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Capital Conference 2015 • Volume 59, Issue 6

JOURNAL

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Lima City's Liberty Arts Magnet Touring Company performs during the Capital Conference's closing General Session. — photo by Gary Motz

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Mission Statement

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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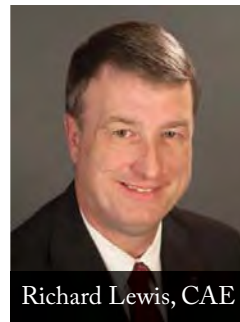
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Staying sharp

Heeding the five lessons of the pencil maker

Richard Lewis, CAE, executive director

The next time you use a pencil, take a long look at it. Close your eyes and recall your school days and your collection of new pencils with flawless erasers and sharpened points ready to take on the learning tasks ahead. A new pencil is indeed a beautiful thing.

Long ago, a pencil maker was preparing to put a very important pencil in a box. Before doing so, he told the pencil, “There are five things you need to know. If you can remember these five things, you will become the best pencil you can possibly be.”

The future belongs to those who see possibilities before they become obvious. That is why OSBA will seize every opportunity and heed the following lessons of the pencil maker.

Lesson one teaches that you can do great things, but only if you allow someone to hold you. Just like the pencil, you must, at times, be carefully guided by people who care. With your dedication and that guidance, not only will you impact the present, you also will be setting the stage for the future. There are few greater calls to public service than paying forward as a school board member.

Children today are learning more, graduation rates are rising and teachers are more qualified than ever before. Ohio’s school facilities are exceptional places to learn. Your dedication has benefited the boards on which you serve.

Last month, voters elected hundreds of men and women to school boards across Ohio. Now, veteran board members and OSBA must help prepare them to carry the banner of public education.

Lesson two is stay sharp. Feedback can be painful at times, but without it you become dull. Constantly take the time to sharpen your skills through self-evaluation. Read as much as you can about leadership, attend workshops, and observe and absorb. Sharpening requires effort, but it’s critical if you want to become a better pencil.

OSBA is a very successful organization with a rich, 60-year tradition of serving school boards. But to stay strong, we need your committed involvement. This association has never been — nor will it ever be — simply a staff in Columbus. OSBA is you. It represents the collective work of more than 700 school boards and nearly 3,500 board members. Its strength lies in remaining true to its roots as a member-driven organization.

Lesson three says that because you have an eraser, you can correct most mistakes, although some may be harder to erase than others. It’s OK to make mistakes — embrace them as opportunities to learn. So, learn, erase and become better!

On average, nearly half of Ohio’s school board members are serving their first term and learning more about board service every day. There can be little debate about the value of experience, and that is what first-term board members are gaining with every challenge they face. Experience is the name we give our mistakes. It is the teacher of all things. It is what allows a leader to make new mistakes instead of repeating old ones.

Lesson four is believe in yourself. We all come in different shapes, sizes and colors — just like pencils. But it’s what’s inside that matters most. You can have a

powerful impact by believing in yourself and your purpose. Our collective voice continues to expand with OSBA’s statewide public awareness 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 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.

Finally, lesson five. No matter what the surface, make sure you leave your mark. You provide the educational foundation that each child needs to pursue college, careers and success in life. No matter how hard, rough or easy, you must continue to write. Don’t give up.

Sometimes you’ll wonder if it is worth it. But hold to your vision, even when it seems to have dimmed. Others are counting on you to move them forward. And you can count on OSBA to move forward with you through demonstrated expertise, active and engaged membership and superior service.

In these difficult times, a strong professional association representing school boards is more important than ever. OSBA *is* that association. Let’s take a look at why.

In 2015, OSBA’s legislative team and member boards successfully lobbied for aid to districts with significant amounts of agricultural land to address

current agricultural use value issues. We blocked efforts to limit districts' right to challenge property valuations and stopped a proposal that would have exempted certain industries from portions of taxes. These measures would have denied Ohio schools badly needed revenue.

We successfully lobbied to change the funding formula that takes local capacity to raise revenues into account. We also were able to reduce the frequency, length and type of student assessments.

We are pleased that the legislature finally acted on our collective calls to increase accountability and transparency for charter school sponsors, governing boards and operators. But our work at the Statehouse is not done. We continue to strongly object to the last-minute addition of the "Youngstown" amendment to House Bill 70. We also are working hard to address the impact of cuts to districts reliant on tangible personal property taxes.

OSBA's attorneys answered thousands of calls this year from members seeking legal information, saving districts tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees. They also issued legal eAlerts to members on crucial case rulings.

The Legal Assistance Fund supported eight cases dealing with matters of statewide significance, including school funding, child abuse reporting, property tax exemptions, open meeting laws, construction contracts and charter

school accountability. OSBA's legal advocacy efforts also extended to the U.S. Supreme Court, where our briefs contributed to favorable judicial rulings for your districts and students.

OSBA continued providing valuable consulting services like strategic planning, executive searches, labor relations, communication, policy development, transportation and more.

To honor our pledge to keep pace with an ever-changing world, OSBA is always innovating. This year saw a transformational change in our use of technology in executive searches and policy development. These services have no equal — in price or innovation — in the field.

OSBA also is pleased to offer a new subscription service beginning in January. This program will expand access to transportation expertise and training. It allows us to better leverage our resources so that more districts can receive affordable transportation guidance.

More importantly, it creates networking channels for administrators responsible for student transportation. Our goal is to ensure each district has the resources to successfully run transportation operations and get the information needed to maintain safety and efficiency.

OSBA, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) and the Ohio Association of School Business

Officials (OASBO) continue to offer SchoolComp, Ohio's largest and most stable workers' compensation pool. The program's combined savings total nearly \$31 million; our Group Retrospective Rating program has provided more than \$7.6 million in premium refunds.

Our three associations also partnered with the Ohio Schools Council to create Power4Schools, an electricity purchasing program that saved members more than \$8 million this past year, bringing members' total savings to \$41.7 million, an amazing return on the investment of your membership dues.

BASA and OASBO are more than just business partners. We greatly value their collaboration in advocacy at the Statehouse and in modeling the concept of the management team. We extend our gratitude and appreciation to the leadership of both associations.

OSBA's relationships with groups sharing our goal of a strong education system are ever expanding. We've collaborated with the State University Education Deans and private colleges to improve teacher preparation.

OSBA pledges to keep working with the State Board of Education and the next state superintendent. OSBA also will continue to reach out to Gov. **John R. Kasich** with the message that by working together, we can propel Ohio and its outstanding system of public education to even greater heights.

Your association marches into 2016 in excellent condition, which is possible only through the shared commitment of the membership, leadership and staff.

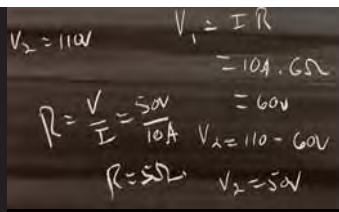
Thank you for everything you do each and every day. The future of millions of children — not to mention our communities and nation — are in the hands of those who lead our schools.

Working together, we can face the future knowing that, by heeding the lessons of the pencil maker, we can all leave a lasting mark. ■



Why are we trying to teach Kyrsten algebra?

Steve Horton, school board services consultant



Finding what's best for kids

The question in the headline is one I asked of attendees at this year's Capital Conference. It was part of a larger discussion about the future of public school boards.

As I prepared to conduct a learning session — “What is the school board of the future?” — I looked at several issues and ideas on the subject presented in a white paper produced by a committee of state association executive directors. The discussion is an important one and deserves our attention.

There is little debate that public education is under attack. Those of us working in the field feel it in a very real way. Consider that our system of public education started during the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century. It was important to support the rapid economic growth and expansion of the time.

Given the significant shifts in our lives now in the 21st century, one can argue that the structure of our education system has seen relatively little change. It has evolved, but has it evolved into something that truly supports the needs of our current society?

Our education system is under extreme scrutiny; there are even some who think the system should be dismantled and rebuilt. There certainly is some dissatisfaction we should address, but public education's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses.

One area of this discussion that needs to be front and center is innovation. If having students take standardized tests online is an example of innovative education, I am clearly missing

something. For me, the notion of innovation goes back to the headline: “Why are we trying to teach **Kyrsten** algebra?”

Who is Kyrsten? She is my 13-year-old daughter in her eighth year of formal education. Kyrsten is pretty clearly defined at this point in her life. She loves to write (especially poetry), and writes amazing stuff. Her teachers love to talk about her unusual depth, wisdom and understanding that transcend her 13 years.

She is moved by music and dance and has a gift for photography. If you ask her what she wants to be when she grows up, she will tell you a photographer.

Kyrsten is *not* a mathematician. We spent five torturous years cramming multiplication into her brain. Not because she has a learning disability, but because it was the last thing she wanted to do. Yes, understanding things like multiplication, subtraction, addition, division, ratios, sets and percentages are all very important and, thankfully, she now gets that.

Unlike her brother, she has no interest in engineering or any other math-related pursuit, and at this point in her life, she never will. Does photography involve math and science? You bet. But she will invest in that learning because she *loves* photography and wants to join the photography club. That's great as long as we can get her to the after-school events and meetings. That certainly cannot get in the way of the important subjects like algebra.

My point is that Kyrsten is not an

unusual or special child. She is like any other child with specific gifts and talents that need to be discovered and nurtured.

I shared portions of a presentation by noted educator and author **Ken Robinson** with the attendees at my Capital Conference learning session. In his presentation about children and creativity, he tells the story of **Gillian Lynne**. As a young child, her school identified her as a discipline problem, and requested her parents attend a meeting with a specialist to help identify Gillian's issues.

Toward the end of the meeting, the specialist turned on a radio to let music play and asked her mother to leave the room. It wasn't long before Gillian started dancing around the room. Taking the specialist's advice, Gillian's mother put her in a dance school.

There, she thrived with many other children who could not sit still. She went on to a brilliant career as a dancer and choreographer. She choreographed shows like “Cats” and “The Phantom of the Opera.” How easily could Gillian have gone on to be just another unhappy discipline problem?

In the end, wouldn't it be wonderful if our school board governance questions could be focused on the means for discovering the best in our children? Once their basic educational needs have been addressed, how can we provide for those students in new and innovative ways? Wouldn't that be more fruitful than squabbles about who has more authority and power and who is right? ■



Are body cameras right for your school district?

Sara C. Clark, director of legal services

An Iowa school district made headlines earlier this year when it became one of the first in the nation to outfit its administrators with body cameras to record their interactions with parents and students.

In September, as part of President Barack Obama's commitment to "building trust and transparency between law enforcement and the communities they serve," the U.S. Department of Justice awarded grants totaling more than \$23.2 million to law enforcement agencies in 32 states to expand the use of body cameras and explore their impact. Legislation in Texas became effective in early September to specifically require policies to regulate the use, maintenance and retention of body cameras and the footage they capture.

In light of the growing popularity of body cameras, let's look at the pros and cons of using the cameras, as well as some of the legal issues districts should consider prior to their use.

Pros and cons

School districts and law enforcement agencies that have chosen to use body cameras say they are useful for

What are body cameras?

Body cameras are small video cameras — typically attached to clothing — that capture video and audio recordings of activities and incidents from an officer or administrator's point of view. Although they vary in size, most body cameras are roughly the size of a pager.

monitoring school environments and evaluating school incidents. By providing a video record of incidents, body cameras have made school operations more transparent to the public and have helped resolve questions following an encounter among officers, administrators and students.

Unlike traditional surveillance methods, body cameras are more likely to capture close-up images of individual students and fall within the purview of FERPA.

Those in favor of using the cameras also have said the devices are helping prevent problems from arising in the first place by increasing professionalism and elevating behavior on both sides of the lens. In addition, since we operate in a world in which anyone with a cellphone camera can record video footage of an encounter with district administrators or law enforcement, body cameras can help ensure events also are captured from the district's perspective.

The potential negative impact on relationships with students is often cited as a reason for not using body cameras. Body cameras might impede a school resource officer's (SRO) ability to build connections and may serve as a barrier to the already daunting task school-based police and administrators

face in building trusting relationships with students. Those relationships are frequently seen as one of the most powerful tools in ensuring the district's safety and security.

In schools, where inappropriate use of physical force by police is far less common than it is out in the community, some believe that student privacy concerns outweigh any potential benefits from using cameras. This is the position taken by the American Civil Liberties Union, which argues that body cameras present a real threat to students' privacy and contribute to the creation of an environment in schools of "pervasive surveillance." The group argues that activities of police, on the "rare occasions when operating in schools is justified," should be closely and actively monitored by school officials, not by body cameras.

Student privacy rights

School officials are regularly asked to balance the interests of safety and privacy for individual students. In the realm of student privacy rights, the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits school districts from disclosing personally identifiable information from students' education records without the consent of a parent or eligible student, unless an exception applies. "Education records" are defined as all records, files, documents and other materials containing information directly related to a student that is maintained by an education agency or institution.

Whether the images of students captured on body cameras are education records subject to FERPA depends

on a number of factors, including who in the district is wearing the cameras. For example, many school districts employ security staff to monitor safety and security in and around schools. Some schools employ off-duty police officers as SROs. Other districts designate a particular school official to be responsible for referring potential or alleged violations of law to local police.

Under FERPA, records, including electronic records, created and maintained by these “law enforcement units” are not considered “education records.” That means schools may disclose information from law enforcement unit records to anyone — including outside law enforcement authorities — without parental consent.

This is true even if the unit performs some non-law enforcement duties, such as conducting investigations or allowing other school officials to view the footage for student disciplinary purposes. In other words, a law enforcement official could share a copy of the footage from his or her body camera with a school official responsible for discipline and the footage would not lose its status as a “law-enforcement record.” However, if a school official receives a copy of the footage — rather than simply viewing it — then it becomes an education record subject to FERPA since the footage is no longer being maintained by the law enforcement unit.

In situations in which the individuals wearing the body cameras are strictly school employees and not tied to a law enforcement agency, a different approach is necessary. In those situations, because the district is maintaining the footage, it’s likely that the images will be an education record subject to FERPA. This assumes that the footage “directly relates” to an individual student.

Unlike traditional surveillance methods that tend to capture students in the background not directly involved in an incident, body cameras are much

more likely to capture close-up images of individual students. As a result, it’s more likely that the footage from body cameras will “directly relate” to an individual student and fall within the purview of FERPA.

Other considerations

Prior to using body cameras, districts should consult with local law enforcement agencies, legal counsel and other stakeholders to develop body camera policies and procedures. In addition to the privacy concerns already discussed, these conversations should take into consideration the following:

- Who should wear the cameras? Should it be limited to those serving in a law enforcement capacity or will administrators be assigned or permitted to wear the cameras as well? This decision will depend on the district or agency’s resources, needs and other factors.
- What should be recorded? Should administrators and officers be required to record every interaction with students, or are there situations in which recording should be discretionary or prohibited? Administrators and officers should receive clear guidelines for when they should activate a camera or discontinue a recording currently in progress.
- How long should the recorded data be retained? The district’s RC-2 (records retention) schedule should be consulted for help in answering this question. The content of the footage, not the format of the data, is what determines how long the recorded information should be retained.
- What are the costs of implementation? The price of body cameras currently ranges from approximately \$120 to nearly \$2,000 per device. However, many districts and law enforcement agencies state that data storage is the most expensive aspect of a body camera program. The cost of that storage will depend on how many videos are produced, how long they are kept and where they are stored.

Like any new technology, body cameras have the potential to dramatically impact districts, administrators and students. To ensure that the transition to the cameras is a positive experience, districts must think critically about the issues they raise and give careful consideration when developing body camera policies and practices.

For more information about the latest trends in technology and their potential legal impact on districts, please attend the OSBA legal division’s Cyberlaw — Technology and the Law Seminar on March 18 in Columbus. To register, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/41890> or contact Laurie Miller at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org. ■

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What will bargaining look like in the future?

Van D. Keating, director of management services

I recently had a somewhat unique opportunity to talk with a board of education about trends in bargaining processes, both at the state and national level. I am familiar with what is going on in Ohio. However, looking at national trends required a bit of research, and I discovered some interesting movements.

In Ohio, collective public sector bargaining has always been approached in a traditional, adversarial manner. Ohio Revised Code Chapter 4117 clearly contemplates this approach and, historically, that's what most districts have done for almost 50 years.

Traditional bargaining is the process in which bargaining teams from management and the employees' union meet, exchange proposals, make counterproposals, reach agreements and, ultimately, ratify a contract of

between one to three years. If the parties can't reach agreement on their own, an impasse is declared, and mediation, fact-finding or arbitration of some manner is used to, hopefully, reach an agreement.

If that fails, employees can go on strike or the public employer can implement the terms and conditions of employment. While this is a gross simplification of the traditional bargaining process, it is easy to see how it can be contentious and time-consuming.

Alternative bargaining processes, sometimes called win-win or IBB (interest-based bargaining), attempt to avoid the contentiousness of traditional bargaining by substituting a healthy dose of cooperative problem-solving instead of two separate teams arguing their way toward a middle ground. Alternative bargaining methods initially

found favor with some Ohio districts in the 1990s and have grown in popularity ever since.

Statistically, Ohio districts are one of the greatest adherents of alternative bargaining in the country. But because most negotiated agreements contain language indicative of a traditional bargaining process, the parties will have to be trained in the new process and mutually adopt new ground rules before actual negotiations can start. For most districts, this is not an impediment, but does require the parties to spend more time thinking about *how* they bargain instead of *what* they bargain.

Between traditional bargaining and alternative bargaining are myriad hybrids that use elements of both processes. Sometimes these are referred to as modified traditional

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People stopping by my booth at OSBA in November offered these types of comments about having future ballot issues: "Oh gosh, I hope not!" "Thankfully, no." "Whew!" (how they feel when they finally pass a vote). "Thank heavens" (there's no need). "Painless would be good!"

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negotiations. Usually, the traditional aspect of developing actual proposals is delayed until after the parties have had broad discussions on the issues. In my experience, traditional modified bargaining has served as a stopgap for a period of time, after which the parties usually transition into a complete alternative bargaining process.

Nationally, there seems to be great interest in what is called open or public negotiations. Regardless of the process used to negotiate collective bargaining agreements, Ohio is like many other states in that the actual negotiations take place in meetings not open to the public.

Ohio law requires negotiations to be conducted in public if attended by a majority of the board and not held in executive session. However, without a majority, negotiations are not required to be held in public, and negotiation meetings are generally not advertised or open to the public. Many collective

bargaining agreements specifically identify who can attend, participate in and/or observe the meetings. Therefore, the practice in Ohio does not equate to conducting negotiations in the public eye.

Other states' laws differ in this respect, and there is a movement to require that negotiations be conducted openly in the interests of transparency. The law in two states, Tennessee and Florida, mandates open negotiations. Several other states come close, although critics note that in many such situations, public employers and unions find ways around these laws to keep the public out. Interestingly, in one study, Ohio rates higher regarding transparency in collective bargaining than 45 other states.

Not surprisingly, union groups strongly oppose opening negotiations to public scrutiny, claiming it only serves to "bust" the union. Management also often

opposes these efforts, claiming open negotiations sessions will not permit direct and frank discussions on sensitive issues. Supporters argue that open negotiations serve a greater public good in allowing taxpayers to see exactly how a district spends public dollars.

OSBA does not have a position on any of these bargaining processes or the issue of open negotiations. The association has always believed that the parties, at a local level, should select and use whatever method best suits their needs. Some districts have made great strides in using alternative bargaining, while others have used traditional processes to great effect over the years.

One size does not fit all, nor should it. Open negotiations do present a greater challenge to the process because they bring in a third party: the public. Whether that is good or bad remains to be seen, but on a national level, it is a discussion that is just beginning. ■

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Testifying for public schools

Thorough, efficient safe; elected boards at risk

Damon Asbury, director of legislative services

The June 2013 issue of the OSBA *Journal* previewed the anticipated work of the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission (OCMC). With the establishment of OCMC, Ohioans are provided the opportunity for a constitutional convention; the last one occurred in 1912.

Since that time, the state has established official commissions to review and update the constitution. Prior to the current commission, the most recent review and update were completed in 1977.

The current commission was established in Ohio Revised Code 103.61 with the passage of House Bill (HB) 188 in the 129th General Assembly. While its initial organizational efforts began in 2011, substantive work did not get underway until late 2012. Originally slated to conclude by 2021, the General Assembly in HB 153 recently shortened the OCMC lifespan by three years to 2018.

One of the first items presented to the Education, Public Institutions and Local

Government Committee was a proposal to eliminate a very important clause in the Ohio Constitution. That clause is in Article VI, Section 2, which states, in part, that “The General Assembly shall make such provisions ... as will secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state.”

While the “thorough and efficient” clause has been protected, the principle of governance by elected board members may be at risk.

Committee Chair **Chad Reader**, who offered the proposal, believed the clause to be too vague and invited judicial intervention, saying such determinations more properly belonged to the legislature.

Following months of discussion and

deliberation, the OCMC committee voted to retain the “thorough and efficient” clause. This outcome is considered to be very important, as it served, in part, as the focal point for the 1997 Ohio Supreme Court *DeRolph v. State of Ohio* ruling that Ohio’s system of funding primary and secondary education was unconstitutional. In this landmark school finance case, the court determined that the state of Ohio had failed to meet its constitutional obligation to “secure a thorough and efficient system of common schools.”

Throughout the hearings, a number of individuals and organizations offered testimony to support retaining the clause. Among those testifying in support were OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis** and this article’s author. These collective efforts prevailed. On Dec. 10, the full commission voted to accept the committee’s recommendation, which means this key clause will remain in the constitution.

The committee has now turned its attention to Article VI, Section 3, Public School Systems Boards of Education, and Section 4, State Board of Education. In this year’s May and July meetings, the commission heard presentations from four school board members representing different types of school districts.

At the May meeting, OSBA President-elect **Eric K. Germann, Lincolnview Local (Van Wert)** and **Vantage Career Center**, described the role of a board member in small and rural districts. **Gary L. Baker II, Columbus City** board president, discussed the challenges of serving as a board member in a large urban school district. Commission

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members asked both board members about any difficulties in attracting qualified individuals to serve on boards of education.

At least one commission member, Franklin County Commissioner **Paula Brooks**, noted that **Cleveland Municipal** has an appointed board. She asked if districts should have the flexibility to choose between an elected or appointed board. Both board members noted that they preferred local control through elected boards of education.



School board members Albert Haberstroh, Trumbull County ESC, above, and Sue Steele, Goshen Local (Clermont) and Great Oaks Career Campuses, previous page, testify before the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission.

Reader asked about the balance of power between the legislature and local school boards. Another committee member, state Rep. **Mike Curtin** (D-Marble Cliff), encouraged board members to become more assertive and outspoken when communicating with their legislators.

At the July meeting, the committee heard from board members representing ESCs and JVSDs. **Albert Haberstroh, Trumbull County ESC**, and **Sue Steele, Goshen Local (Clermont)** and **Great Oaks Career Campuses**, offered testimony on the roles of their respective types of districts and governing boards.

Steele emphasized the scope of vocational and career development opportunities available to adults in the

community as well as to secondary students. She also addressed difficulties with recently adopted legislation that changed the composition and terms of the JVSD boards. Commission members asked if the necessary corrective measures should be constitutional or legislative.

Haberstroh noted that ESCs function as a resource for districts and their staffs, offering special education services, professional development and other services. He pointed out that the services ESCs provide to districts are more efficient and cost-effective on a countywide or regional basis. He also supported elected rather than appointed ESC members.

Following the school board members' presentations, the committee raised further questions about elected versus appointed boards of education. Committee member and former Gov. **Bob Taft** asked legal counsel how communities might move to an appointed board, if so interested. OCMC Senior Policy Advisor **Steven H. Steinglass** noted that it could be done in one of two ways — through a petition process or a top-down, legislatively imposed process.

Steinglass said that the only current example in Ohio was in Cleveland, where voters did approve an appointed board. Recent legislation, HB 70, establishes the framework for creating an appointed board in Youngstown and any other community that falls under the purview of an academic distress commission.

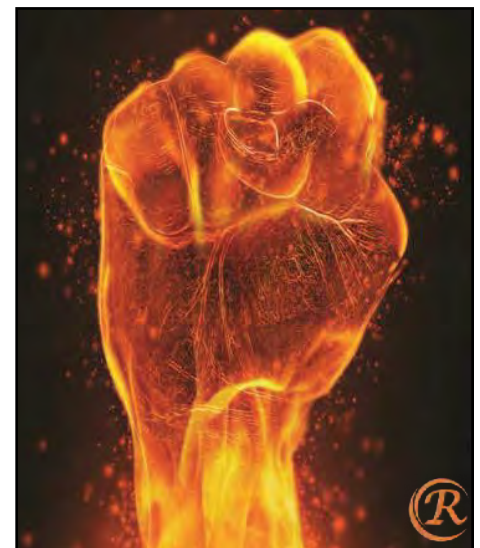
The most recent issue before the committee is the role of the State Board of Education. Based on testimony and comments at the November meeting, it would appear that some members question the purpose of and need for the board, while others believe it should be expanded. Questions also were raised about current provisions that permit the governor to appoint eight of the 19 members.

William L. Phillis, executive director of the Ohio Coalition for Equity &

Adequacy of School Funding, said he believes the current situation leads to more partisan decisions and less continuity in education policy. Others expressed concern about how well the public knows who serves on the State Board and how they are held accountable.

Reader noted that the absence of a State Board might give more power to local leaders. It is anticipated that significant discussion on the school board section of the constitution will need to take place before the committee offers any recommendations.

The interest in appointed boards from at least some commission members is intriguing and based on little or no apparent public demand. While the voices of education stakeholders have protected the “thorough and efficient” clause, the bedrock principle of governance through elected board members appears to be at risk. It is imperative that we make our voices and opinions known on this vitally important issue. ■



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A behind-the-scenes look at your membership

Amanda Finney, senior marketing and trade show manager

For 60 years, OSBA has been the only state association that works for boards of education and their school districts. As a board member, OSBA is *your* association and has a well-established reputation for service and advocacy on behalf of public education.

The value of OSBA programs, services and information makes your association membership a smart investment for your district. Your entire district's management team is eligible to receive many services in return for your membership dues.

This article highlights some of the behind-the-scenes work performed by the association on behalf of your district. These are just some of the outstanding benefits your district has gained by being a member of OSBA. For a comprehensive look at what your membership provides your district, visit the OSBA website at www.ohioschoolboards.org.

Advocacy efforts

The association advocates tirelessly for its membership and on behalf of public education. Through testimonies given at the Statehouse, workshops, webinars, publications and more, OSBA works to ensure its members are heard and understood by legislators.

OSBA lobbyists advocate strongly for Ohio's schoolchildren and their districts. A sampling of the legislative goals for this year, include:

- aiding districts with significant agricultural land to address current agricultural use value issues;
- blocking efforts to limit districts'

right to challenge property valuations and stopping a proposal to exempt industries from portions of taxes;

- continuing to push for accountability and transparency for charter school sponsors and their boards;
- working hard to limit the damage from the Youngstown amendment to House Bill 70 that threatens local control;
- continuing to raise money for *Kids PAC*, OSBA's political action committee supporting school districts.

Your entire district's management team is eligible to receive many services in return for your membership dues.

Another important way OSBA works to promote public education in a positive light is through the association's statewide public awareness campaign — Stand Up for Public Schools. With the goal of raising awareness of the value and success of Ohio public schools, this campaign focuses on community and business leaders to show the effectiveness of public schools and locally elected boards. To see this campaign in action and more good news about public schools, visit www.standupforohiopublicschools.org.

Legal assistance

OSBA attorneys provide tremendous

support to members. The legal team answers thousands of calls from members seeking legal information, saving school districts thousands of dollars in legal fees. This year, a legal hotline was instituted to better assist members. The hotline can be reached during business hours at (855) OSBA-LAW.

Also, the Division of Legal Services conducts in-person workshops, writes publications and legal updates and continuously communicates with members on hot topics. In 2015, OSBA's Legal Assistance Fund (LAF) supported eight public education cases dealing with matters of statewide significance and also filed briefs with the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Ohio school districts.

For a recap of 2015 LAF activities, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/86891>. For information on joining LAF, visit <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/24927>.

Money-saving programs

OSBA is committed to providing exclusive cost-saving programs to its members. The association seeks programs that not only add value to your district, but also save you money in the process. Below are just some of the annual savings provided by OSBA's endorsed programs.

- Member districts have saved more than \$30 million by participating in the SchoolComp program — the largest workers' compensation pool in the state.
- Power4Schools, an electricity purchasing program, has saved members more than \$41 million.



- Other programs such as OSBA’s endorsed property, fleet, liability and violence coverage, and school safety and security programs help schools save money while keeping students safe.

Professional development

The association provides members with one of the largest annual education events in the country — the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show. With more than 9,000 in attendance each year and international vendors in the OSBA Trade Show, the conference truly has something for everyone. In 2015, more than 90% of Ohio public school districts attended the conference.

The training does not stop with the Capital Conference. This year, the association conducted more than 100 workshops and webinars with nearly 3,000 board members, administrators and other personnel attending. The association also offers customized workshops to address a district’s specific needs.

In addition, there’s the Board Leadership Institute held each spring in Columbus. This comprehensive, two-day event is designed exclusively for board members by board members.

OSBA continually strives to help you succeed by offering superior and creative solutions for your management team. Visit the association website to jump-start your workshop planning for 2016.

Technology evolution

In 2015, OSBA offered forward-thinking solutions to help change the way your board does business. Highlighted below are some new methods to help you engage, stay connected and receive superior service.

- Association apps — OSBA offers a Capital Conference app for Apple and Android devices because more members are using electronic devices for meetings and events. The association also created a school district directory app that includes

contact information for school buildings and school administrators, enrollment information, report card ratings and driving directions to school buildings. You can find this app by searching for “OSBA” in the app stores.

- Endorsed programs — Many of OSBA’s endorsed programs embrace technology to help schools with business operations. Examples include paperless governance solutions, an online safety compliance program, online purchasing, online payment programs for school fees and many more.
- Executive searches — OSBA has created the Electronic Search Online Application Process to streamline the executive search process. The association also offers the Achiever tool, an Internet-based assessment test that helps school districts screen and select

candidates for executive positions.

- Policy services — The association provides online services such as Web conversion of policies and the *Policy Development Quarterly* e-newsletter, which features a webinar with each issue to ensure subscribers are getting the most up-to-date information.
- Transportation services — In 2016, OSBA will offer a Virtual Transportation Supervisor program to expand access to district transportation departments for training, expertise and guidance.

More information

I encourage you to take advantage of all of OSBA’s resources to maximize the return on your dues investment to benefit your district. Remember to visit the association website — www.ohioschoolboards.org — to see a comprehensive overview of OSBA’s services. OSBA truly is working for you. ■



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Celebrating public



OSBA President Ed Penrod, Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking) and Tri-County Career Center, welcomes attendees to the 60th annual Capital Conference during the First General Session. Onstage with him is Logan-Hocking's Marching Chieftains band.

The 60th annual OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show was a resounding success by any measure. More than 9,000 public education leaders from around the state and beyond gathered in Columbus from Nov. 8 through Nov. 11 for a four-day celebration of leadership and learning.

The conference is Ohio's "must-attend" educational event of the year, with participation from more than 90% of the state's more than 700 public school districts. The event's stellar reputation as a premier professional development event is reflected in its continued standing as the second-largest education conference in the nation. And the Trade Show — with 559 exhibitor booths — maintained its ranking as the biggest exhibition of education-related goods and services in the U.S.

Special events at the conference also recorded impressive numbers. Nearly 550 attendees enjoyed the two Conference Luncheons. The Early Bird Workshop, featuring a new format in 2015, attracted more than 125 education leaders. The Student Achievement Fair again was filled with 100 booths. The OSBA Black Caucus Dinner drew about 140 attendees.

In addition, each of the three General Sessions — the conference's marquee events — was packed with thousands of attendees learning from inspiring world-class keynote speakers.

"Leadership for Learning" is the Capital Conference's guiding principle, and that principle abounded in nearly 200 workshops, seminars, information sessions, luncheons, networking receptions and other events. Leaders honed their

education

*Gary Motz,
managing editor*

skills as they learned from each other by sharing their expertise, experiences, challenges and solutions. Ideas flowed freely among school board members, superintendents and other administrators, students, teachers, OSBA staff and more.

The conference curriculum featured 24 categories of learning sessions with a rich range of topics. Categories covered everything from 21st century learning; board development; administration; ESCs; and career centers to rural and urban schools; finance and facilities; legal issues; human resources; and safety and wellness. Others included new board members; state learning standards; student achievement; student issues; technology; leadership development; and community relations.

A series of Spotlight Sessions offered in-depth looks at critical issues. Topics included: how to set up and run a command center during a school crisis; ways to raise minority and urban student achievement; the effect of cultural code switching on student achievement and school climate; the impact of House Bill 70 on **Youngstown City** Schools; initiatives to help urban students succeed; and a legislative update.

The General Session speakers offered a diverse blend of perspectives on the future of education, perseverance and lifelong learning. They were:

- Nov. 9, former space shuttle astronaut and NASA education administrator **Leland Melvin**;
- Nov. 10, renowned educational media expert Dr. **Milton Chen**;
- Nov. 11, award-winning broadcast journalist **Jane Pauley**.

See “Conference keynote speakers deliver inspiration, optimism” on page 17 for coverage of these three outstanding speakers.

The Early Bird Workshop helped kick off the conference on Nov. 8. The session featured the Apple Leadership Forum, with Apple Inc. representatives exploring the latest in digital learning. For full coverage of the workshop, see “Untethered technology teaches in many ways” on page 26.

The OSBA Black Caucus dinner also was held on the first day of the conference. The scheduled keynote speaker, former state Sen. **Nina Turner**, was unable to attend, and educator, author and children’s advocate **LaMarqué D. Ward Sr.**, CEO of

Dream Builders University, filled in for her.

Ward presented an inspirational talk about the profound effect his teachers had on him as a child and how that educational experience led to his current success. He now devotes himself to giving back to schools and communities by supporting at-risk youth in the Cincinnati area through his work with Dream Builders University.

The dinner also featured performances by **East Cleveland City’s** Shaw High School Progeny jazz band and **Maple Heights City’s** Maple Heights High School Gospel Choir. In addition, art created by students in the Franklin County Children Services Therapeutic Arts Program was on display.

Proceeds from the dinner benefit the Leo Lucas Scholarship Program, which provides graduating seniors funds for college expenses. Lucas, who died in 2008 at the age of 95, was a longtime **Dayton City** Board of Education member and educator who founded the OSBA Black Caucus.



A vendor passes out tasty treats during the Trade Show.

A different format greeted attendees at the Monday Conference Luncheon on Nov. 9. Instead of a speaker, this year's event featured a lunch-and-learn session called the Collaboration Connection. Attendees held discussions with their peers and OSBA staff on a host of subjects crucial to running a successful school district. About 240 people took advantage of this new opportunity. See "Inaugural Collaboration Connection a success" on page 31 for more on this innovative lunch and learn.

Anthony Muñoz headlined Tuesday's Conference Luncheon on Nov. 10, with more than 300 in attendance. The former Cincinnati Bengals standout and Pro Football Hall of Fame member talked about the challenges he faced while growing up, his football career and his work with the Anthony Muñoz Foundation. The nonprofit organization's mission is to educate, encourage, inspire, recognize and reward Cincinnati-area youth, many of whom face significant challenges in life.

See "Muñoz's NFL fame boosts foundation's work with kids" on page 29 for further details on his presentation.

The Annual Business Meeting of the OSBA Delegate Assembly is conducted annually at the Capital Conference.

This year, delegates approved amendments to the OSBA Legislative Platform; elected **Denise Baba, Streetsboro City**, as OSBA's 2016 president-elect; and heard Executive Director **Richard Lewis'** annual report on the state of the association. To learn more about the Delegate Assembly's action, see "Delegates OK platform changes, select president-elect" on page 24.

Planning for the 2016 Capital Conference and Trade Show has already begun. In addition to attending, consider applying to present a learning session or nominating one of your school district's exemplary programs or outstanding performing groups for the Student Achievement Fair. There also will be openings for workshop moderators. Watch OSBA's publications, eAlerts and website for further information on these opportunities to participate.

Next year's conference is Nov. 13-16, so mark your calendar now and make plans to attend. Nowhere else will public education leaders find such an extensive offering of high-quality training at such an affordable cost.

Be sure to take advantage of all the learning and leadership the Capital Conference provides — it's an investment that will repay itself many times over. ■



Conneaut Area City sixth-graders Nick Osborne, right, and Ben Penniman greet an attendee before the district's learning session on student mentoring. Both boys served as presenters at the session, along with Conneaut Superintendent Michael R. Notar, left.

Conference keynote speakers deliver inspiration, optimism



Two school board members join keynote speaker Leland Melvin for a selfie following his Nov. 9 presentation. Melvin, a former space shuttle astronaut and NASA education administrator, spoke at the First General Session.

Scott Gerfen, assistant editor

Attendees at the 2015 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show heard from a trio of General Session speakers who encouraged thousands of public education leaders to not only think about their future, but also how they can better the lives of others.

Former astronaut and engineer **Leland Melvin** shared his personal journey from a Virginia high school football field to outer space, and how those around him helped him persevere. Melvin is the only person drafted by the National Football League (NFL) to have traveled in space. His Detroit Lions jersey hangs in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Dr. **Milton Chen** has been a leading figure in educational media for more than 20 years. He has made it his life's work to improve education in the digital age. His message highlighted

the role of technology inside and outside the classroom.

Awarding-winning TV journalist **Jane Pauley** had to reimagine her life after spending nearly 40 years in front of the camera as co-host of NBC's "Today" show, "Dateline NBC" and other programs. She inspired attendees to imagine their future as she shared stories of people 50 and older starting different careers, learning new skills, making a difference or pursuing their dreams.

The speakers shared more of their time after the General Sessions to meet with attendees while signing books and posing for photos.

The power of believing in someone

Many of us know that moment that changed everything —

the big break that moves you forward in your life or career.

Leland Melvin might be most recognized from the famous 2009 NASA photo with his two dogs, Jake and Scout. He's also hosted the Lifetime channel's "Child Genius."

But you likely don't know the people who helped this product of public education get to outer space or catch footballs for the Dallas Cowboys.

"When I think back, there are so many who inspired me and believed in me," Melvin told the audience at the First General Session.

As the son of two public school teachers growing up in Lynchburg, Va., there was plenty of curiosity and exploration in his childhood.

Melvin's interest in engineering began at an early age when his father told him there was no money to buy a skateboard. He wasn't discouraged. Melvin found a piece of wood to carve and landed a paper route to help pay for the wheels.

During the summer, his dad brought home a bread truck that would be converted to an RV for summer vacations. Melvin helped build the flip-down beds and propane stove.

His mother was equally as motivating, but in different ways.

"What inspired me besides my public education was my mother reading to me at night *The Little Engine That Could* to the point where, even before I could read, I could recite the entire book from memory," Melvin recalled. "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can, I think I can, I know I can. So when things got tough, I was able to resort back to the book."

Things did get tough. Before Melvin made it into space or appeared on television, he was an NFL receiver, drafted by the Detroit Lions in 1986, the same year he enrolled at the University of Virginia to study materials science and engineering.

A severe hamstring injury suffered during a practice — first with the Detroit Lions and later with the Dallas Cowboys — ended his NFL career. However, it led him to a new passion.

NASA was looking for astronauts, and Melvin thought his athleticism and engineering experience would make him a good candidate. He applied and soon learned he would be among the 25 astronauts selected from 2,500 applicants to train for work at the International Space Station.

The demanding training included being submerged in a large pool to train for spacewalks. Astronauts press their nose against a small pad to clear their ears when going down in the water. When Melvin touched the pad, he couldn't hear a thing. As he was pulled from the water, there was blood coming from his ears.

"There was nothing but white noise," he said.

Melvin's hearing would eventually return. However, he was told the medical condition would disqualify him from going to space. From there he headed to Washington, D.C., where he would work in one of NASA's education programs.

Around that time, space shuttle Columbia disintegrated over Texas and Louisiana as it re-entered Earth's atmosphere on Feb. 1, 2003. All seven crew members died.

Melvin traveled across the country to attend memorial services. As he consoled the parents of **David Brown**, an astronaut who died, he was struck by the comments of Brown's father.

"He told me it would be a tragedy if we didn't continue to fly in space," Melvin said.

Melvin wanted to do anything he could to continue that



Educational media expert Dr. Milton Chen stresses a point during his Second General Session presentation Nov. 10.

legacy. He soon would get the opportunity. The chief flight surgeon had been keeping an eye on Melvin's ear injury and was ready to give him a waiver to fly in space. It was the big break he'd been waiting for.

On Feb. 8, 2008, Melvin was aboard space shuttle Atlantis as it roared into space. He had made it.

Melvin hasn't forgotten those who provided the encouragement to persevere. They include his high school football coach who made certain Melvin would forget about a pass he dropped during the homecoming game his senior year.

"He said get out there and catch the ball," Melvin said. "We ran the same play. I caught it, and we won the game."

A college scout just happened to be watching that night. He saw someone recover from failure.

That one catch resulted in a scholarship to the University of Richmond, where his journey to space began. The twists and turns and opportunities and support carried Melvin along the way.

"It was all because I had a coach who believed in me," he said.

The future of learning

Imagine a nation where the education of children and adults is of the utmost importance — a focus that is on par with a strong economy and national security.

Educator and best-selling author Dr. Milton Chen asked the audience at the Second General Session, "Can we truly become the education nation?"

To do that, the senior fellow and executive director emeritus at the George Lucas Educational Foundation (GLEF) said we must change the way people think about education. He has been at the forefront of K-12 teaching and learning as it has been transformed in the information age.

"Our job is to find the innovative projects out there and show them to you," Chen said. "There are millions of kids out there with talents and interests, and now we have ways of reaching those students."

Among those kids, specifically, are students who might not thrive in the traditional educational setting where a teacher stands in front of a classroom filled with students at desks.

As executive director of GLEF, Chen was instrumental in creating **Edutopia.org**, a multimedia website that receives more than a million visits each month from administrators, teachers, parents and students.

It was the perfect fit for Chen, who previously was director of research at the Children's Television Workshop, where he helped produce "Sesame Street," "The Electric Company" and "3-2-1 Contact."

"Five million preschoolers would watch the content and learn," Chen said. "What was even better is that if parents or child caregivers could reinforce that program content."

With that foundation intact, Chen and others set out to make Edutopia an "idea factory" for education. They were determined to make it the premier online community that advances 21st century learning skills.

The Internet, Chen said, is home to a world of knowledge for



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students, who need the infrastructure and tools, such as mobile devices and laptops, to tap into that knowledge. The idea is to make school life more like real life.

“We must create a new day of learning, 24/7/365 learning,” Chen said. “It’s about trying to make sure that every student knows that what they’re learning applies to themselves, their families and their communities.”

In looking at how school systems are reinventing themselves, Chen’s presentation highlighted the six leading edges of innovation, the topic of his most recent book, *Education Nation: Six Leading Edges of Innovation in our Schools*.

He introduced those leading edges in a 2010 blog post on Edutopia.org:

- **The Thinking Edge:** Changing our thinking about teaching and learning and calling a truce to the wasteful education wars that pit one school of thought against another — from the reading wars of phonics skills versus “whole language” and children’s literature to the debate over 21st century skills versus “core curriculum.”
- **The Edge of Curriculum:** All around the country, schools and districts, as well as after-school programs, are redefining what is taught and how it’s assessed. Importantly, through project-based learning, creative educators are relating curricula to students’ lives, so their students never ask the most frequently asked question in most schools: “Why do we need to learn this?”
- **The Technology Edge:** From the Internet to mobile devices and online curricula and courses, technology-based content, platforms and experiences are enabling students to learn more, earlier. They also are helping teachers make the learning process more visible to themselves, their students and parents.
- **The Edge of Time and Place:** Learning can now truly be

Conference gained following on Twitter

Those who attended the 2015 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show took to social media to share their experiences and connect with others who were at the event.

School board members, administrators and educators used Twitter to share what they were learning at the conference. Exhibitors highlighted their booths at the Trade Show. Teachers made sure their groups participating in the Student Achievement Fair received recognition.

During the four-day event, more than 1,000 tweets were shared using the conference hashtag, #OSBACC. OSBA used Twitter to update attendees and share the conference experience with those who could not attend. OSBA’s conference tweets were viewed nearly 40,000 times by Twitter users.

24/7/365 rather than limited to what happens in a classroom six hours a day, five days a week, 31 weeks a year.

- **The Co-Teaching Edge:** Rather than the traditional model of one teacher in a room with 30 students, smart teachers involve a team of “co-educators” in student learning, from parents — a child’s first and most important teacher — to other teachers and content experts in the community and online.
- **The Youth Edge:** Today’s youth are becoming the first generation to carry powerful mobile devices wherever they go. Students are used to instantly accessing information and their entire social network.

In embracing change, one also must measure its success, Chen said. He believes student evaluation often is viewed as the equivalent to testing, while most people agree that the real purpose of assessment should be to improve student learning.

Chen said he asked **Paul Houston**, the former executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, “What makes a good school?”

Houston’s answer was short and simple, “Do the children run in at the same rate they run out?”

The calling to reimagine the rest of your life

Jane Pauley didn’t forget the return trip to her Indianapolis high school several years ago.

The former “Today” show and “Dateline NBC” co-host was invited back as a former state debate and public speaking champion to be photographed with the new state championship team for the yearbook.

Needless to say, she was looking forward to the homecoming. But she was unprepared for the sight that awaited her as she arrived. The entire student body had lined the driveway into the school.

“I was, as you can imagine, a little overwhelmed,” Pauley told the audience at the Third General Session. “Until a little voice in the back of my head interrupted (me). ‘It’s a fire drill!’ It was.”

Warren Central High School is where Pauley made the cheerleading squad as a freshman. However, she began to explore her calling a year later when she didn’t make the squad.

“It was the saddest and the luckiest day of my life,” Pauley said. “If I had made cheerleader in 10th grade, someone else would be standing here talking to you now.”

With her weekends free, Pauley was able to discover something she was genuinely good at — public speaking.

She still considers herself to be paying off student debt — her



*Veteran broadcast journalist Jane Pauley smiles before starting her presentation at the Third General Session. Pauley shared stories about the people she met while conducting interviews for her latest book, *Your Life Calling: Reimagining the Rest of Your Life*.*

debt to public schools and the teachers who made her career and life possible.

From the local TV station in Indianapolis, Pauley made her way to the “Today” show and became a symbol for professional women and female journalists.

But in 2004, her television career came to a pause. “The Jane Pauley Show,” a syndicated daytime talk show, never gained traction and was canceled after one season.

Like many over the age of 50, the end of the show brought a real fear. What would Pauley do for the next 30 or 40 years? Is it possible for baby boomers to reinvent themselves later in life?

Pauley spent a good portion of her midcareer transition sitting on her living room couch, researching the numerous possibilities. That’s when she came across a newspaper headline that would eventually inspire her.

“It said inspiration is everywhere, but you have to be looking,” Pauley said.

She found her mission.

Pauley hit the road and began interviewing regular people

who had taken new career paths after age 50. These second chances might’ve been prompted by the loss of a job or early retirement.

What resulted was a book — *Your Life Calling: Reimagining the Rest of Your Life* — and a return to the “Today” show as a contributor on behalf of a series sponsored by AARP.

She met a diverse group along the way — alpaca ranchers, an oil well driller who helped bring potable water to Africans and the founder of a nonprofit that provides art supplies to inner-city kids.

She reassured audience members that they have a toolbox of knowledge waiting to be applied in new ways.

“Remember, inspiration is everywhere, and I hope you find it everywhere you look,” Pauley said. ■

Editor’s note: The General Session sponsors were: Leland Melvin — Pepple & Waggoner Ltd.; Ross, Sinclair & Associates LLC; and Walter Haverfield LLP. Dr. Milton Chen — Boenning and Scattergood Inc.; Peck, Shaffer & Williams LLP, a division of Dinsmore & Shohl LLP; Scott, Scriven LLP; and Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP. Jane Pauley — CompManagement and Smith Peters Kalail Co. LPA.

Highlights from the conference

►▼ Workshop participants explore different aspects of hands-on learning in Springboro Community City's learning session 'Makers and Shakers' — making things to learn.

▼ OSBA President Ed Penrod, Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking) and Tri-County Career Center, left, introduces the 2015 OSBA President's Award winner, Dr. Richard Murray. Murray, a retired school superintendent, is executive director of the Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools.



▲ Award-winning broadcast journalist Jane Pauley shares a laugh with an attendee while signing her book following her Third General Session presentation.

► Displaying the manicures they just received from Trumbull Career & Technical Center students are, from left, Brigitte L. Green-Churchwell, Sandusky City; Veronica Sims, Akron City; and Renda M. Cline, Mansfield City.



◀ Dayton City Board of Education Vice President Ronald C. Lee makes a point during a Spotlight Session examining the impact of House Bill 70 on Youngstown City Schools. The controversial legislation is seen as a threat to the principle of school district local control.

◀ School district leaders fill the convention center's Main Concourse en route to the first round of learning sessions on Nov. 9.

▼ Mary Beddell, public relations director at Plain Local (Stark), chats with an attendee at the Ohio School Public Relations Association (OHSPRA)/OSBA Idea Center. Beddell is OHSPRA chapter manager.



▲ Attendees take part in a drum circle during the Nov. 9 President's Reception. The Delaware-based Central Ohio Symphony facilitated the team-building exercise.

◀ LaMarqué D. Ward Sr., CEO of Dream Builders University, speaks during the OSBA Black Caucus dinner Nov. 8.



Delegates OK platform changes, select president-elect

Scott Gerfen, assistant editor

The OSBA delegates gathered for the 60th annual Capital Conference and Trade Show approved amendments to the association's 2016 Legislative Platform and selected the next president-elect.

More than 300 delegates assembled Nov. 9 at the Annual Business Meeting of the OSBA Delegate Assembly in Columbus. Made up of representatives from Ohio public school boards, the assembly establishes association policies and approves the OSBA Legislative Platform.

The platform communicates to legislators, policymakers, the public and the media where OSBA stands on issues impacting public education.

Delegates also recognized a number of OSBA past presidents and reviewed reports from the Credentials, Rules, Nominating and Legislative Platform committees. OSBA President **Ed Penrod, Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking)** and **Tri-County Career Center**, presided over the session.

The assembly elected a northeast Ohio school board

member, **Denise Baba, Streetsboro City**, as the association's 2016 president-elect. Her duties include serving on OSBA's Board of Trustees and Executive Committee and chairing the Legislative Platform Committee and Federal Relations Network.

Elected three times to the Streetsboro City board, Baba served as board president in 2009 and 2013 and as vice president in 2008 and 2012. She has earned multiple OSBA Awards of Achievement, and in 2010 was named a Master Board Member, a lifetime distinction.

Her work with OSBA includes service on the Board of Trustees, Delegate Assembly, Nominating Committee, Board Member Cabinet, Capital Conference Planning Task Force and Northeast Region Executive Committee. She also is the region's immediate past president and her district's legislative liaison to OSBA.

Baba, in her 10th year on the Streetsboro City board, will become OSBA president in 2017, following her term as president-elect.

Delegates also approved amendments supporting legislation that:

- holds charter/community schools and their operators to the same compliance and reporting requirements as public schools;
- requires a charter/community school receiving public tax dollars to release on all advertising performance metrics, including, but not limited to, the overall performance index and four-year graduation rate;
- prohibits a charter/community school from advertising if that school does not meet or report minimum academic and/or financial standards established by the state of Ohio;
- requires that schools accepting voucher students be held to the same performance reporting requirements as public schools;
- separately appropriates all lottery profits funding to be distributed to districts on a per-pupil basis.



Denise Baba, Streetsboro City, awaits the vote on her nomination as OSBA 2016 president-elect.



Margie Lairson, Northridge Local (Montgomery), and Randall E. Smith, Forest Hills Local (Hamilton), prepare to address the OSBA Delegate Assembly at the Capital Conference.

Delegates also approved an amendment opposing legislation that provides facilities funding to private and charter/community schools.

The assembly added a new policy to the platform that addresses school transportation. This plank supports transportation-related legislation that:

- provides sufficient funding for every child who rides a school bus;
- rewards schools for efficiency;
- incentivizes school districts to transport students residing within one to two miles of their school;
- incentivizes school districts to provide transportation for high school students;
- fully compensates districts for transporting students to schools that are not part of the district;
- provides for better support of rural districts with low density and low wealth;
- requires transportation funding to operate separately from the education funding formula to ensure districts actually receive the state transportation levels to which they are entitled;
- reinstates funding for school bus purchases.

In his report to delegates, OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis** pointed to the continuing success of Ohio public schools and the board members who help guide them.

“Year after year, Ohio public schools are among the best in the country, earning national recognition, landing on

prestigious awards lists and showcasing models of efficiency and achievement,” Lewis told the assembly. “While your challenges are substantial — poverty, funding uncertainties and ever-changing mandates — it is clear that Ohio public education is thriving. As you strive to provide a world-class education, it is OSBA’s mission to continue leading the way through superior service and creative solutions.”

Lewis also said OSBA is well positioned to lead its members and their districts well into the future.

“Delegates, I am pleased to share that your association marches into 2016 in excellent condition,” he said. “Our finances, programs and services remain strong. This is possible only through the shared commitment of the membership, leadership and staff. OSBA’s infrastructure, processes and resources remain sustainable, flexible and dynamic.”

Delegates also heard from Ohio Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. **Richard A. Ross**, who expressed his gratitude to the “men and women who have more impact on the children of our state than any other group.” Ross is retiring as state superintendent at the end of the year.

The 2016 Legislative Platform will be distributed to all OSBA members in January. It also will be available on the OSBA website at www.ohioschoolboards.org/legislative-platform. For more information on the platform and this year’s amendments, contact the OSBA legislative services division. ■



Untethered technology teaches in many ways

Apple forum explores dynamic digital learning

Margo Bartlett, freelance correspondent

An Apple Leadership Forum conducted by Apple Inc. brought **Charlene Campbell** and more than 125 of her OSBA colleagues to the Early Bird Workshop at the Capital Conference on Nov. 8. The workshop was sponsored by Ennis Britton Co. LPA.

Campbell, a school board member at **Cedar Cliff Local**

(Greene), said she's been involved with technology since she had an Apple IIe, released in 1983.

"I'm here to see what's coming down the road, what challenges, and how we can best prepare for them," she said.

Campbell, who retired after 32 years in education, was a middle school science teacher when her superintendent put her in front of that IIe. She watched the blank screen for several minutes, then reported that it wasn't working.

"I had no idea you had to type words," she said.

She educated herself and went on to write and teach a computer lab for eighth-graders, then set up a high school Mac lab and trained the teachers who would use it.

Campbell acknowledged that she's considered to be her board's tech expert, but said her colleagues are no slouches. "We're all pretty tech savvy," she said.

Barb Huffman, an Apple K-12 regional manager, works with educators on all levels, from kindergarten through college. She introduced other presenters, including **Gabriella Myers**, an Apple K-12 development executive, and **Sue Meyer** of Cupertino, Calif., a national development manager.

Early computers were a far cry from the slender wireless wafers so ubiquitous today, Meyer told the audience. Those room-sized behemoths were useful only to the few who knew how to use them — the military, NASA and other government agencies; and universities. Apple made computers accessible to all who wanted one.

Computers weren't a new idea, Meyer said. As early as 1910, French artists were commissioned to create pictures



Gabriella Myers, an Apple K-12 development executive, explains how computers encourage project-based learning.



Attendees at the Early Bird Workshop use iPads to test classroom exercises.

sold in tobacco packs. The **Maximilian Villemard** painting, “The Future of Paris,” showed a classroom full of students whose heads were attached by wires to a contraption. A teacher was dumping textbooks into the contraption while a boy cranked the machine’s handle. On the painting were the words “En L’an 2000,” “in the year 2000.”

“He envisioned a network,” Meyer said.

Early accessible computers — those 1980s word processors — caused many newbies to give up prematurely.

They’d say, “I’m not good at computer,” Meyer said, though no one ever said, “I’m not good at pencil.”

But iPads and other devices are tools, Meyer said. Today’s technology is untethered, can be held in one hand, taken anywhere and be put to dozens of creative uses. Students can employ it in truly game-changing ways.

Millennials know this, said **Cory Tressler**, associate director of Learning Programs in Ohio State University’s Office of Distance Education and eLearning.

Ohio State is a bring-your-own-technology campus, Tressler said, “and they bring it.” Most students take five or six devices to campus and carry one or two of them to classes.

One result of all this traffic is changing student expectations. With the tools to participate, students want less lecturing and more Q & A, more *doing*, Tressler said. Entire courses now are offered online, and digital books are free or sold at reduced rates.

Apple’s Myers stressed using wireless devices for maximum K-12 classroom benefit. That most students love computers is a given, she said, but Apple wants more. “We want them to use computers to expand their horizons.”

Today’s devices encourage “project-based learning,” Myers said. A video showing students using wireless devices to research, photograph, write and publish a story emphasized today’s technology capability. Given the story assignment, Myers noted, “no kid mentioned wanting to cut pictures from *Woman’s Day* and use the white paste.”

When attendees were invited to pick up the iPads on each



table, they pounced. Meyer led an exercise in which participants rated four classroom lessons. The process demonstrated how technology can be used as a substitute for conventional activity, such as reading on an iPad instead of a book, to augment learning, to modify learning and — this is the goal — to redefine learning.

Board members took turns clicking and swiping through various sites and actions. Classroom devices can enhance and expand learning, Meyer said. She cited a reading teacher who used wireless technology to write her leveled reader books. The result? Reading scores soared, and better yet, her students clamored to write their own books.

Challenged as a final exercise to discuss their visions for education, participants mentioned peer showcases, parent training and funding. Cedar Cliff Local's Campbell said she'd welcome "not having to learn everything to pass a test," and "older students working with younger students."

Lance Bell, Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking), also likes student-to-student mentoring. He said he's seen fourth-graders tutoring second-graders with good results.

"They knew a way to say it when the teachers weren't getting through to them," he said.

As leave-taking began, many conference goers asked — jokingly — if they could keep the iPads. (No one seemed surprised at the answer.)

Today's technology is untethered, can be held in one hand and be put to dozens of creative uses, allowing students to employ it in truly game-changing ways.

Campbell said she'd take a positive report back to her school district.

"I learned some new things today," she said. "It's always good to learn some new things." ■

About the author: A veteran reporter and freelance feature writer, Margo Bartlett currently is a columnist and editorial assistant at *ThisWeek Community Newspapers* in central Ohio.

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Muñoz's NFL fame boosts foundation's work with kids



Anthony Muñoz shares how the work ethic instilled in him by his mother led to his success on the field and in creating the foundation that helps and rewards young people in the Cincinnati area.

Margo Bartlett, freelance correspondent

OSBA President **Ed Penrod** introduced the Tuesday Capital Conference Luncheon speaker who arguably needed no introduction.

Anthony Muñoz is “considered by many to be the greatest offensive lineman in NFL history,” said Penrod, a school board member at **Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking)** and **Tri-County Career Center**.

When the person considered by many to be the greatest offensive lineman in NFL history stepped to the stage Nov. 10, he didn’t talk much football. Instead, he spoke to the crowd of more than 300 about his mom.

“We didn’t have a lot,” he said. His mother raised five kids alone, and she ensured that each of them pitched in.

“We had to clean house; we had to cook ... We had to do our homework.”

The family didn’t have much, but they had all they needed.

“She taught us a lot about life,” Muñoz said. “We had a lot of encouragement; we had a lot of support.”

When he wasn’t doing his part as a family member, Muñoz dreamed of being a professional athlete — a major league baseball player. His mom, he said, “could hit ground balls better than anyone.”

He was disappointed when University of Southern California (USC) recruited him to play football. He accepted the offer, hoping he could also play baseball, he said.



Anthony Muñoz greets Northwestern Local (Wayne) board member Paula Abrecht following his presentation.

Then came the injury that threatened to end his career. Three knee operations later, Muñoz said, reporters were asking when enough was enough.

“I had to hold onto the things that were important in life: my God, my wife, my family, my dream,” he said.

Just as his mom taught him to mend torn pants and repair worn shoes, he knew he was responsible for letting his knee heal and getting back to the game. He had to get a note from his doctor to convince coach **John Robinson** he could play in the Rose Bowl, but play he did, against Ohio State. Muñoz called it “probably the best game I’ve ever played,” the game that made him the No. 3 draft pick in 1980.

When the call came, he told his wife of two years, “We’re going to Cincinnati.” She said, “Cincinnati, where’s Cincinnati?”

“We had to get a map,” Muñoz said.

During his 13 years with the Bengals, Muñoz played in two Super Bowls, made 11 Pro Bowl appearances and was named Offensive Lineman of the Year eight times, but he practically shrugged at these accomplishments.

More important, he said, his career gave him the platform

to start the Anthony Muñoz Foundation, a nonprofit organization that educates, promotes, recognizes and rewards young people in the Cincinnati area who excel, and reaches out to help those who are struggling.

Muñoz credited the work ethic his mother gave him for his success in this endeavor — that and the humility his older brother taught him when he said, “If you’re good enough, people will talk about you.”

“I’m grateful for mentors,” Muñoz said. He cited his football camps and their focus on character and team building. His employees are always asked if Muñoz ever actually comes around. Good or bad, he said, they see him just about every day. The young campers see him, too, and recognize him from the Cincinnati-area television commercials he does.

“That’s the furniture guy!” Muñoz said the kids say. He doesn’t seem to mind not being identified as the greatest offensive lineman in NFL history.

“Dream and dream big and you can accomplish something,” he said. “You’re going to go through adversity. ... It’s a matter of how you’re going to come out on the other end.”

It seems anticlimactic to mention it, but for the record,

Muñoz did get to play USC baseball. In 1978, he pitched for USC's national championship team. ■

The Tuesday Conference Luncheon was sponsored by CompManagement Health Systems Inc.; NaviGate Prepared; and

OSBA Insurance Agency.

About the author: A veteran reporter and feature writer, Margo Bartlett currently is a columnist and editorial assistant at ThisWeek Community Newspapers in central Ohio.

Inaugural Collaboration Connection a success

Gary Motz, managing editor

The Monday Conference Luncheon at the Capital Conference offered attendees the opportunity to collaborate with their peers, OSBA staff and other professionals while enjoying a leisurely meal. About 240 school district leaders took advantage of this innovative event.

Dubbed the Collaboration Connection, this new conference feature offered a lunch-and-learn venue designed to promote discussion on issues crucial to effectively leading a school district. Topics, which were denoted by signs on each table, included:

- effectively communicating with your community;
- charter schools/home schooling;
- policy issues;
- board roles and relations;
- levy strategies;
- safety and security issues;
- effectively using technology in schools;
- shared services;
- school cafeteria programs;
- promising education practices;
- school transportation issues;
- critical issues in your district.

The facilitated small-table discussions enabled attendees to network with others who have already tackled perplexing issues and to share some of their challenges, successes and solutions. The event also provided participants with different perspectives and a deeper understanding of numerous areas of public school governance and management.

"Attendees really seemed to enjoy OSBA's inaugural Collaboration Connection and picked up many outstanding ideas to take home to their districts," said association Deputy Executive Director **Rob Delane**. "Having topic facilitators at each table helped guide the discussions and encourage everyone to participate."

"Sharing ways to approach the many challenges school district leaders face and learning from each other is what the conference is all about, and I believe this event distilled that concept to an even deeper level."

CompManagement sponsored the luncheon. Facilitated table hosts were Champions Inc., Ennis Britton Co. LPA and Facility Security Solutions.



Columbus City board member W. Shawna Gibbs, center, networks with attendees at the Collaboration Connection luncheon.

Highest achievement



2015 All-Ohio School Board members recognized during the Third General Session are, from left, Kevin A. Johnston, Sandra Poe, Sue Williams and Bob Vasquez. Mary Tedrow was unable to attend.

Five board members receive OSBA's top honor

Scott Gerfen, assistant editor

Five Ohioans have earned OSBA's most prestigious honor. The All-Ohio School Board program, which began in 1971, distinguishes exemplary boardmanship and service to public education. The award signifies the commitment and dedication displayed by thousands of school board members across the state.

These outstanding school district leaders were named to the 2015 All-Ohio School Board on Nov. 11 during the OSBA

Capital Conference and Trade Show in Columbus.

The 2015 honorees are:

- **Kevin A. Johnston, Preble County ESC;**
- **Sandra Poe, Green Local (Scioto);**
- **Mary Tedrow, Groveport Madison Local (Franklin);**
- **Bob Vasquez, Toledo City;**
- **Sue Williams, Southeast Local (Wayne) and Wayne County Schools Career Center.**

Every year, OSBA names one board of education member from each of its five regions — Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest — to the All-Ohio School Board. Their respective school boards nominate All-Ohio School Board candidates; OSBA regional committees then select the five winners.

“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.”

Kevin A. Johnston
Southwest Region

Johnston has dedicated his life to not only serving youth, but also his community as a whole. His lifetime support of developing and educating young people is evident through his many years of board service and community engagement.

He has been on the Preble County ESC Governing Board for 20 years, and twice served as the board’s president or vice president.

Outside of his school activities, Johnston devotes time to the Preble County Historical Society, Preble County Red Cross, Preble County Local Emergency Planning Committee, College Corner Cub Scouts and College Corner Community Club.

Johnston, a printer assistant and water plant caretaker in College Corner, is highly active in OSBA as a member of the Delegate Assembly, Capital Conference Planning Task Force and Southwest Region Executive Committee. He also represents his district as an OSBA legislative liaison.

In 2006, he was recognized as an OSBA Master Board Member, a lifetime distinction. The honor recognizes those who work hard to become better board members by participating in workshops and conferences, volunteering for service to OSBA and working on behalf of their own board.

In nominating Johnston, his colleagues wrote that he has “invested his time and energy for the greater good of the community selflessly.”

Sandra Poe
Southeast Region

Poe has spent decades working in public education and advocating on behalf of Ohio schoolchildren as both a teacher and board member.

She has been on the Green Local board for six years.

Poe was a second-grade teacher for 36 years. Some of her students chose education as a career and became highly respected co-workers.

Involved in many school activities, Poe serves on the District Leadership Team, as well as Project MORE, which strives to improve the reading levels of Ohio students. Every year, she sends each graduate a card from the board of education.

In nominating Poe, her colleagues wrote, “she works tirelessly to help create an atmosphere focused on the best interest of students and the district. She researches, reads, studies and discusses issues with an open mind willing to examine all sides.”

Poe is her district’s student achievement liaison to OSBA.

She and her husband, **John**, live in Franklin Furnace. They have three children and three grandchildren.

The All-Ohio School Board program, which began in 1971, distinguishes exemplary boardmanship and service to public education.

Mary Tedrow
Central Region

It is Tedrow’s compassion, commitment and love of community that drives her passion to serve students.

She has been a member of the Groveport Madison Local board for 24 years. In the past seven years, Tedrow has served as board president or vice president four times.

The retired registered nurse has been an advocate for Groveport Madison students for nearly 40 years as a volunteer, PTO member, tutor and school board member.

In nominating Tedrow for the award, her colleagues wrote: “In short, it is Mary’s care for our children and consistency of service that make her an exceptional nominee.”

Tedrow also is active in the community as a member of the League of Women Voters, Girl Scouts, BREAD interfaith organization and the Broad Street Presbyterian Church, where she serves in a variety of leadership roles, including treasurer.

Described by her peers as someone who “asks the right questions” and “illuminates the big picture,” Tedrow currently serves on OSBA’s Urban School District Advisory Network.

She has represented her district in the OSBA Delegate Assembly and as a student achievement liaison to OSBA.

Tedrow and her husband, **Brandt**, live in Groveport. They have three children.

Bob Vasquez
Northwest Region

Vasquez is described as a natural leader in public education who is not afraid to ask the tough questions.

He has been with the Toledo City Board of Education for seven years. During that time, he has served as president or vice president six times.

Vasquez’s decision-making process is one that can best be described as thoughtful. By carefully weighing all the options, he does what is best for the district and, ultimately, the students.

“He approaches each situation with confidence and integrity,” his colleagues wrote in nominating him.

He has worked closely with OSBA as a member of the Urban School District Advisory Network, Board of Trustees and Northwest Region Executive Committee. His past OSBA service includes the Federal Relations Network, Board Member Cabinet, and Arrangements and Hospitality Team.

In the community, he is a member of the WGTE-FM Board of Trustees and University of Toledo Urban Affairs Advisory Committee.

Vasquez and his wife, **Kathy**, live in Toledo. They have two children.

Sue Williams
Northeast Region

Williams is a strong believer in public education and serving her community.

She has been on the Southeast Local board for 20 years and the Wayne County Schools Career Center board for 10 years. She has served as president of the Southeast board for the past eight years. Williams also has served as president and vice president of the career center board.

Those who know Williams say she is informed, active and accountable to school and community members. Her involvement in local and state activities provides the information needed to make decisions that are best for the children. That involvement includes a working relationship with state legislators.

In nominating Williams, her colleagues wrote that she is “fair and firm, yet a kind and caring listener who can be trusted.”

Williams is active in the community, where she volunteers in the district’s concession stand and ticket booth. She is a past PTO and Little League officer and 4-H Club adviser.

She has worked closely with OSBA throughout her career. She is a member of the OSBA Board Member Cabinet and Northeast Region Executive Committee, and serves as student achievement liaison to OSBA. Among her numerous OSBA awards was recognition as a Master Board Member, a lifetime distinction.

Williams and her husband, **Murray**, live in Dundee. They have two children. ■

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Board members honored for quarter century of service

Gary Motz, managing editor

Statewide, 43% of public school board members are in their first term of service, according to OSBA’s most recent biennial survey, conducted in 2014. An additional 29% are serving their second term.

That’s why it’s worth recognizing a board member who has served for 25 years. And that’s just what OSBA did during the 2015 Capital Conference.

OSBA President **Ed Penrod, Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking)** and **Tri-County Career Center**, and association Executive Director **Richard Lewis** honored six board members for achieving that milestone on Nov. 11 at the Third General Session.

“There are more than 3,400 school board members in the state of Ohio,” Lewis said. “Each of these men and women has dedicated a significant portion of their life to the improvement of public education and the betterment

of their community.

“I would like to introduce to you some extremely dedicated individuals who have gone above and beyond in donating their time as citizen servants. Each of these community leaders is completing at least their 25th year of service as a public school board member.”

Those honored at the conference and their districts are:

- **Hugh Arnold, Wolf Creek Local (Washington);**
- **Betty A. Burwinkel, Brown County ESC;**
- **H. Tad Johnson, Coshocton City and Coshocton County Career Center;**
- **Jim Perdue, Reading Community City and Great Oaks Career Campuses;**
- **Joseph Stockham, Minford Local (Scioto).**

Penrod and Lewis also recognized **Carl Fisher, Huber Heights City**, who was unable to attend. ■



Veteran board members recognized during the Capital Conference include, from left, Joseph Stockham, Jim Perdue, H. Tad Johnson, Betty A. Burwinkel and Hugh Arnold. Carl Fisher, Huber Heights City, was unable to attend.

Pride, excitement abound at Student Achievement Fair



A student from Clinton-Massie Local's (Clinton) Robotics Club watches elementary kids from Vermilion Local's (Erie) International Clue Hunters program try out two robots. All of the students were participating in the Student Achievement Fair.

Crystal Davis, editor

Student achievement is the prime focus of everyone who works in public education. Student success doesn't just happen, it takes the dedication and hard work of a school district's entire team: school board members, administrators, teachers and support staff.

OSBA knows that, and since 1999 has hosted the Student Achievement Fair at the Capital Conference. It quickly became one of the conference's most popular events, and this year was no exception. The fair again was filled to capacity with 100 booths showcasing exceptional student programs created by school districts from across the state.

The Nov. 10 event also was packed with conference attendees marveling over the many innovative programs coming out of Ohio schools. The fair gave them the opportunity to interact with students, teachers and other staff while getting a firsthand — and sometimes hands-on — look at what 21st century education is all about.

The **Clinton-Massie Local (Clinton) Robotics Club's** demonstration was a perfect example of the kind of cutting-edge programs on display at the fair. As you can see in the photo above, it attracted the attention not only of school district leaders, but also students displaying their work in

other booths at the 17th annual Student Achievement Fair.

“The opportunity for students from across the state to showcase their school projects and new ideas is not only exciting for them, but it also allows board members and administrators the opportunity to regain their own appreciation and excitement for the work being done in our school districts,” said OSBA Division of School Board Services Director **Cheryl W. Ryan**, fair coordinator.

District programs are selected based on what others might learn from them, ease of replication, creativity and the program’s impact on student achievement. Displaying at the fair further expands student learning by requiring students to know and communicate their content, present it with confidence, solve problems on-site and work as a team.

“We had 72 districts represented and a few that had never participated,” said **Gwen Samet**, OSBA administrative associate of school board services. “**Margaretta Local (Erie)** was one that was there for the first time. Superintendent **Daniel J. Schroer** said they were so proud to be there.”

The range of programs on display this year was even more impressive than previous events. That speaks to the ongoing efforts of students and educators to keep pace with an ever-changing world.

“This year’s show featured several unique exhibits on STEM and technology projects, but there also were projects about firefighting, special education, agricultural education, literacy and the connection between music and math achievement,” Ryan said. “Traffic was excellent and the new layout of the fair floor served districts very well, providing maximum visibility to those viewing the booths and great interaction among students, teachers and attendees.”

Other programs included: video storytelling; goal setting; entrepreneurship; energy efficiency; team-building with retreats; quilting; recycling; community outreach picnics; character education programs; bakery operations; history studies; and career exploration, among many others.

Beautiful displays of art could be seen hanging in the fair at a student art show. The law firm Pepple & Waggoner Ltd. sponsored the art show.

Besides visiting the eye-catching art displays and thought-provoking program booths, attendees could sit and enjoy lunch as performing groups entertained them. One group from each of OSBA’s five regions was selected based on grade level, talent and variety. This year’s performers were:

- **Groveport Madison Local (Franklin)** — High School Percussion Ensemble;
- **East Cleveland City** — Shaw High School Progeny jazz band;

- **Morgan Local (Morgan)** — Morgan High School Band;
- **Bellevue City** — Bellevue High School Good Vibrations handbell choir;
- **Middletown City** — Middletown High School Show Choir.

The performance area was sponsored by Ennis Britton Co. LPA.



An East Cleveland City saxophonist accents the Shaw High School Progeny jazz band’s performance with a solo during the Student Achievement Fair. The group was one of five talented student entertainment groups performing at the fair.

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

“Districts get very pumped up when they’re accepted to participate,” Samet said. “We had 10 districts on our waiting list and other applications came in after that. It’s a good idea to submit a nomination as early in the year as possible, so districts don’t miss out on a great opportunity.”

OSBA already has begun preparing for the 2016 Student Achievement Fair. The nomination deadline is Friday, June 24. Nomination forms are available via a link posted at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/81148>. A link to a list of districts that participated in the 2015 Student Achievement Fair also is posted at that Web address.

For additional information, contact Samet at (614) 540-4000; (800) 589-OSBA or gsamet@ohioschoolboards.org. Districts with questions about nominating a performing group should contact Ryan at the above phone numbers or cryan@ohioschoolboards.org. ■



Two achievement fair districts mourn loss of classmates

Crystal Davis, editor

This year, the Student Achievement Fair offered both a helping and a healing hand to two Ohio school districts in the aftermath of tragedy.

When the **Morgan Local (Morgan)** Morgan High School Band performed at the fair on Nov. 10, it was a day its members will never forget. It was one of their first performances since two band members were killed and two others injured in a car crash. One of the injured students — in a wheelchair with medical devices still attached to her — arrived straight from Columbus' Nationwide Children's Hospital to watch the performance.

"We've had a hard time with losing two band members and we've always been a large family, so I wanted to be here for

support," said **Katie L. Stevens**, 16, who underwent eight surgeries after the two-car crash in Morgan County on Oct. 2.

Passengers **Donald Perry**, 15, and **Hannah L. Lewis**, 16, were killed after 17-year-old **Weston R. Starling** lost control of his vehicle and collided with another car. Starling was treated and released; the driver of the other car suffered minor injuries.

Wearing a bright green T-shirt that read, "Morgan Band, We Are One," OSBA Southeast Region President **Gail Requardt**, **East Muskingum Local (Muskingum)** and **Mid-East Career and Technology Centers**, tearfully introduced the band at the fair's performance area.



Morgan Local (Morgan) band member Katie L. Stevens stands before the Morgan High School Band after the group's performance at the Student Achievement Fair. Stevens was injured in a car crash that killed two other band members and injured a third.

When the performance was complete, Stevens, helped by two therapists and a nurse, rose from her wheelchair and used a walker to stand in front of the band as the crowd gave a standing ovation.

“I’m extremely proud of how well they pushed through and still performed top-notch,” said Stevens, a junior who plays trumpet in the band. Afterward, she returned to the hospital and was released two weeks later. She went back to school Dec. 1.

The Morgan High School Band was one of five student entertainment groups to perform at the 2015 fair.

Mount Vernon City, which had two booths in the Student Achievement Fair, also was dealing with a tragedy — one that happened just two days earlier.

Mount Vernon High School senior **Chelsie Alaimo**, 17, was walking through a Mount Vernon intersection when she was struck by a car and killed the night of Nov. 8, the first day of the Capital Conference. The driver has been identified, but no charges had been filed as of this writing.

Alaimo was in the band and recently acted in a school musical. A small memorial has been set up at the accident site in her memory.

During the fair, several OSBA officers and staff members stopped by Mount Vernon City’s two booths to offer condolences. Visiting the booths were current OSBA President-elect **Eric K. Germann, Lincolnview Local (Van Wert)** and **Vantage Career Center**, and 2016 president-elect **Denise Baba, Streetsboro City**. They were joined by OSBA staff members **Richard Lewis**, executive

director; **Kim Miller-Smith**, Central Region manager; and **Terri Shaw**, executive assistant. ■

Career centers offer services

Do you enjoy getting a manicure or a massage? Every year at the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show you can get both for free, courtesy of a group of Ohio career centers.

Attendees could drop by any of six career center booths in the Trade Show to relax, and then walk away feeling fabulous. The free services included hand and arm massages, blood pressure checks, cosmetology makeovers and more. One career center provided landscaping and benches across from the OSBA Bookstore.

Through partnerships with business and industry, career centers provide real-world learning opportunities to secondary students to teach the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue a career and/or postsecondary education. The career-tech programs that showcased their skills during the 2015 conference included:

- Coshocton County Career Center – cosmetology;
- Delaware Area Career Center – landscaping near the OSBA Bookstore, blood pressure checks and wellness information;
- 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;
- Trumbull Career & Technical Center – hand and arm massages and manicures.



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Documenting conference eye-opening for video team

Crystal Davis, editor

“It provided real world experience that I wouldn’t have gained at school,” Wooster High School senior **Curtis Williamson** said about working on the student video production team documenting the 2015 Capital Conference. “(And, we got) the chance to speak with really important people in education.”

Computer science teacher **Nathan Greene** leads the award-winning **Wooster City** team named WSTR TV. Seniors **Sawyer Cass, Rece Emplit, Joe Kline, Jake Rayman, Jake Robinson** and Williamson make up the team that filmed events during the conference and conducted interviews with attendees, speakers and OSBA leaders.

“The students are enrolled in a class at Wooster High School called TV Production,” Greene said. “The program began back in 1994 ... as another outlet for our media department and a way to provide a connection between our community and our school.”

“We’ve been featured on our local access cable station over the years, but since the switch from analog to digital, we’ve decided to put everything online to reach an even larger audience.”

“(I enjoyed) the experience of interviewing a lot of people, and gaining knowledge of what OSBA stands for.”

— *Sawyer Cass*

“I really enjoyed the student performers at both the keynote speeches and at the Student Achievement Fair,” Kline said. “All of the performers were great.”

Students could be seen editing their video at the conference in a Trade Show booth. The material is being edited into a 10-minute documentary, which will be streamed on the OSBA website, shared with other state school boards associations and used to promote the conference.

“I really enjoyed seeing all of the students at the Student Achievement Fair,” Rayman said. “It was eye-opening what other schools around Ohio are doing.”

“(I enjoyed) the experience of interviewing a lot of people, and gaining knowledge of what OSBA stands for,” Cass said.

At Wooster, the team produces weekly school announcements for the high school and community. It has partnered with various community businesses and organizations on different projects. Visit <https://vimeo.com/channels/woosterhighschool> to see more of the team’s work.

“Not everyone gets to miss school for three days and learn this much about their future and possible career,” Emplit said. ■



OSBA Executive Director Richard Lewis responds to interview questions from Wooster City’s TV Production class. The Wooster High School video class served as this year’s Capital Conference student video documentary team.

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Student talent on display at the Capital Conference

► Groveport Madison Local (Franklin) students play some unique instruments at the Student Achievement Fair — ladders. They were performing with the Groveport Madison High School Percussion Ensemble.

▼ Greene Local (Scioto) students explain how the district's Courage Committee program promotes self-esteem and good life choices at their Student Achievement Fair booth.



▲ Shawnee Local's (Allen) Shawnee High School Symphonic Band performs at the Second General Session.

► A Mad River Local (Montgomery) student drives a simulated construction vehicle at one of the district's booths.





◀ Columbus City's Berwick Eco Fashion Club members and their adviser show off some of the fashions they created from old clothing.

◀◀ Two Vinton County Local (Vinton) students stand before a mural created as part of the district's community mural project.

▼ Students in Mentor EV's Robotics and Design program booth focus intently on a STEM project.



▲ A conference attendee gets a manicure at Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools' booth in the Trade Show.

◀ OSBA Northwest Regional Manager Dr. Judy Jackson May watches a Put-in-Bay Local (Ottawa) student demonstrate the Sphero program.



OEPI provides public policy, school-funding expertise

Amanda Finney, senior marketing and trade show manager

The relationship between public education and public policy decisions made at the state level is multifaceted and sometimes difficult to navigate.

To understand this challenging interplay, school districts need a resource to provide continuously updated information on education policy, tax policy and other issues affecting public education. The Ohio Education Policy Institute (OEPI) provides this valuable resource.

OEPI's mission is to help school districts understand complex financial and policy issues by providing research, analysis and expertise on school funding. Since its inception, OEPI has successfully provided credible and insightful information to help policymakers and educators make important decisions.

To best serve its members, OEPI recently rebranded and transformed itself to reflect better the many resources and tools it provides. Created to supply data to school districts on property tax issues, the organization has expanded its scope to cover a variety of education funding and policy

topics. Thanks to the expertise of the consulting firm of Howard Fleeter & Associates, this nonprofit research group has become known as the premier school funding and public education policy resource in Ohio.

OEPI recently rebranded itself and expanded its scope to cover a variety of education funding and policy topics.

OEPI benefits members by publishing relevant studies, articles and reports for use by school districts, the media and the public. Another major benefit of OEPI is that it can respond quickly to legislative proposals and comprehensively evaluate the long-term effects of existing law.

The institute also plays a critical role in the state budget process. The group serves as the “go-to” organization for policymakers and was instrumental in analyzing the current state budget for fiscal years 2015-16. It also is committed to ensuring public schools are kept up-to-date on fast-paced legislative changes.

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

For past issues of the OEPI newsletter and other updates, visit the new website at www.oepiohio.org. Newsletters are published quarterly.

For more information or to become a member, please contact **Marcella Gonzalez** at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org. ■



OEPI consultant Dr. Howard Fleeter discusses current school-funding issues during the OSBA Capital Conference.

New year, new chance to thank school board members

Crystal Davis, editor

From dressing up like them to performing community service in their honor, students and staff in Ohio school districts find creative ways to say “thanks” to their board members each January during School Board Recognition Month.

In 2015, **Mogadore Local (Summit)** students played the part of school board members and the superintendent as they acted out a historical play about the creation of the village of Mogadore. Students also presented board members with personal letters detailing their positive impact on the schools.

In **Northmont City**, several Northwood Elementary School students volunteered in the community in the name of board members, then talked about their experiences at the district’s January board meeting.

Every year, school districts like Mogadore and Northmont honor their board members in unique ways. Ohio’s annual celebration of School Board Recognition Month coincides with a national campaign highlighting the importance of board members to public education.

Across the state, recognition month activities can range from simple to elaborate. Resolutions to honor school boards often are passed by chambers of commerce and other organizations, and many newspapers run editorials praising these dedicated community servants.

Districts that submitted information to OSBA about their 2015 celebrations can be found at www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month. The page will be updated in March with school districts’ 2016 celebrations.

Ohio board members work for their districts year-round, and most work a full-time job, according to a 2014 OSBA survey. Others are self-employed or retired, and many have children attending school in their district.

Visible rewards of serving as a school board member are few. That’s why it is so important to take time in January to

trumpet their successes and welcome new board members.

OSBA’s theme for the 2016 School Board Recognition Month is “A Work of Heart.” To kick-start your recognition efforts, the association has again put together an extensive resource kit to help you thank those who give their heart and hard work to the public education system.

The kit contains hundreds of ideas and samples of what other Ohio districts have done to show their appreciation. Posted at the Web address listed earlier in this article, the resource kit offers sample newsletter articles, editorials, letters and artwork. Each district will receive a poster to use at recognition events, as well as personalized certificates to present to board members.

Use the resource kit or come up with your own way to honor the extraordinary things board members do for your district. For more information, contact the author at (614) 540-4000 or cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org. ■

Share why your board is a ‘Work of Heart’

Honor your district’s board members by submitting articles and photos to OSBA highlighting your January School Board Recognition Month activities. The 2016 theme is “A Work of Heart.” OSBA will feature your celebrations in the association’s *Journal* magazine and on its website.



Submit articles and high-resolution photos to **Crystal Davis** at 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. The submission deadline is Feb. 15.

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- **NO-COST TRAINING** – This is a nonprofit program sponsored by Buckeye Firearms Foundation, a 501(c)(3) public charity. There is no cost to your school district. Since 2013, thousands of educators have applied for this specialized training.
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