we must do is recognize and embrace our own brilliance. The brilliance inside is what makes you come alive.”*

“To shift to your brilliance you must be willing to examine everything you do,” Bailey said. “You must ask yourself if you are creating the future you want. Are you prepared to tell your *own* story, not someone else’s? That’s the vujade moment, when you decide to create your own future, find your inner vision and feel confident about what you are going to do.”

He said brilliance is released in an environment where people are celebrated rather than tolerated. That tone must be set by leaders who do much more than simply tell people what to do. Rather, they must be lifelong learners and good



listeners who can draw out the best in people.

“What are people learning from you as a leader?” he asked. “What are your students learning, what about your staff? To truly lead you must be a ‘hope-pusher.’ Kids drop out of school because they lose hope for a better future. They drop out of school and then they drop out of life. And who pays for that? The taxpayers.

“To push hope as a board member you need to build a better connectivity, be more engaged. Leading is not about ‘my way or the highway.’ It’s about bringing out the best in yourself and in others. It’s about listening and giving up the need to be right.”

Another key to releasing brilliance is consistency, Baily said. In business, it’s being consistent with your customers. In education, the customers are students, parents and taxpayers, and it’s essential for leaders and staff to create a culture of accountability that not only meets customers’ expectations, but also exceeds them.

“When someone calls a school at four in the afternoon and no one is there to answer the phone, what kind of a message does that send?” he asked. “It gives the impression that schools don’t care. When you’re making budget

cuts, are you careful not to cut the things that serve your customers well?”

Another key part of customer service is staying on top of social media, he said. Respond to misinformation, because if you don’t, people will believe what they read, whether it’s true or not.

“The key to great customer service is to respond quickly, intelligently and consistently with your message and mission,” Bailey said. “Gone are the days when people can say, ‘that’s not my job,’ and pass you off to a website or a voice mail box. You must transform your school district culture to one that creates a positive experience for the people you serve.”

Bailey also urged attendees to, “give their energy the green light. Seek out those tasks and activities that you love to do, because they will engage you and boost your energy. Always look for ways to go beyond your potential and energize yourself to go above and beyond what is expected. That’s where you’ll find your place of congruence, brilliance and wholeness.” ■

*Simon T. Bailey’s appearance at the Early Bird Workshop was sponsored by the law firm of Britton, Smith, Peters & Kalail Co. LPA.*

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# Lauding board leaders



*The 2014 All-Ohio School Board members recognized during the Third General Session are, from left, Jim Sommer; Jackie Place; Kevin Worthington; Westerville City Board of Education Vice President Tracy A. Davidson, accepting for Cindy Crowe; and Dr. Gregory A. Roadruck.*

## *Five board members earn OSBA's highest award*

*Bryan Bullock, assistant editor*

**F**ive Ohioans have been recognized for their extraordinary contributions to public education. The outstanding school district leaders were named to the 2014 All-Ohio School Board on Nov. 12 during the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show in Columbus. The recognition is OSBA's most prestigious honor.

The All-Ohio School Board program, which began in 1971, recognizes exemplary boardmanship and service to public education. It represents the commitment and dedication shown by thousands of school board members across Ohio.

The 2014 honorees are:

- **Cindy Crowe, Westerville City;**
- **Jackie Place, Bath Local (Allen) and Apollo Career Center;**
- **Dr. Gregory A. Roadruck, Orrville City and Wayne County Schools Career Center;**
- **Jim Sommer, Greenville City;**
- **Kevin Worthington, Fort Frye Local (Washington).**

One school board member from each of OSBA's five regions — Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest

— is named to the All-Ohio School Board every year. Candidates' school boards nominate them and each region then selects its winner.

"Each year OSBA recognizes school board members who have demonstrated their commitment to public education in their respective communities," OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis** said before introducing the honorees. "Competition is heavy and the qualifications are considerable. Earning the award is not an easy feat and it is considered OSBA's most prestigious award. It is my pleasure to now introduce to you the 2014 All-Ohio School Board."

### **Cindy Crowe** **Central Region**

Crowe devoted her life to public education as a teacher, volunteer and fundraiser. She is the first person to be named to the All-Ohio School Board posthumously.

Crowe, who was 50, died in July of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease or ALS. She was a Westerville City Board of Education member for 14 years, and continued to serve until just two months before her death. Crowe courageously led a crusade — "Winning the ALS Fight" — to raise awareness of the disease as well as funds to fight it.

Crowe was active in many ways in her schools and community. She was a founder and board member of the Westerville Education Challenge, an anti-bullying program offered at all three of Westerville's high schools. In the past seven years, the program has helped raise \$80,000, involved nearly 3,700 students and more than 900 adults and provided grants to Westerville teachers.

She also served on the Westerville Chamber of Commerce Education Committee and Westerville Education Foundation. Her community service included membership in Ohio Reads, Kids Voting USA, Read Across America, Rotary Club of Westerville, Westerville Parks Foundation Committee and Westerville Alumni Association.

Crowe worked closely with OSBA throughout her school board career. She served on the Executive Committee, Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee, Federal Relations Network, Delegate Assembly and Capital Conference Planning Task Force. She also was OSBA Central Region president in 2011 and served on the region's executive committee. In addition, she was her school district's legislative liaison and student achievement liaison to OSBA.

In nominating her for the award, her colleagues wrote: "Cindy's greatest attribute was her drive, passion and ability to go above and beyond to make a positive difference in the world."

She is survived by her husband, **Alan**, and her sons, **Brandon** and **Tyler**.

### **Jackie Place** **Northwest Region**

Place is a veteran teacher and passionate supporter of public education.

She has served on the Bath Local board for 11 years and the Apollo Career Center board for three years. Place has served as board president or vice president for six of those years.

The veteran board member is an advocate for her district and its students. She attends school functions ranging from athletic events and academic assemblies to banquets and musical programs. She also volunteers at open houses, the Bath Wildcat Den at the Allen County Fair and elementary school science nights. In addition, Place serves as Bath Local's student achievement liaison to OSBA and represents the career center at the OSBA Delegate Assembly. She also has served both boards on all of their board-superintendent committees.

In her community, Place is a member of St. Gerard Catholic Church, the Ohio Retired Teachers Association and the Allen County Retired Teachers Association. She retired after 34 years as a teacher and uses her experience as an educator to help lead her districts.

She continues her education through professional development, regularly attending the OSBA Capital Conference, Board Leadership Institute, ESC Leadership Academy and other association training events. Her dedication to ongoing education has earned her multiple OSBA Awards of Achievement as well as Master Board Member status, a lifetime distinction.

Place said her proudest accomplishment is helping pass levies for needed school building projects. In nominating Place, her board colleagues wrote: "Jackie is a very active and dedicated board member. She likes to be involved in what is going on and volunteers to chair or be a member of all groups and committees."

Place and her husband, **Tom**, live in Lima. They have three children and nine grandchildren.

### **Dr. Gregory A. Roadruck** **Northeast Region**

Roadruck is a veteran board member who is dedicated to his schools.

He has served on the Orrville City board for 25 years and the Wayne County Schools Career Center board for 18 years.

The veteran board member stays engaged in his schools and community. He takes an active role in Orrville City Schools' PTO and booster club and is a member of the Trinity United Methodist Church. A large animal veterinarian, he belongs to the American Veterinary Medical Association, Ohio

Veterinary Medical Association and American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior.

Roadruck said he first ran for a school board seat as a way to connect with and contribute to his school community. He wants every child to enjoy learning and have a thirst for knowledge.

He said he is proud to serve on boards that have hired and empowered highly skilled administrators to make transformational changes. Those changes include efforts to share administrators and services with area districts, resulting in cost savings, collaboration and innovation.

In nominating Roadruck for the award, his colleagues wrote: “His greatest attribute is the ability to recognize quality and effective people and send them on a path of success. For example, he has hired exceptional superintendents and treasurers who went on to create an educational compact that is now benefitting four school districts.

“He is strongly dedicated to the thousands of students in Wayne County and leads the way for creating innovation in the educational community.”

Roadruck and his wife, **Carolyn**, live in Orrville. They have two children.

### **Jim Sommer** **Southwest Region**

Sommer has spent decades working in education and advocating for Ohio schoolchildren.

He has served on the Greenville City board for 10 years, and has served as board president or vice president for four of those years.

Sommer worked as a teacher and administrator for 30 years. His family has a proud history as educators; his wife, father and mother-in-law all dedicated their lives to education.

The veteran board member is very engaged in his schools. He attends most athletic and fine arts events; volunteers with Woodland Primary School’s pizza bingo; is a member of Woodland’s Watch Dog Program; and serves as president of the Greenville Schools Foundation and on the Greenville High School Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Sommer also is active in his community, where he is a 30-year member of the American Legion, 40-year member of the Greenville Elks Lodge and a lifelong member of the Knights of Columbus.

He is extremely active with OSBA, where he serves on the Executive Committee, Board of Trustees, Board Member Cabinet, Delegate Assembly, Legislative Platform Committee

and Federal Relations Network. He is the Southwest Region’s immediate past president and serves on the region’s executive committee. In addition, he is Greenville City Schools’ legislative liaison and student achievement liaison to OSBA.

A strong believer in professional development, Sommer’s dedication to ongoing education has earned him multiple OSBA Awards of Achievement as well as Master Board Member status, a lifetime distinction.

In nominating Sommer for the award, his colleagues wrote: “Jim’s outstanding leadership and his dedication to the district give us reasons to be proud. He is committed to what is best for children and demonstrates that he is a good steward of the community’s trust by participating not only in school events, but also in community projects.”

Sommer and his wife, **Alicia**, live in Greenville. They have three sons and three granddaughters.

### **Kevin Worthington** **Southeast Region**

Worthington is a board member who always seeks to put students first.

He has served on the Fort Frye Local board for eight years, and has served as board president or vice president for two of those years. Worthington said he ran for the board to champion high-quality instruction and uses his experience as an engineer to assist the district with building projects.

The veteran board member stays engaged in his schools and community. He takes an active role in Fort Frye athletic events and attends awards assemblies, homecoming activities, school plays and graduations. He is a member of the charitable organization Ramp Up for Jesus, which buys wheelchairs and distributes them to community members in need of one. He also is helping raise funds for Relay for Life and for a new track for the district.

Worthington said his proudest accomplishments as a board member involve projects completed in the district while he was chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee. In nominating him for the award, his colleagues wrote: “His greatest attribute as a board member is that he is a reflective researcher and does not make decisions in haste. As a veteran board member, he is a great mentor to new board members and focuses on academically moving the district forward.

“Every time a major decision is to be made, Kevin asks the board and administration, ‘What is best for our kids?’ He is very grounded and reacts to change and controversy with calmness and integrity. For him, excellence is non-negotiable.”

Worthington and his wife, **Beth**, live in Lowell. They have two children. ■



# Veteran school board members honored

*Bryan Bullock, assistant editor*

OSBA recognized a record number of school board members in 2014 for reaching an extraordinary milestone. Twenty-nine board members from across Ohio were honored on Nov. 12 for 25 years of service.

Each year, veteran board members are presented awards and recognized in front of the crowd at the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show. Those who serve for 25 years know just how demanding school board service can be. The hours are long, the challenges are never-ending and the “thanks” are often few and far between. On top of that, school board members often serve their school districts while juggling full-time careers and other professional, personal and family obligations.

The dedication shown by longtime board members is highlighted by the fact that, according to OSBA’s 2014 member survey:

- 21% of Ohio school board members are in their first year of service.
- 43% of board members are serving their first term.
- 17% of members have more than 12 years of service.

“There are more than 3,400 school board members in the state of Ohio,” said OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis** before introducing the veteran board members honored at the Capital Conference. “Each of these men and women has dedicated a significant portion of their life to the improvement of public education and the betterment



*Veteran board members are recognized for 25 years of service during the OSBA Capital Conference.*

of their community.”

“Today, it is appropriate that we pause to say thank you to a very special group of these members. I would like to introduce to you some extremely dedicated individuals who have gone above and beyond in donating their time as citizen servants.”

Veteran school board members recognized for 25 years of service are:

- **Daryl E. Amstutz, Putnam County ESC;**
- **W.E. Anderson, Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center;**
- **Larry Campbell, East Knox Local (Knox);**
- **Paul Crabtree, South Central Ohio ESC and Scioto County Career Technical Center;**
- **Michael D. Elliott, Ada EV;**
- **Donald Ellis, Vanguard-Sentinel Career and Technology Centers;**
- **Robert L. Faulkner Sr., Warren City and Trumbull Career & Technical Center;**
- **Mary Frantz, Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Local (Greene) and Greene County Career Center;**
- **James F. Hildreth, Delaware Area Career Center;**
- **Jack Koschnick, North Central Ohio ESC;**
- **Ted McKinniss, Marion City;**

- **Daryl Michael Jr., Montgomery County ESC;**
- **John Pennycuff, Winton Woods City;**
- **Scott Pertner, Gibsonburg EV;**
- **Brian Pusateri, Waterloo Local (Portage);**
- **Dr. Greg Roadruck, Orrville City and Wayne County Schools Career Center;**
- **Judith A. Sander, North Point ESC and Penta Career Center;**
- **Philip Schumacher, East Central Ohio ESC;**
- **Tom Siciliano, Rootstown Local (Portage);**
- **Carlyle Smith, Northmor Local (Morrow);**
- **Terry L. Smith, Montgomery County ESC;**
- **Steven Snavely, North Central Ohio ESC;**
- **Mary Jean Theaker, Mid-Ohio ESC, Knox County Career Center and Pioneer Career & Technology Center;**
- **Gene Wiley, North Central Ohio ESC and Tri-Rivers Career Center.**

Veteran board members unable to attend the event include:

- **Ron Dixon, Ross-Pike ESC and Pike County Career Technology Center;**
- **Randall S. Macko, North Point ESC;**
- **Scott Perner, Gibsonburg EV;**
- **Gary Quimby, Ohio Valley ESC;**
- **Bernard Snow, North Fork Local (Licking). ■**



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# Student Achievement Fair hits pinnacle of popularity



*Holly Collett, a student from Green Local (Scioto), explains how the district's CATS program works. Students in grades seven to 12 participate in CATS, which stands for character, attitude, teamwork and spirit.*

*Crystal Davis, editor*

The 100 booths in the Student Achievement Fair at OSBA's Capital Conference and Trade Show filled up faster than ever before in 2014. The fair was fully booked by late August.

"The Student Achievement Fair was better than ever with what seemed like higher traffic and lots of activity within the fair itself," said **Cheryl W. Ryan**, OSBA deputy director of school board services and fair coordinator. "We had several booths from districts who've never been to the show before."

In all, 78 districts from around the state were represented

in the event. They set up and staffed booths for four hours on Nov. 11 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. The groups were selected to share their innovative programs designed to boost student achievement and leadership.

The considerations for selection include what others might learn from the project, ease of replication, creativity and the program's impact on student achievement.

"Those who stop by the fair take home many creative and proven strategies that they can implement in their districts," said **Kathy LaSota**, OSBA director of school board services.



“The networking that takes place at the fair also may help build connections that have a long-lasting impact on participants and attendees.”

The 16th annual fair gave students and staff the opportunity to explain their programs to school board members, administrators and guests. Programs in the 2014 fair included virtual learning; skateboard design; energy efficiency and conservation; dropout prevention; robotics; video and clay animation; biomedical science; computer programming; outdoor classrooms; and character education programs, among others.

OSBA’s Student Achievement Leadership Team, composed of school board members and OSBA staff, started the fair in 1999 to emphasize the association’s dedication to promoting academic excellence.

“Funds are tight for schools these days, so we greatly appreciate the districts that continue to make participating in the fair a priority,” LaSota said.

“I wish there was a way to bottle the appreciation and excitement expressed to us by those attending this great event at our Capital Conference,” said **Debby Hoopes**, OSBA senior administrative associate of search services, who coordinates applications to the Student Achievement Fair.

“Attendees always mention that the Student Achievement Fair is one of their favorite parts of the Capital Conference,” Ryan said.

The fair has become a crowd favorite in part due to the



*Northwest Local’s (Hamilton) Colerain Show Cards choir puts on a dazzling show at the Student Achievement Fair. The choir was one of five groups from around Ohio that performed at the fair.*

popularity of the student entertainment groups performing throughout the event. One group from each of OSBA’s five regions was selected based on talent, grade level and variety. Tables were set up by the performance stage so conference attendees could eat as the groups entertained them. This year’s performers were:

- **Danville Local (Knox)** — Danville High School Jazz and Clarinet Band;
- **Mentor EV** — Sparkle Cheerleaders;
- **Port Clinton City** — Touch of Class a cappella group;

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*Marion City students Aaron Campbell, center, and Win Adissem, right, learn more about Coshocton City's Full STEAM Ahead initiative. At left is Coshocton teacher Jon Cotterman. Students participating in the Student Achievement Fair often visit other districts' booths to learn about other schools' programs.*

- **East Muskingum Local (Muskingum)** — PanJGea Steel Drum Band;
- **Northwest Local (Hamilton)** — Colerain Show Cards choir.

The performance area was sponsored by the law firm Britton, Smith, Peters & Kalail Co. LPA.

Adding a high-tech twist to an old favorite, the student art exhibition went digital this year. Monitors displayed images of student art from school districts across the state. The law firm Pepple & Waggoner Ltd. sponsored the student art show.

Once again, State Board of Education members visited the Student Achievement Fair to tour booths and thank student and staff participants.

“The students always enjoy when the State Board of Education members visit their booths each year,” LaSota said. “They like that the State Board members personally present certificates of appreciation to participating programs and performers.”

“The Student Achievement Fair is always one of the highlights of the Capital Conference, as students are really what our work is all about,” Ryan said. “Their excitement in sharing their learning with all of us at the fair each year is really special.”

Ryan encourages districts to start planning for the 2015 Student Achievement Fair.

“We hope that all districts will strongly consider nominating programs for 2015 to keep fresh ideas coming in from all over the state,” she said. “Please start nominating as soon as possible, because returning districts want spots and there’s only room for 100 booths. We expect the booths to fill up even faster next year.”

OSBA already has begun preparations for the 2015 Student Achievement Fair. The deadline for submitting nominations is Friday, June 27. Nomination forms are available at <http://conference.ohioschoolboards.org/2015/saf-nominations>. A list of districts that participated in the 2014 Student Achievement Fair also is posted at that Web address.

For additional information, contact Hoopes at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or [dhoopes@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:dhoopes@ohioschoolboards.org). Districts interested in nominating a performing group should contact Ryan at the above phone numbers or [cryan@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:cryan@ohioschoolboards.org). ■

## An oasis of relaxation in the Trade Show

A group of career centers has been working for years to make sure you are relaxed at the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show.

Between conference sessions, attendees could stop by any of seven career centers’ booths in the Trade Show to get some R&R. These generous career centers offered free services such as hand and arm massages, blood pressure checks, makeovers and more. Another career center provided landscaping and benches outside the OSBA Bookstore.

Career centers prepare secondary students to succeed in the 21st century workforce and value learning as a lifelong process. The career-tech programs that demonstrated their skills during the 2014 conference included:

- **Coshocton County Career Center** — blood pressure checks, cosmetology and wellness information;
- **Delaware Area Career Center** — OSBA Bookstore landscaping;
- **Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools** — hand and arm massages and manicures;
- **Mahoning County Career and Technical Center** — blood pressure screenings and wellness information;
- **South-Western City Career Academy** — cosmetology;
- **Tolles Career & Technical Center** — manicures and hand and arm massages;
- **Tri-Rivers Career Center** — blood pressure screenings and wellness information;
- **Trumbull Career & Technical Center** — hand and arm massages and manicures.

# High schoolers shoot, edit video at Capital Conference

*Crystal Davis, editor*

**F**or the first time ever, a group of high students filmed and edited the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show documentary on-site.

The **North Canton City** Hoover High School Video Production Team, the official documentary team of the 2014 conference, set up an on-site editing suite in the Trade Show and in the main concourse of the Greater Columbus Convention Center, where attendees could watch them work as they walked by.

The award-winning team, led by program coordinator **Tom Wilson** and broadcast journalism teacher **Jen Manion**, was selected based on the outstanding video work it submitted.

Students filmed conference events and conducted interviews with attendees, speakers, OSBA leaders and others. Students then edited the material into a 10-minute documentary, which is available on the OSBA conference website at <http://conference.ohioschoolboards.org>. It also is being shared with other state school boards associations and used to promote the conference.

“We’ve covered conferences before, but what made OSBA different was that our students were able to make connections to the information shared,” Manion said. “Because of that, they enjoyed being there and finding out about all of the different aspects of the conference.”

The documentary team included seniors **Abigail Grisez**, **Autumn Yocas**, **Frankie Colantuono**, **Jonah Kearns** and **Kelan Vollmers**, and junior **Kathryn Poe**.

In its sixth year, the OSBA conference documentary program offers students an opportunity to practice their skills in a real-world setting.

“I was so proud to see how well they worked together as a team, acted as professionals and produced a final product with such excellent quality,” Wilson said.

“What I particularly enjoyed was watching the students apply everything that they have learned,” Manion said. “They had to deal with time constraints, the pressure of interviewing strangers and only having one chance at getting their shot. When they returned, they told their classmates how much work it was, but how much fun they had as well.”

Manion said what the students enjoyed most was highlighting districts participating in the Student Achievement Fair and meeting actor **Jeffrey Tambor**.

“The students really enjoyed the interviews — they felt very professional going out and interviewing attendees and the keynote speakers,” Manion said. “Obviously, Wednesday was their favorite; they sent several tweets out about getting to meet Jeffrey.”

At Hoover, the team produces daily news broadcasts, public affairs programs and special projects. You can watch more of their work at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/50225>. ■



*Two members of North Canton City's Hoover High School Video Production Team frame a shot during the conference.*

# Students display their talents at the conference

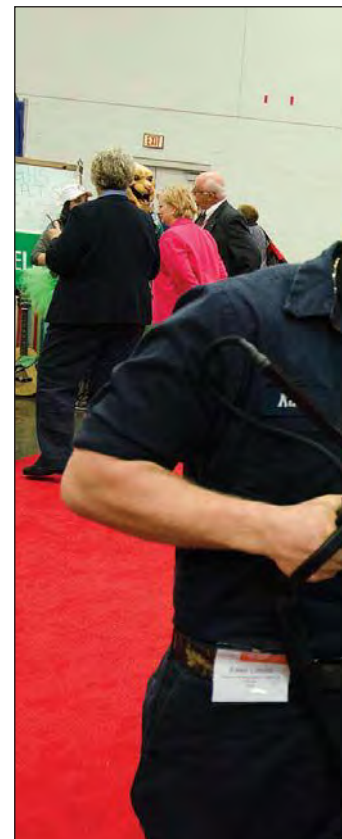
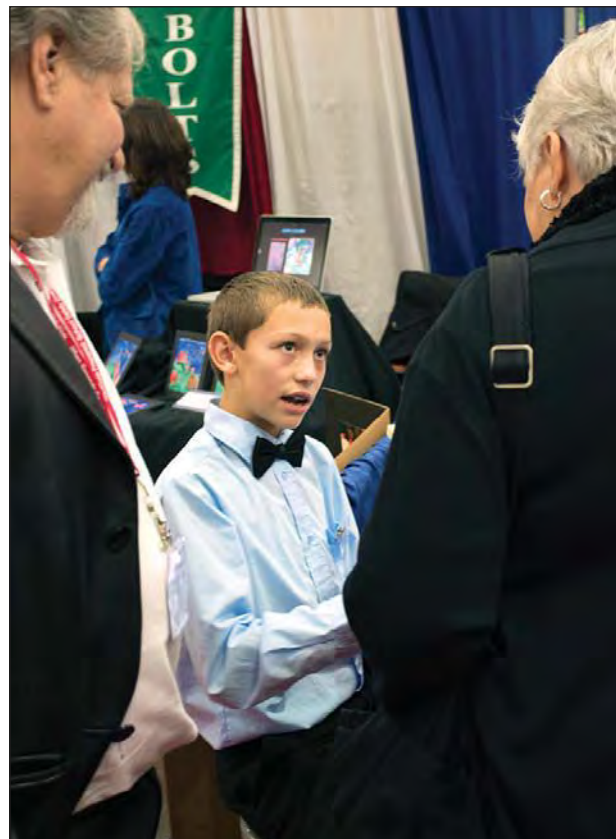
► *Danville Local's (Knox) Danville High School Jazz and Clarinet Band entertains attendees.*

▼ *Mentor EV's High Tech Art students put new faces on classic works of art.*



▲ *Huber Heights City Valley Forge GEMS students pose at their booth that displays engineering, math and science activities.*

► *Northwest Local (Wayne) Middle School student Brock Tegtmeier gives attendees an overview of the Agri-STEM program.*





◀ The Mentor EV Sparkle Cheerleaders proudly display a certificate OSBA's Northeast Region presented to them after their performance.

◀▼ A Talawanda City Fuel Up to Play 60 participant demonstrates one of the program's activities. Butler Tech students secured a grant to launch the program at a Talawanda elementary school.

▼ A member of Southeast Local's (Wayne) Waynedale High School Goldenaires adds her voice to the ensemble.



▲ Meigs Local (Meigs) student Jasmine Goss explains an After School Kids Program activity.

◀ A Wooster City Wooster High School Orchestra cellist is the picture of concentration as she performs with the group.

◀◀ A welding student from Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools operates a virtual welder.



# Districts will honor school board service in January

*Crystal Davis, editor*

From making them Facebook stars to giving them a piece of a new school building, Ohio school districts find creative ways during School Board Recognition Month in January to say “thanks” to their board members.

In 2014, **Northmont City** painted the Northmont “N” on six tiles from a new school building, framed them, then added an engraved “2014 Board Appreciation” plaque below each tile with an individual board member’s name.

Students painted the tiles, which were installed in the Kleptz Early Learning Center as permanent art. **Sycamore Community City** posted biographies of each board member on Facebook and asked the community to thank them.

Each year, recognition month activities range from simple programs held during a January board meeting to elaborate events involving students, staff and parents. Resolutions to honor school boards often are passed by chambers of commerce and other organizations, and editorials are sometimes published in newspapers praising these dedicated community servants.

School districts that submitted information to OSBA about their January 2014 celebrations can be found at [www.ohio-schoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month](http://www.ohio-schoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month). The page will be updated in March with school districts’ 2015 celebrations.

Many may not realize how hard school board members work throughout the year. Other than handing out diplomas and awards during graduation and other ceremonies, the visible rewards of being a school board member are minimal. School Board Recognition Month offers the perfect opportunity for districts to trumpet their board’s accomplishments and honor board members.

While teachers and students enjoy summers and holidays off, school board members work for their districts year-round. In fact, OSBA’s 2014 member survey found that in addition to their board work, the majority of board members:

- Either work a full-time job, are self-employed or are retired.
- Have school-aged children attending school in their district.
- Hold a bachelor’s or master’s degree.
- Are not former school administrators or teachers.

The survey also found that 89% of districts have no former

## A high-profile way to showcase your board

Honor your district’s board members by submitting articles and photos to OSBA that highlight your School Board Recognition Month activities during January. Submissions will be featured in the association’s *Journal* magazine and on its website. A resource kit to help you honor board members is available at [www.ohio-schoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month](http://www.ohio-schoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month).



OSBA also will send each district personalized recognition certificates to present to board members. After your celebrations, submit articles and photos to **Crystal Davis** at [cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org) or 8050 N. High St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43235. You also can submit materials online at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/forms/sbrm.php](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/forms/sbrm.php).

The submission deadline is Feb. 16, 2015.

school administrators on the board and 47% have no former teachers.

Despite outside work and family commitments, board members are expected to attend countless board, committee and community meetings. You might run into them at school events and extracurricular activities; acting as chaperones on student trips or at dances; judging scholarship programs; representing the board on building projects; or talking with kids or parents in the community. They also represent their districts at other community organizations' events.

OSBA's theme for the 2015 School Board Recognition Month is "School boards strengthen public education." And, to empower your recognition efforts, we've again put together an extensive resource kit to help you thank those who serve so selflessly.

The kit contains hundreds of ideas and samples of what other Ohio districts have done to show their appreciation. Draft newsletter articles, editorials, letters, public service announcements and artwork are available at [www.ohio-schoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month](http://www.ohio-schoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month). Each district will receive a large poster and personalized certificates for its board members to use at recognition



*Northmont City students painted tiles in honor of their board members. The tiles were installed as art in the district's new Kleptz Early Learning Center.*

events. For more information, contact the author at (614) 540-4000, ext. 272, or [cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org).

Use the resource kit or come up with your own way to honor all of the extraordinary things school board members do for your district. OSBA looks forward to seeing your pictures, videos and articles. ■

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