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OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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### New digital edition available!

You can access the *Journal's* new digital edition on the OSBA website at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/journal](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/journal).

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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 and creative solutions.*

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## Correction

An item on page 35 of the October *Journal* should have said **William Howard Taft** was the 27th U.S. president.

## OSBA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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*The strength of 700 boards*

# Weaving our strengths together

*Richard Lewis, CAE, executive director*

There is little doubt our public schools are under attack. These attacks come from local politicians wanting to take over education. They come from state and federal officials. They come from the media, which often neglect your successes while sensationalizing reports of your struggles. They come from entrepreneurs and charter school operators pursuing vast profits, and from the man in the street who longs for the “good old days,” which were never as good as he remembers.

Sadly, they now even come from fellow school board members.

The mantras of “money follows the child,” “parents know best” and the “right to school choice” are rallying cries for those seeking to dismantle or privatize public schools. National organizations push a variety of legislative initiatives seeking to expand vouchers and parental choice in our state. Ohio General Assembly leaders have pursued these initiatives, which include autism scholarships, special education vouchers and the ill-fated House Bill 136 proposal for a statewide voucher system. This all comes at a time when you, as public school leaders, are forced to do even more with even less.

Yet, despite expanding mandates and attempts to diminish local control, schools are succeeding. Thanks to school boards, public education continues to make a difference in millions of lives. This year’s Capital Conference theme, “Key into public education,” reflected the accomplishments of school boards and OSBA, the only organization that represents you as publicly elected boards

of education.

In these difficult times, a strong professional association representing school boards is more important than ever. OSBA *is* that association, thanks to our active and engaged membership and dedicated staff. In 2012, we strongly represented the voice of public school board members and the diverse districts you represent. We fought hard as an unwavering advocate of public education and local control. We delivered on our ongoing pledge to provide superior service and creative solutions.

*Thanks to school boards, public education continues to make a difference in millions of lives.*

I am very proud of our staff. They believe in you. They work hard for you.

Your legislative team has been instrumental in battling legislation detrimental to Ohio’s 1.8 million public school students. We helped unify the public outcry against the statewide voucher bill. We were successful in helping modify time lines and performance expectations for the third-grade reading guarantee and report card changes. We helped keep legislation on bullying, concussions, fee payments, and seclusion and restraint realistic. And we helped the state collect and report school districts’ effective shared services practices.

Your staff provided key information and

representation to districts considering leasing property for oil and natural gas exploration, and cosponsored a statewide summit to highlight the impact of this rapidly growing industry on communities and school districts. OSBA also led efforts to roll back electricity rate increases in American Electric Power service areas and preserve the right to competitively shop for power. OSBA also plans to help districts in other service areas obtain fair electricity rates.

Your legal division answered thousands of calls from members seeking legal information in 2012, saving districts tens of thousands of dollars in attorneys’ fees. OSBA’s Legal Assistance Fund worked hard to win favorable legal interpretations for Ohio public schools. We joined high-profile cases, such as *ESPN vs. OSU* in the Ohio Supreme Court, where the fund helped safeguard schools’ ability to keep student data confidential. We thwarted efforts by organized groups to repeal a **Westerville City** levy. We prevailed in a teacher termination case that overruled an arbitrator’s order to re-employ a discharged teacher. And we remain deeply committed to ongoing litigation in the White Hat charter schools case.

We also collaborated with the Ohio Department of Education to organize meetings to inform board members, staff and students about the new Common Core standards and accompanying assessments.

OSBA’s strategic plan — Visionary Initiatives for Strategic Action — continues to guide our financial stewardship, program delivery and vision

for the future. In approving the plan this year, the Board of Trustees reauthorized OSBA's mission and vision and set preliminary goals to guide us through 2017.

Our programs and outreach benefit school boards across the state. OSBA, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA) and the Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO) partnered with the Ohio Library Council to create SchoolComp, Ohio's largest and most stable workers' compensation pool. SchoolComp provides the most reliable quotes and greatest savings of any such program. These organizations and their members, in cooperation with the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, helped achieve another 5% reduction in workers' compensation base rates this year.

The associations, along with the Ohio Schools Council, continue to offer Power4Schools, an electricity purchasing program that has saved schools more than \$30 million in the last two years.

OSBA's outreach to higher education also made great strides. We have collaborated on initiatives with The Ohio State University, University of Toledo, Xavier University, Kent State University and many others. We and

other education associations are working with the State University Education Deans and private teacher education colleges to improve teacher preparation.

Always innovating, OSBA is never satisfied with past practice. To keep pace with an ever-changing world, we embrace forward thinking and the dynamic transformation it brings. OSBA continues to provide valuable services like training, communication consulting, executive searches, policy development and labor relations assistance. But we also have launched several new initiatives to offer expert assistance on transportation; financial and levy issues; data-based decision-making; school safety and security; and process and efficiency analysis. Contact OSBA to learn more about what these new programs can offer your district.

OSBA's relationships with groups sharing our goal of a strong education system are ever-expanding. We participate with scores of committees and task forces around Ohio, promoting the voice of local school boards. We highly prize our relationships with BASA and OASBO, collaborating with them in efforts such as the Education Tax Policy Institute and the Coalition for Public Education. Nationally, OSBA networks closely with other state school

boards associations and holds several leadership roles within the National School Boards Association.

Change is in the air. We will soon have a new state superintendent, our fourth in five years. Voters elected two new members to the State Board of Education and the governor will be appointing four at-large members. In the Ohio General Assembly, 19 new legislators will take their seats, with one race awaiting recount results as of this writing.

As the new year evolves, we will face issues that may create discord — but we cannot let this happen. We must resist the temptation to view issues as Democrat versus Republican; large district versus small; wealthy versus poor; or urban versus rural. More importantly, we cannot allow ideological differences among board members divide us.

Public education and Ohio need your strongest support in what is shaping up to be a very challenging 2013. School funding will be front and center in the new biennium. Increasing calls for school choice will pose stiff challenges. The concept of money following the child must be quashed. We will need to build support for our schools with new legislators who might not fully appreciate the importance of high-quality public education.

OSBA is a highly successful organization with a strong reputation for serving you. But to remain strong, we need your continuing commitment. This association has never been — nor will it ever be — simply a staff in Columbus. OSBA 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.

Thank you for everything you do each and every day, not just for your community, but for all of Ohio's schoolchildren. We will face the future knowing that by working together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish. ■

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*Healthier school food*

# Food for thought – state standards you need to know

*Candice L. Christon, staff attorney*

**S**tudent nutrition and wellness have become hotly debated topics in recent years. In light of this, it's important to be aware of required state nutritional standards that boards of education must adopt and enforce, as well as the a la carte items that may be sold on school property.

Although students can purchase any food and beverages outside of school, districts are required to follow certain state regulations when determining what items may be sold on school property.

## State nutritional standards

First, let's review nutritional standards required under state law. Each school district is required to "adopt and enforce" nutritional standards that govern food and beverage items that may be sold on school property, including time and place restrictions (Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3313.814 and Ohio Administrative Code 3301-91-09). In developing these standards, boards must consider the "nutritional value of each food or beverage" item that may be sold (RC 3313.814).

Each board must consult with a licensed dietician, a registered dietetic technician or a certified/credentialed school nutrition specialist. In addition, the district must consult the national dietary guidelines developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and incorporate these guidelines into the district's standards to the "maximum extent possible."

The board must select staff members to ensure the nutritional standards required under state law are being met.

The staff members are required to draft an annual report that illustrates the district's compliance with the standards and release the report to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The board must annually present the compiled information during a regular meeting of the board. Upon request, the district must make copies of the report available to the public.

## A la carte items

Districts may sell a la carte food and beverage items to students. What is an a la carte item? Pursuant to RC 3313.814, an a la carte item is defined as a food or beverage item individually priced and available for sale to students through a school food service program, such as a breakfast or lunch program, a school vending machine or a school store. Items available for sale through a school-sponsored event held outside the regular school day or at an interscholastic athletic event are not considered a la carte items.

In addition, items included in a reimbursable meal that are available for sale as an individual item "in a serving portion of the same size as in the reimbursable meal, regardless of whether the items are included in the reimbursable meal served on a particular school day," are not considered a la carte items.

## Beverage sale regulations

A la carte beverage items that may be sold during the regular and extended school day vary according to grade level. Each district is required to follow the statutory guidelines set forth in RC 3313.816 when selling these beverages to students.

For schools with mostly kindergarten through fourth-grade students, the only beverages that may be sold are:

- water;
- milk;
- eight ounces or less of 100% fruit juice containing no more than 160 calories per eight ounces;
- eight ounces or less of 100% fruit juice and water blend, with no added sweeteners, containing no more than 160 calories per eight ounces.

For schools with mostly fifth- through eighth-grade students, the only beverages that may be sold are:

- water;
- milk;
- 10 ounces or less of 100% fruit juice containing no more than 160 calories per eight ounces;
- 10 ounces or less of 100% fruit juice and water blend, with no added sweeteners, containing no more than 160 calories per eight ounces.

For schools with mostly ninth- through 12th-grade students, the only beverages that may be sold are:

- water;
- milk;
- 12 ounces or less of 100% fruit juice containing no more than 160 calories per eight ounces;
- 12 ounces or less of 100% fruit juice and water blend, with no added sweeteners, containing no more than 160 calories per eight ounces;
- 12 ounces or less of any beverage containing no more than 66 calories per eight ounces;
- any size beverage containing no more than 10 calories per eight ounces, including caffeinated



beverages and beverages with added sweeteners, carbonation or artificial flavoring.

In addition, at least 50% of the a la carte beverages — other than milk (as modified by House Bill 153 in 2011 and Senate Bill 316 in 2012) — available for sale to all grade levels through a school food service program, a school vending machine that “does not sell only milk or reimbursable meals” or a school store must be water or other beverages containing no more than 10 calories per eight ounces.



*Districts are required to follow certain state regulations when determining what food items may be sold on school property.*

### Food sale regulations

Determining the nutritional value of each a la carte food item for sale is another duty assigned to the district (RC 3313.817). The nutritional value of foods is one of the most important reasons for regulating the sale of a la carte food on school property.

How can a district determine the nutritional value? Under state law, when ODE is able to obtain free computer software that assesses the nutritional value of foods, it must make that software available to each school free of

charge. ODE has identified the Snackwise software program as meeting those requirements under RC 3313.817. Districts can access this free program at [www.snackwise.org](http://www.snackwise.org). The software is required to do the following:

- rate the healthiness of foods based on nutrient density;
- assess the amount of calories, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, protein, fiber, calcium, iron, vitamin A and vitamin C in each food item;
- evaluate the nutritional value of foods based on the national dietary guidelines developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as it relates to children and adolescents.

Each district is required to use the software provided by ODE to determine the nutritional value of the a la carte food items that may be sold. In addition, a la carte food items are prohibited from being in the lowest-rated category of foods designated by the software. The statute requires at least 20% of the a la carte food items available for sale through a school food service program, school vending machine or a school store during the regular and extended school day to be in the highest-rated category of foods designated by the software during the first year of use.

After the first year, at least 40% of the a la carte food items available for sale in the same manner must be in the highest-rated category of foods designated by the software.

However, if any a la carte food item is not in the highest-rated category of foods designated by the software, it must contain at least two of the following:

- at least five grams of protein;
- at least 10% of the recommended daily value of fiber;
- at least 10% of the recommended daily value of calcium;
- at least 10% of the recommended daily value of iron;
- at least 10% of the recommended daily value of vitamin A;
- at least 10% of the recommended

daily value of vitamin C.

As an alternative to complying with the nutritional requirements of the software provided by ODE, “schools may comply with the most recent guidelines for competitive foods issued by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.” Districts can visit the Alliance for a Healthier Generation website at [www.healthiergeneration.org](http://www.healthiergeneration.org).

### A la carte items in vending machines

Just as students may purchase a la carte items through a school food service program or school store, they may purchase items from a school vending machine (RC 3313.814). Vending machines are prohibited from being placed in classrooms where students are “provided instruction,” unless students are served meals in those classrooms. Vending machines are exempt from this restriction if they sell only milk, reimbursable meals and any food and beverage items that are part of a reimbursable meal and may be individually sold in serving portions that are the same size as in the reimbursable meal.

### Good nutrition essential to learning

Nutrition impacts school performance and achievement. Therefore, it is important that your district provides students with access to healthy foods and beverages. Your district must ensure students receive the proper nutrition mandated by law during regular and extended school hours. Encourage your students to maintain a healthy lifestyle and practice healthy eating habits, because the habits they form today can last a lifetime.

If you have questions about any of the information discussed in this article, please contact OSBA’s legal services division at (614) 540-4000. ■

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

# This year's holiday gift



*A gift for your board*

*Renee L. Fambro, deputy director of labor relations*

The holidays are here: stores are full of decorations, kids are excited about winter break and families are gathering to celebrate the season. What a joyful time of year!

Regardless of your family's particular traditions, there is one gift every school district in Ohio can expect: the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES).

As schools look ahead to 2013, many will face labor agreements expiring in June or July. As with other years, there are several things your district can do now to make collective bargaining an easier and less stressful process when it gets under way. Special planning will be even more important this year as your district tackles the adoption of the OTES policy by July 1, 2013, and its collective bargaining implications.

## General considerations

*Team makeup* — Consider who is best suited to be on the board's bargaining team. What issues does the board have with the labor agreement? What issues can you expect from your union? A good way to prepare for bargaining is to have "subject matter experts" at the table for issues, especially contentious ones.

*Bargaining style* — There are several bargaining models, and they all can work well. The key is to determine what model best suits your district's needs. Generally speaking, there are three negotiation styles used by schools: traditional, interest-based bargaining (IBB) and a modified version that combines elements of both traditional and IBB.

Traditional bargaining is adversarial-based and relies on a chief spokesperson

to conduct the discussions. Both teams come to the bargaining table with proposals in hand, and the process proceeds from there.

Interest-based bargaining requires the parties to focus on interests rather than positions. The parties bring a list of interests to the bargaining table and then identify mutual interests as they work to draft new language that addresses those interests.

Modified bargaining merges the two styles and can be adjusted to accommodate a district's specific needs. This style can be successful because it allows the parties to create a process that fits most closely with their goals, needs and working relationship.

How a district chooses a bargaining style should be a matter of fit for the parties negotiating. Considerations should include the relationship with the union, past bargaining history, economics and the number of issues that will be raised. Keep in mind that the type of bargaining used is a mutual decision between both parties. If your labor agreement specifies one style of negotiating and you'd like to try something different, approach your union early to see if you can agree to try a new method this year.

*Look at potential bargaining issues* — Over the course of your existing agreement, what issues have arisen? What contract language (or lack thereof) has made managing the district more difficult? While no collective bargaining agreement can anticipate every conceivable issue, some shortcomings can be addressed in the labor agreement. Negotiations are the time to fix these

problems. Finally, OTES and its impact on job security will be a vital concern for teachers unions.

*District finances* — Arguments over finances may be particularly difficult this year for several reasons. First and foremost, most schools are still working hard to make ends meet with less funding and higher expenses. A second driving force will be that many local unions gave significant concessions in the last round of negotiations and will be looking for a way to make up for those concessions now.

Make sure your five-year forecast is current and that your treasurer is prepared to answer tough questions about it. Be able to present where the district is in its levy cycle, when levies are up for renewal and what new levies may be placed on the ballot. If your district does not want to ask the public for additional money in the near future, be prepared to explain why.

Most importantly, make sure your message about what the board is willing to spend is consistent. Even if your district has money, that does not mean the board is willing or able to spend it all on salaries or benefits, given the volatility of the economy and the unknown biennial budget in 2013. Should the parties arrive at impasse, it's much easier to explain to a mediator a consistent stance on finances.

## Special considerations for 2013

What does it mean for districts to adopt the OTES policy "in consultation" with their teachers? What is a "comparable evaluation" for purposes of a reduction-in-force (RIF)? Are observations in

classrooms announced or unannounced? What happens when the OTES policy is adopted in June but the parties are still in negotiations?

These are all questions we've heard; unfortunately, these are all questions that remain largely unanswered. What we can do is give some suggestions for how to prepare to tackle these tough questions.

*"In consultation"* — Ideally, your district has already started looking at the OTES policy in consultation with your teachers. Although there is no definition of "in consultation" in the law or in the framework, districts must make their best efforts to fulfill this requirement.

Consultation is defined as the act or process of formally consulting or discussing. So, work with your teachers to start this process, possibly through a committee made up of an equal number of administrators and teachers. Keep records of your meetings (date,

attendees, length of meeting) so you can show there was meaningful consultation, you met with teachers and you listened to their input and gave it due consideration.

*Language pitfalls* — Be prepared to see proposals on various aspects of OTES. The definition of "comparable" is likely to be a hot topic. Tread carefully on what language is negotiated; unions are likely to push hard on broadening the definition of comparable to the point where enough employees are deemed "comparable" so that seniority is once again the deciding factor in a RIF.

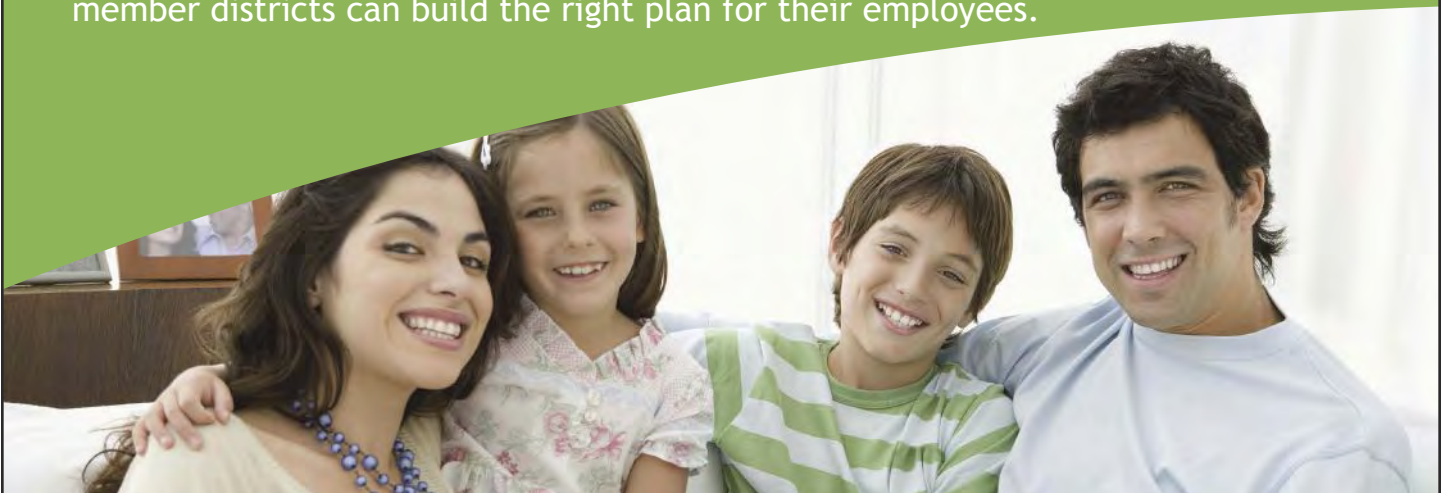
Generally speaking, unions will look for ways to limit the impact of OTES on its members. Whether it's requiring that all observations be announced or selecting the types of assessments that will be used to evaluate teacher performance, carefully evaluate how proposed language will affect management's ability to effectively use OTES.

*Timing* — Most labor agreements have a window of approximately 60 days in which to open negotiations. This year, start sooner rather than later. And remember, either party can open negotiations, so don't hesitate to be the first one to file the Notice to Negotiate with the State Employment Relations Board. The form can be found at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/93781>.

Preparing for negotiations in 2013 will be a bit different than in prior years. If ever preparation was important, it's now. Work closely with your labor counsel as you tackle these questions and work through a challenging round of negotiations.

As always, OSBA's professional negotiators are available to lead your district through the upcoming challenges. Contact the author at [rfambro@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:rfambro@ohioschoolboards.org) or (614) 540-4000, ext. 243, for more information on our negotiations assistance service. ■

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# Comeback champions

*Winning against the odds*

*Kendall A. Lee, school board services consultant*

There is nothing better than a comeback story. At the movies, we cry over them. In sports, we cheer for them. Whether you are the hero or the underdog, nothing is greater than beating the odds and winning.

The term comeback is often used in sports, but rarely used in the field of education. Comeback kings in sports include boxer **Muhammad Ali**, who said, “Champions aren’t made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them — a desire, a dream, a vision. They have to have skill and the will. But the will must be

stronger than the skill.”

The same is true in education. Nothing is better than a comeback, whether it’s passing a levy after prior failures, raising academic achievement or improving graduation rates.

From time to time, every school district has experienced some type of setback. These challenges and issues can appear overwhelming for board members and administrators. During these times, everyone is looking for a quick-fix solution. It is easy to become consumed with circumstances of the moment. The real opportunity lies in demonstrating the leadership to get up after being knocked down.

Being knocked down by levy failures or weaker-than-expected student test scores are calls to answer the bell and get back up. It’s the building of character and relationships that pushes a champion. In the face of criticism and failure, champions must win by building relationships with people.

**Frank Outlaw**, founder of the BI-LO supermarket chain in the southern U.S., provides a short course in human relations for building relationships. He says:

- The six most important words: “I admit I made a mistake.”
- The five most important words: “You did a good job.”
- The four most important words: “What is your opinion?”
- The three most important words: “If you please.”
- The two most important words: “Thank you.”
- The one most important word: “We.”
- The least important word: “I.”

In making a comeback, one should focus on not losing control. Poor and misleading communication often can cause setbacks. Real progress is made when the board and district administrators are transparent.

The need to understand views and perspectives of the community, parents and students is a giant step on the road to a comeback. Another is the ability to change directions. Having the sense to know when a change is necessary is a part of the comeback process. It’s realizing what works and how. It’s responding to district policies, practices and procedures. It’s knowing and understanding the people, culture and emerging issues in the district — all of which are vital to a comeback in education.

Outlaw gives a great example on how to respond, saying:

- Watch your thoughts; they become words.
- Watch your words; they become actions.
- Watch your actions; they become habits.
- Watch your habits; they become character.
- Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

Finally, a comeback is victory at the highest level. It is a return to greatness. It’s the history, heritage and legacy of what your district was, is and will be.

Remember, when facing defeat and failure, if you get knocked down, look up, get up and don’t ever give up. Champions come back and train, but losers complain. ■



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# Déjà vu all over again



Race results

*Damon Asbury, director of legislative services*

The November 2012 general election is now history and the votes have all been counted. Well, *almost* all have been counted. A question concerning the counting of provisional ballots cast in the wrong precinct is still unresolved. Ohio Secretary of State **John Husted** has issued a directive that these votes not be counted. Democrats have challenged this decision, asserting that it is counter to federal law. As of writing this in early December, the matter is yet to be resolved.

Candidates for both Congress and the Ohio General Assembly were vying for seats in newly configured districts. The districts were redrawn based on the 2010 U.S. Census. The redistricting process was controlled by the Republicans by virtue of their majority in the Ohio House and Senate and their control of the statewide elected offices.

The Democrats challenged the new districts as being gerrymandered to favor Republican candidates in the majority of seats in Congress and the General Assembly. However, the Ohio Supreme Court, by a vote of 4-3, upheld the new districts. So, the new districts will remain intact until the next census or until the parties come together on a new redistricting process.

Despite voters re-electing President **Barack Obama** and Sen. **Sherrod Brown**, both Democrats, Ohio Republicans remain in solid majority control of the state's U.S. House seats, with wins in 12 of the 16 congressional districts. Ohio lost two seats in Congress due to the census data. Three new representatives were elected, including Republicans **Brad Westrup** from the Cincinnati area

and **David Joyce** from Geauga County. Democrat **Joyce Beatty** won the newly created district in Franklin County.

Democrat Rep. **Marcy Kaptur** prevailed over her challenger in the new district that follows the Lake Erie shoreline from Toledo to Cleveland; three-fourths of the voters supported Kaptur. Republican **Jim Renacci** defeated Democrat **Betty Sutton** in a race that pitted two incumbents against each other.

*Candidates for both Congress and the Ohio General Assembly were vying for seats in newly configured districts.*

In addition to Joyce, Renacci and Westrup, the Ohio delegation consists of nine other Republicans — **Steve Chabot** (Cincinnati); **Jim Jordan** (Urbana); **Bob Latta** (Bowling Green); **Bill Johnson** (Marietta); **Bob Gibbs** (Lakeland); House Speaker **John Boehner** (West Chester); **Mike Turner** (Dayton); **Pat Tiberi** (Columbus); and **Steve Stivers** (Columbus). Joining Beatty and Kaptur, the remaining two Democrat representatives are **Marcia Fudge** (Cleveland) and **Tim Ryan** (Niles).

Ohio Republicans retain strong control of the General Assembly. In the Senate, they maintained their strong 23-10 majority. All incumbents in the Senate contests were returned, including Sen. **Lou Gentile** (D-Steubenville),

whose seat had been targeted by Senate Republicans in hopes of expanding their majority. Gentile won by a margin of approximately 5%. Senate Republicans elected **Keith Faber** to assume the role of Senate president, succeeding term-limited **Thomas Niehaus** (Batavia). They tapped **Chris Widener** (Springfield) as president pro tempore. Senate Democrats returned **Eric Kearney** (Cincinnati) as the Senate minority leader.

As of this writing, Republicans held a 60-39 majority in the Ohio House, with one race pending the outcome of a recount. If the Democratic challenger wins that race, the GOP would have a 59-40 majority.

Nevertheless, the House will continue under a substantial Republican majority, which voted to retain its leadership team with **William Batchelder** (Medina) continuing as speaker of the House. **Matt Huffman** (Lima) will assume the second-in-command position. House Democrats returned **Armond Budish** (Beachwood) as House minority leader, and **Matt Szollosi** (Oregon) as second ranking minority leader.

With the 129th General Assembly coming to a close, it is too early to tell what the new year and the new legislature will bring forward. We hear promises of tax reform, job creation and, yes, more school reform.

With a new biennial budget soon to be introduced and the promise of a new school-funding bill, it is essential that all education stakeholders be ready to step up and help our elected legislators do what is in the best interests of public education. Help them truly put students first! ■



# Working for you

## *The value of your membership*

*Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator*

For 57 years, OSBA has been the only state association that works for public boards of education and their school districts. As a board member, OSBA is *your* association, one with 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.

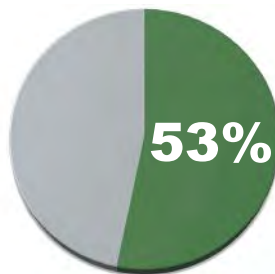
We encourage you to take advantage of all of OSBA's resources to maximize your return on investment and benefit your district. Take a look, by the numbers, at just some of the outstanding benefits your district has received by being a member of OSBA.

Visit [www.ohioschoolboards.org](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org) to see a comprehensive overview of OSBA's services. We truly are working for you! ■



# 4,700

The number of phone calls OSBA received from members in 2012



2,500 calls — 53% — were fielded by OSBA's legal staff

# 850

The number of successful executive searches conducted by OSBA's Division of School Board Services

# More than 2,300

members registered for an OSBA workshop in 2012

## OSBA fulfilled more than 300 requests for sample policies in 2012



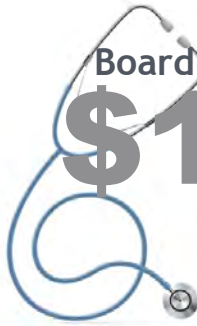
Derailing HB 136, a statewide program that would have made every child in every public school eligible for a voucher, saved literally millions of dollars across the state.

# = \$5,700

For every voucher granted, a district would lose \$5,700 in current state revenue.

# Innovative programs save your district money

OSBA offers  
**18** endorsed programs  
providing members services  
at a reduced cost



Board members are covered by a

**\$100,000**

AD&D insurance policy  
while on school business

Member districts have realized nearly

**\$200 million**

in savings on workers' compensation  
premiums since 1991



OSBA lobbyists helped reduce American Electric Power  
price hikes for the Power4Schools program.

**The rate was capped at 12% for  
school districts over the next  
three years.**

**\$31 million**

in electricity savings for districts participating in Power4Schools

**5.25  
cents**

**=**



average savings of

**25%**

a fixed price per kilowatt-  
hour for electricity for  
districts participating in the  
Power4Schools program

off the generation  
portion of schools'  
electric bills

# Innovative



*Students from The Ohio State University's Mansfield campus navigate the high-ropes course inside Mansfield City Schools' Springmill Learning Center. The district rents its learning center facilities to outside groups when its students are not using them.*

## *Hands-on learning center engages students*

The rooms inside Springmill Learning Center are splashed with vibrant colors, bright lights and eye-catching attractions. There are gears of all sizes scattered on the walls and tables in one room. There's a large spaceship in another room and a rover that comes alive with the push of a button. In one area, giant tree roots run across a wall, an obstacle in a sprawling, nature-inspired high-ropes course.

It's easy to get lost in the building's immersive spaces, and it's even easier to forget you're in a public school. **Mansfield City's** Springmill Learning Center is unlike any public school in Ohio — and maybe even in the nation.

The north central Ohio district opened its hands-on learning and outdoor education center last school year. The facility,



# instruction

*Bryan Bullock,  
assistant editor*

which is being completed in phases, is a fun place to visit. But students leave with more than just a smile on their face. Springmill is giving students in the high-poverty urban district new experiences and new ways to learn — a field trip in their own backyard. The facility is designed to engage students in learning and reinforce Ohio Academic Content Standards, Common Core standards and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) concepts.

“In terms of the reputation of the district, we really want to be known as best in basics and first in innovation,” said Mansfield Superintendent **Dan Freund**, who proposed the Springmill Learning Center. “That’s what we’re going after with this facility and other programs we have in the district.”

He said the district’s efforts to bolster student achievement and transform a once-vacant elementary school into a center for experiential learning are already bearing fruit. Student enrollment is up, state test scores are climbing and the community is taking notice.

On top of that, Springmill Learning Center is generating new revenue for the district from visits by outside groups.

“We think ultimately, after our initial investment, payback is probably three-to-five years away on this project,” Freund said. “We think we’re doing something really unique here that could be replicated anyplace in the country.”

## **Building blocks**

In spring 2011, Freund and the Mansfield City Board of Education charged a small group of teachers with the task of turning an empty school building into a museum-quality learning center.

“My goal was to give them the support they need, but to really get out of the way and let teachers lead this,” Freund said. “The staff at Springmill has really taken this project and run with it.”

**Brad Strong** and other Springmill staff have worked with designers and construction crews since April 2011 to transform the 51-year-old school building. The staff was enthusiastic about the project, but it was a little daunting at first, Strong said.

“We decided to split the project into phases, because looking at it was overwhelming,” he said. “When we first came into the building (which was closed in 2010), there was water on the floors, broken windows and truckloads of old equipment stored in here.”

Springmill staff — which now includes six teachers, three paraprofessionals and a custodian — got to work immediately. They crafted a mission statement, consulted experts at local colleges, created plans, and set ambitious project deadlines and put in long hours to meet them.

*“We want kids to touch things and have fun with science, even when they don’t realize they’re learning.”*

*— Brad Strong*

The school partnered with Splashmakers, a Mansfield-based design company, to turn its ideas into reality. Renovations began in the building, work started on the first phase of construction and the center opened the following school year. The district’s long-running outdoor education program for intermediate school students was relocated from an off-site location to the 40-acre Springmill property, which includes old-growth woods, a ravine and a bedrock stream.

In November 2011, Springmill debuted its first building phase, a nature-themed Adventure Gallery in the renovated gym. The space features a high-ropes course complete with seven obstacles, including a boulder wall, a climbing wall and a tree root climb that designers say is the only one of its kind in the country. Tree-covered murals and faux stone and tree roots now cover the gym walls. Animal tracks run along a stream on the padded floor. Interactive learning stations are scattered around the room, teaching kids about rocks, trees and nature. From fossils in the climbing wall to plants in the murals, every little detail is designed to be educational and consistent with the local environment.

“Mansfield is truly a leader with what they’re doing here,”



*In the Sensory Gallery, students learn hands-on about the five senses and related science concepts.*

**Herbert Broda**, a curriculum and instruction professor with Ashland University told a local newspaper at the Adventure Gallery’s grand opening. “I know of no other school district in Ohio that has done something on a scale like this.”

In navigating the high-ropes course, students learn teamwork, problem-solving and self-confidence. For Mansfield school board member **Cliff Crose**, the Adventure Gallery came alive once students set foot in it. He said he vividly remembers seeing a disabled student being helped from his wheelchair and up onto the high-ropes course.

“They harnessed him up and helped him across the obstacle,” Crose said. “The other kids watching were just clapping and going crazy. That child will never forget that. It almost brings tears to your eyes.”

### Hands-on learning

Today, Springmill Learning Center boasts a wide range of interactive learning experiences — and more are in the works. While the attractions are designed for fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders, people of all ages will find them engaging. A bird sanctuary greets visitors as soon as they enter the facility. A fenced-in, open-air garden is visible from a bird observation area lined with stations outfitted with binoculars and electronic devices that play birdcalls. Custom-made charts decorate the walls with illustrations of Ohio birds.

“Those are wrens and finches,” said Strong, pointing to birds at a feeder outside. “We have identified 17 different species of birds out here so far.”

Deeper inside Springmill Learning Center, there are 10 math and science galleries. Each gallery occupies its own classroom, and four galleries were just completed in December. Every gallery is designed around a visual and educational theme, including supporting worksheets and activities.

In the Measuring Mars Gallery, for example, students simulate a journey to Mars and learn about volume, area, perimeter and shapes on the

planet’s surface. There is a large spaceship in the room that students must pack with various sized boxes, learning about volume as they go. There’s also a rover that hovers above a mock planet’s surface and moves around as students measure area and perimeter. In addition to other space-themed learning stations, the room is complete with twinkling stars on the ceiling, tables that resemble planets and a futuristic clock.

“We wanted this to be a museum-quality Exploratorium, so the details are very important,” Strong said. “We also wanted to emphasize incidental learning. We want kids to touch things and have fun with science, even when they don’t realize they’re learning.”

The galleries were designed with creative teaching tools in mind. The ceiling of the Earth Studies Gallery is tiled with a map of the planet, including latitude and longitude; teachers can flip a switch and light up certain continents or regions for an impromptu geography lesson. The Chemistry Lab Gallery has mobile lab stations and a giant periodic table on the floor. Teachers are able to lead students in activities by using an iPad to control an interactive periodic table on a nearby flat-screen TV.

“I can click on the iPad and it tells everyone to go stand on a noble gas,” Strong said. “We can then have conversation about how elements are numbered or talk about radioactivity and atomic weight.”

Springmill Learning Center also has hands-on galleries that focus on the following subjects:

- Algebra — Students use hands-on materials to learn about algebra and math in a submarine-themed room.
- Alternative Energy — Students learn about alternative energy, circuits, battery storage and the U.S. electrical grid.



*Malabar Intermediate School students learn about math in the Measuring Mars Gallery.*

- CSI — Students use science to solve a situational problem that includes exposure to graphing, angles, patterns and other math concepts.
- Gadgets — Students use materials to construct a predetermined project using a design process and 21st century skills.
- Gears, Levers and Pulleys — Students manipulate and explore gears, levers and pulleys through a variety of stations.
- Number Sense — Students learn about multiplication, ratio, proportion and probability in a carnival setting.
- Sensory — Students learn about the five senses and are exposed to a variety of science concepts.

Malabar Intermediate School students will visit Springmill Learning Center in small groups throughout the school year. So far, they like what they've seen.

"I like that we get to go out and learn and have fun at the same time," said Malabar fifth-grader **Tyler Breeze**.

Fifth-grader **Adrien Frank** said he has learned about "photosynthesis, how trees grow, how leaves look and tiny bugs" so far in outdoor education, and he is looking forward to other experiences at the learning center.

"I'm really looking forward to the ropes course," he said.

### The big picture

Springmill Learning Center staff continues to meet regularly and discuss lesson plans, facility improvements and future projects. They're developing plans to construct a fourth-grade math immersion program, a fifth-grade science immersion program and two history galleries, one focusing on pioneer history and the other on Ohio and Mansfield history. The development of a community garden, pioneer village and wetlands have all been discussed as part of improvements to the outdoor education program.

Springmill staff has sought school board approval for projects as plans have moved forward. Freund said the district is using permanent improvement funds to pay for the project, which has cost about \$1.5 million so far. The learning center was designed to accommodate groups of various sizes and includes meeting space, separate dining areas and a gift shop. When the facility is not being used by Mansfield students, outside groups, businesses and schools are able to rent time to take advantage of the building's offerings, including the high-ropes course.

"We're seeing more and more outside groups all the time," Freund said. "Our goal is to be self-sufficient."

The project, he said, has helped the district raise community awareness about its innovative approaches to instruction. A district where nearly 85% of students live in poverty, Mansfield City has increased its focus on at-risk students with

new intervention programs and the expansion of The Algebra Project, an initiative to prepare students for college-level math.

The district has seen its performance index score climb the last four years, reaching an all-time high last school year, according to preliminary report card data. Freund said the district of 3,500 students has reversed a trend of declining student enrollment, adding about 125 students this school year.

"We're really on the cutting edge with what we're doing here, and parents and the community are learning how exciting this is," said Mansfield school board member **Lowell T. Smith**. "We believe that teachers and principals make it happen, and we support them."



*Springmill Learning Center teacher Bernadette Redman works with Malabar Intermediate School students in the Earth Studies Gallery.*

Springmill teacher **Janet Ellsworth** said staff members, encouraged by the support they've received from their superintendent and school board, have been inspired to dream big. From the outside, Springmill Learning Center still looks like a regular old school. But inside, it's a different story.

"I think if students experience learning in a hands-on way they will remember it the rest of their lives," Ellsworth said, gesturing to the vibrant science gallery around her. "The students are moved when they come into a room like this ... it doesn't look like a traditional school."

"We've had people come from different parts of the country and they say you are building the school of the future. That's a very special thing to be a part of." ■

*Editor's note:* For more information about Springmill Learning Center, contact teacher Brad Strong at [bstrong@mansfield.k12.oh.us](mailto:bstrong@mansfield.k12.oh.us) or (419) 525-6348, ext. 4331.

# Keying into public



*Nearly 10,000 public education leaders, staff, students and guests attended the 2012 OSBA Capital Conference in Columbus.*

## *2012 Capital Conference draws school leaders from across Ohio*

Ninety-one percent of OSBA's 714 member districts were represented at the 2012 Capital Conference and Trade Show, one of the strongest participation rates ever recorded at the annual event. The 57th annual conference hosted more than 9,400 public education leaders from Nov. 11 to 14 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. From football to political follies and much more, speakers such as The Ohio State University football great **Chris Spielman** and political satirists The Capitol Steps attracted crowds to the nation's second-largest education convention and premier professional development event.

The success of this year's event is clearly demonstrated in the

numbers: 603 booths were filled in the Trade Show; 861 people enjoyed the two Conference Luncheons; 112 participants attended the Early Bird Workshop; 100 school groups shared displays in the Student Achievement Fair; and nearly 100 feasted and learned at the OSBA Black Caucus dinner. Thousands of board members, superintendents, treasurers, students, teachers and guests flocked to the convention center's Grand Ballroom for the three General Sessions.

This year's conference theme was "Key into public education." That message could be seen and heard throughout the convention in workshops, seminars, information sessions, luncheons, networking receptions and other events.

# education

*Crystal Davis Hutchins,  
editor*

Offering a plethora of topics for conference attendees to choose from, the workshops were organized into 15 learning tracks focused on the latest issues facing public education. Tracks ranged from 21st century learning, student achievement, safety and wellness, and career education to board development, community relations, human resources and finance/facilities. Special Spotlight Sessions examined Singaporean education; public records training; high school sports; legislative issues; and **Chardon Local's (Geauga)** response and recovery efforts after the tragic 2012 school shootings.

The Capital Conference General Sessions are known for featuring a diverse and intriguing slate of renowned speakers. This year's keynote speakers were:

- **Stephen Pemberton**, an author, child advocate, motivational speaker and strong believer in public schools. He is the chief diversity officer and divisional vice president for Walgreens, the first person to hold that responsibility in the company's 110-year history.
- **Diane Ravitch**, a research professor of education at New York University and author of *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*. Ravitch served as U.S. assistant secretary of education and was responsible for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the U.S. Department of Education.
- The Capitol Steps, America's funniest political satire group. The troupe began as a group of Senate staffers who satirized the very people and places that employed them. They have recorded dozens of albums and appeared on many national news shows, including "Good Morning America," "20/20" and CNN's "Inside Politics."

Please see "General Sessions offer rich mix of perspectives" on page 21 for coverage of these outstanding speakers, as well as The Capitol Steps.

**Katheryn Gemberling** opened the conference as the Early Bird Workshop speaker. Gemberling is an independent educational consultant, and works with school boards and school district leadership throughout the country on topics related to using data to improve student achievement.

For more on Gemberling's presentation, see "The data made me do it" on page 34.

The OSBA Black Caucus dinner also was held on the first day of the conference. This year's keynote speaker was Dr. **Eugene T.W. Sanders, Sandusky City** interim superintendent; CEO of The Sanders Transformation Group LLC; and former **Toledo City** superintendent and **Cleveland Municipal** CEO. His motivational address — "The Transformation of Urban Schools in America" — inspired the dinner attendees. The former professor introduced an innovative transformation agenda in Cleveland that included creating new schools and programs, as well as striving to close student achievement gaps and increasing graduation rates for at-risk groups.



*Dr. Eugene T.W. Sanders speaks during the OSBA Black Caucus dinner. Sanders, a veteran urban schools superintendent, spoke on transforming urban school districts.*

The dinner also featured entertainment by The Conspiracy Band. For more than 20 years, the group has performed as a local favorite throughout Ohio.

Proceeds from the dinner benefit the Leo Lucas Stipend



*Scores of workshops on a wide range of cutting-edge topics were available during the four-day conference.*

Program, which provides graduating seniors funds for college expenses.

The Conference Luncheon speakers were internationally recognized anti-bullying expert **Rosalind Wiseman** and former NFL and Ohio State Buckeyes star and anti-cancer crusader Spielman.

See “Luncheon speakers enlighten, inspire conference crowd” on page 30 to learn what these inspirational speakers had to say.

The Annual Business Meeting of the OSBA Delegate

Assembly is conducted at the Capital Conference. This year, delegates approved amendments to the OSBA Legislative Platform; elected **Jo Ann W. Feltner, Franklin City**, as OSBA’s 2013 president-elect; honored more than a dozen past OSBA presidents; and heard Executive Director **Richard Lewis’** annual report on the state of the association. For details on Delegate Assembly action, see “Delegates pick president-elect; OK amendments” on page 28.

Planning for the 2013 Capital Conference is already under way, which means now is the perfect time for you to send us your ideas. In addition to attending, consider applying to present a breakout session or nominating some of your school district’s exemplary programs and performing groups for the Student Achievement Fair. Workshop moderators also are needed. Watch OSBA’s publications, eAlerts and website for further information on all of the wonderful ways you can participate.

Next year’s conference is scheduled for Nov. 10-13, so start making plans now to attend. With such a rich offering of high-quality training at an affordable cost, attending the Capital Conference is an investment in your district’s future that will pay for itself many times over. ■

## Dayton City video team documents Capital Conference

A group of students from **Dayton City’s** Ponitz Career Technology Center was the official student video documentary team for the 2012 Capital Conference. The students, led by Communications Team Leader **Kenneth D. Kreitzer** and advisers **Jennifer Bryant** and **Jarrold Williams**, were chosen to document the conference based on video work they submitted to OSBA earlier this year.

“I loved working on this project!” said video team member **Da’Qeayce Swain**, a senior. “It was a lot of work, but it was fun.”

“The whole experience was amazing, from talking with vendors on the show floor to taping the sessions,” added team member **Lamarr Henry**.

The video team filmed a number of events and conducted interviews during the four-day event. Students edited the footage into a documentary, which will be streamed on the OSBA website, shared with other state school boards associations and used to promote the conference.

“Dayton Schools was very honored to be selected to participate,” Kreitzer said. “Our superintendent and board of education were very excited about showcasing our students and their professional work.”

The Media Arts classes at Ponitz CTC are for students in grades 10 through 12. As part of the program, Ponitz operates a 24-hour



*The Dayton City student video team visits with General Session speaker Stephen Pemberton. Shown are, from left, team adviser Jarrold Williams; senior Thomas Powell; junior Lamarr Henry; senior Jalen Jones; and Pemberton. Senior Da’Qeayce Swain and adviser Jennifer Bryant are not pictured.*

cable TV station and video-on-demand website, and provides video coverage of district events. Students also operate the video scoreboard for Welcome Stadium. Through a partnership with the University of Dayton (UD), students also man the “Fan Cam” for UD basketball games. In addition, students run a 6,000-watt FM radio station and stream jazz music live on the Web.

# General Sessions offer rich mix of perspectives



*Author, foster child advocate, public education supporter and corporate diversity executive Stephen Pemberton shares his inspiring message of struggle and redemption at the first General Session at the OSBA Capital Conference.*

*Gary Motz, managing editor*

**A**n inspiring story of an orphan's struggle to succeed, a call to action in defense of public education and musical political satire marked the three General Sessions at the 2012 OSBA Capital Conference.

**Stephen Pemberton, Diane Ravitch** and *The Capitol Steps* each brought unique messages to the thousands attending the sessions. After their presentations, each spent time signing books and talking with attendees.

## **A chance in the world**

At first glance, Stephen Pemberton looks every bit the extraordinary corporate executive that he is. Articulate, confident, fit and handsome, he appears to have been groomed for success.

But his piercing blue eyes and voice filled with compassion and empathy tell a much different story, one that he shared during his Nov. 12 General Session appearance.

Now chief diversity officer and divisional vice president for Walgreens, Pemberton is known as a national leader on diversity and inclusion issues and one of the most influential African-Americans in corporate America. He also has been recognized for his work with *The Home for Little Wanderers* and *UCAN*, where he provides guidance to youth in need and children aging out of the foster care system.

However, there was a time — a very long time — when *nothing* about him was recognized, not even his existence.

Abandoned by his mother at the age of 3, Pemberton grew up in a series of abusive foster homes. His autobiography — *A Chance In The World: An Orphan Boy, a Mysterious Past and How He Found a Place Called Home* — chronicles his struggle to triumph over the mental and physical anguish of his childhood.

“I’m African-American, I have blue eyes, and as a young boy I had a blond Afro and a Polish last name of Klakowicz,” Pemberton said. “People would ask me, ‘What are you? Where do you come from? Who do you belong to?’ And the answer throughout my entire childhood was, ‘I don’t know.’ Because the fact was, I really did not know. I was this collision of labels.”

Pemberton bounced from one foster home to another, enduring constant abuse, humiliation and pain. Whenever he was injured bad enough to visit an emergency room, he had to

lie about how he had gotten hurt or face even more violence later.

One home, in New Bedford, Mass., was much worse than the others. To those foster parents, he was nothing more than a monthly check from the state. He had to ask permission to eat. He was not allowed to read in the house or own books. He was told never to talk to adults outside the home lest his maltreatment be revealed.

“And that is where I would spend my childhood: over 11 years,” Pemberton said. “They looked at me like I was broken. They said I was beyond hope, that I was ugly and dumb. But I fancied myself as a fighter, and I learned to fight.”

His one refuge — and inspiration — was reading. Despite the book ban, he found a way to read. He stole books from his school library because his foster parents would not sign for a library card. He would find ways to sneak away and read. His sanctuary was a rock wall across from his foster home, in the protective shade of a massive oak tree.

One day a woman walked by and he prayed she wouldn’t stop and talk to him. But she did, and asked what he was reading.

“I held up my book, almost in defense,” Pemberton said. “She asked me, ‘Weren’t you reading that last week?’ I told her I was and she asked, ‘Well, don’t you have any more books?’ I said, ‘No, I just go back to the beginning when I finish.’”

Later that day Pemberton heard a knock at the door and there was the woman, with a box of books. He found a way to conceal them, and in the ensuing years the woman kept bringing more.

“And as I got older, the books stayed age appropriate,” Pemberton said. “I went from *Winnie the Pooh* to the great classic *Watership Down*. Moments in those books so exemplified what I was going through that I would latch onto those characters who kept fighting for something they believed in.

“That became my childhood mission, to fight and endure and learn and to believe that there was, indeed, goodness in the land. Those books gave me vision and courage and direction. So, it was just a matter of time; I was going to defeat this family. That’s how I thought.”

Inspiration also came to the boy from another source: a school board member named **Ruby**. He met her when she was judging a spelling bee that the 10-year-old boy won. He said she turned out to be the single biggest influence in his life.

“She looked at me differently than anyone had ever done in my life,” Pemberton said. “And when I won, she didn’t say anything, she just smiled, and I could see how proud she was.”



Former U.S. assistant secretary of education and veteran educator Diane Ravitch describes how so-called education reformers are aggressively pursuing the privatization of American public education. Ravitch spoke at the second General Session.



Ruby, who also was the director of an Upward Bound program, later helped him get into college, over the stiff resistance of his foster parents. And, although Pemberton was a fighter, he came to realize he also needed others to fight for him.

“All these small engagements and interactions changed the arc of my life,” he said. “Those people saw not the circumstances of my life, they saw the possibilities, which is what any great educator does.

“And that makes all the difference in the world. Please don’t underestimate the power of what you do, the lives that you change. ... It absolutely does make a difference. And, it does a little bit more — it makes *the* difference.”

### The Walmartization of education

Diane Ravitch got right to the point.

“This is a very critical time for American education. Public education is at risk, and Ohio is on the front lines of the battle, either to save it or lose it. Those who will save it are in this room today: board members, administrators, people who care about public education, children and the future of this state.”

Ravitch, the keynote speaker at the Nov. 13 General Session, is a research professor of education at New York University. She taught at Columbia University’s Teachers College and served as an assistant undersecretary of education under President **George H.W. Bush**. A prolific writer, her most recent book is *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*.

A staunch defender of public education, she once strongly supported the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). But after witnessing NCLB’s true impact, she now speaks out strongly against the largely discredited reform plan and its standardized testing, support for charter schools, unfunded mandates and punitive measures.

Public education is under attack

across the nation by so-called reformers, Ravitch said. She cited ballot issues that recently authorized charter schools in Georgia and Washington state. In local races, school board members were up against candidates supported by an unprecedented infusion of outside campaign funds from groups supporting charters, vouchers and virtual schools.



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*The Capitol Steps entertain during the closing General Session. The Washington-based political satire troupe has been putting the “mock” in democracy for more than three decades.*

“We just saw an astonishing amount of money directed at statewide initiatives and state and local school board races to influence education policy,” Ravitch said. “Millions of dollars were spent to elect candidates who support the privatization of public education. This money came from Wall Street hedge fund managers, equity investors and charter school operators.”

“Reformers” also are attacking the quality of education, she said. They say American schools are falling behind the rest of the world because there are so many bad teachers. They discount the challenge of teaching low-income children by contending that anyone who talks about poverty’s effect on education is making excuses for bad teachers.

“Their solution is to open lots of charters, because charters are silver bullets that will fix education and eliminate poverty,” Ravitch said. “There absolutely is no evidence for any of these claims.”

The reformers also want to abolish local school boards, she said, because school boards spend too much time in debate and discussion. Reformers support strong governors, state superintendents and commissions who can override local decisions on charter schools. They favor national standards

and tests so that the federal government can dictate education policy without any local input.

“This is their way of saying that they don’t like democratic control of public education,” Ravitch said. “They don’t want the public involved in public education. This is not a recipe for reform, this is a step-by-step recipe for the privatization of public education.”

She said reformers’ call to eliminate collective bargaining is another ploy to diminish local control and influence. By marginalizing unions and employees, there will be fewer stakeholders to object when legislatures and governors cut public education funding.

“By the way, thank you for repealing Senate Bill 5,” Ravitch said to loud applause. “When I speak around the country I say that what Ohio did was very important, and Ohio always gets a tremendous round of applause from educators.”

She said powerful groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council are working with state legislatures to perpetuate the myths that charter schools are a panacea, teachers unions are blocking reform and American schools are

failing their students.

“None of these claims about public education is true,” Ravitch said. “The National Assessment of Educational Progress, our only long-running longitudinal test, shows U.S. scores are at the highest point in history across all races and groups. Graduation rates are at the highest point in history ... (T)he dropout rate is the lowest in history.”

International assessments showing the U.S. lagging are not true performance indicators because they are based on standardized tests, she said. By some of the most important measures — creativity, economic growth, military strength, technological innovation and democratic institutions — America outshines all others. But, the current embrace of standardized testing is putting those successes at risk by crushing creativity.

“The test scores don’t predict anything about the future performance of our economy,” Ravitch said. “What matters most for our economy and society is not test scores, but creativity and ingenuity and risk-taking. This is what is encouraged by a free society. This is where America has always excelled and this is what standardized testing is crushing.”

She also shot down the contention that poverty does not impact student achievement. On the most recent Program for International Student Assessment, she said, Americans in schools with fewer than 10% of their students in poverty outscored Finland, Japan, Korea and other high-scoring nations, ranking that group of U.S. students first in the world. American students in schools with 25% or fewer in poverty had scores the same as the highest-scoring nations.

“As the poverty level rises in our schools, the test scores go down,” Ravitch said. “We have a low average because so many children are living in poverty. ... More than any advanced nation in the world. Almost a quarter of our children live below the poverty line, as opposed to 5% in Finland. That has a huge impact on our test scores.”

“The deck is stacked against the poor. Instead of closing the achievement gap, we need to close the opportunity gap. It is the civil rights issue of our time.”

Ravitch closed by saying the essential mission of public education is to develop citizens with the heart and character to make good decisions. That job, she said, belongs to the community and must not be outsourced to Wall Street.

“Work with your community leaders and your business leaders; they are your best allies,” she said. “They do not want to see the Walmartization of public education.”

### **The lighter side of politics**

Appearing just a week after the close of a hotly contested

presidential campaign, The Capitol Steps had plenty of material to work with. The musical political satire group headlined the closing General Session on Nov. 14.

The Capitol Steps began as a group of Senate staffers that had planned to put on a traditional Nativity play for a December 1981 Capitol Hill Christmas party. But, as their creation myth has it, they could not find three wise men or a virgin in all of Washington. So, adopting the motto “We put the ‘mock’ in democracy,” they set out to satirize the very people and places that employed them.

Although some of the current members have not worked on Capitol Hill, the combined cast has served in 18 congressional offices and represents 62 years of collective House and Senate staff experience. They translate that experience into a show full of hilarious musical skits.

The equal-opportunity lampooners took aim at the full spectrum of election year politics. They opened by poking fun at Super PACs with the ditty, “SuperPACafragilisticpealidocious.” Next up were spot-on sendups of President **Barack Obama**, Vice President **Joe Biden**, House Minority Leader **Nancy Pelosi** and Senate Majority Leader **Harry Reid**. The Biden character shared the secret of his debate preparations: Red Bull, Mountain Dew and 5-Hour Energy drinks.

Moving to the other side of the aisle, The Steps portrayed former presidential candidate **Mitt Romney** as the “Plain White Rapper” grooving to the beat of his DJ, Roof Doggy Dogg.

Taking a stab at foreign affairs, the troupe spoofed the Greek fiscal crisis with “Greece,” a medley sung to the tunes of the musical “Grease.” Another skit featured a travel agent pushing Iraq as a wonderful vacation destination by singing “On the Sunny Side of Tikrit.”

To mark three decades of turning political scandals, gaffes and embarrassments into their own special brand of political humor, The Capitol Steps wrapped 30 years of performances into the musical skit “We Didn’t Start Satire.” Sung to the tune of **Billy Joel**’s “We Didn’t Start the Fire,” the song — accentuated by props, costumes and signs — covered political, cultural and historical happenings from the Reagan years on through to Obama. ■

*Editor’s note:* The General Session sponsors were: Stephen Pemberton — Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff LLP; Pepple & Waggoner Ltd.; and Ross Sinclair & Associates LLC; Diane Ravitch — Baird Public Finance and the law firms Peck Shaffer & Williams LLP; Scott, Scriven & Wahoff LLP; and Squire, Sanders (US) LLP; The Capitol Steps — CompManagement Inc. and Honeywell International Inc.

# Capital Conference highlights

▶ *With more than 600 vendor booths, the Capital Conference Trade Show is the largest education-related exhibition in the country.*

▼ *Revere Local's (Summit) Revere High School Choir performs during the second General Session.*



▲ *OSBA Northwest Region Manager Dr. Judy Jackson May, left, greets an attendee at the Region Resource Center.*

▶ *OSBA President Sharon E. Manson addresses the first General Session. Manson, who led the association in 2012, is a school board member at Waverly City and Pike County Career Technology Center.*





◀ OSBA Senior Administrative Assistant of Legislative Services Marcella Gonzalez, right, assists Early Bird Workshop attendees.

◀▼ Breakout session participants get active during Northmont City's workshop, "Peer facilitation — using peers to teach."

▼ Board Vice President Brenda Hill, Toledo City's representative to the OSBA Delegate Assembly, speaks during the assembly's annual business meeting.

Visit OSBA's Flickr page at [www.flickr.com/OHSchoolBoards](http://www.flickr.com/OHSchoolBoards) to view more conference photos.



▲ Attendees pick up their complimentary conference bags, courtesy of CompManagement Health Systems Inc.

◀ Akron City board member Bruce Alexander asks a question during the OSBA Black Caucus meeting.



# Delegates pick president-elect; OK amendments

*Angela Penquite, assistant editor*

The OSBA Delegate Assembly selected the association's new president-elect; heard the executive director's annual report; honored more than a dozen past OSBA presidents; and approved six amendments to the association's Legislative Platform on Nov. 12 in Columbus.

Delegates also heard from Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction **Michael L. Sawyers** and 2012 Ohio Teacher of the Year **Carole Morbitzer**, a math teacher at **Hamilton Local's (Franklin)** Hamilton Township High School. In addition, they received reports from the Credentials, Rules, Nominating and Legislative Platform committees.

The Annual Business Meeting of the OSBA Delegate Assembly was held at the association's 57th annual Capital Conference and Trade Show at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. The assembly is composed of representatives of Ohio public school boards, and sets the association's policies and approves the OSBA Legislative Platform. The platform informs legislators, policymakers, the public and the news media where OSBA stands on issues.

Delegates elected **Jo Ann W. Feltner** 2013 OSBA president-elect. Feltner has served on the **Franklin City** Board of Education for 15 years.



*Delegates, from left, Gail Martindale, Cedar Cliff Local (Greene) & Greene County Career Center); Sue Steele, Goshen Local (Clermont) & Great Oaks ITCD; and James Sommers, Greenville City, stand to vote for the election of Jo Ann W. Feltner, Franklin City, for 2013 OSBA president-elect.*

Feltner will become OSBA president in 2014, following her term as president-elect. The president-elect's duties include serving on OSBA's Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, chairing the Legislative Platform Committee and Federal Relations Network, and representing OSBA on the National School Boards Association Delegate Assembly.

The veteran board member serves on the OSBA Board of Trustees, Executive Committee and Federal Relations Network, and is her district's representative to the Delegate Assembly. She also is the OSBA Southwest Region immediate past president and serves on the region's executive committee. She earned OSBA Master Board Member status in 2003 and has received nine Awards of Achievement.

OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis** updated delegates on the state of the association and its 2012 achievements. He cited successes on the legislative, fiscal and legal fronts. These include thwarting the statewide school voucher bill; helping the state collect and report on districts' effective shared services practices; and winning several favorable, high-profile legal rulings on behalf of Ohio public schools.

"In 2012, we stepped up as the voice of public school board members and the diverse districts you represent," he said. "We fought hard as an unwavering advocate of public education and local control. We delivered on our ongoing pledge to provide superior service and creative solutions."

Lewis praised board members and districts for continuing to advance public education in Ohio, despite being under attack on multiple fronts.

"In spite of ever-increasing mandates and concerted efforts to erode local control, schools are *succeeding*," he said. "Under your leadership, public education continues to make a difference in millions of lives. This year's conference theme, 'Key into public education,' symbolizes the collective accomplishments of school boards and OSBA, the only organization that represents you as publicly elected boards of education."

The executive director reminded attendees that the true strength of the association is in its members. That strength — the power of 700 school boards and nearly 3,500 board members — will be needed in the coming year.

"Public education and Ohio need your robust support in what is shaping up to be a most challenging year," he said. "School funding will loom large in the new biennium. We will need to rebuild and strengthen support for our schools with new legislators who might not place a high priority on public education.

"OSBA is a very successful organization with a rich tradition



of serving you. But to stay strong, we need your committed involvement. We will face the future knowing that by working together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish."

Before adjourning, delegates approved amendments supporting legislation that:

- aligns state assessment laws with any requirements added by amendments or waivers to the No Child Left Behind Act;
- allows locally elected school boards to exempt foreign exchange students from taking the Ohio Graduation Test during the year they are visiting the United States;
- increases the 1% cap on alternative assessments for students to a realistic percentage that reflects the number of disabled students educated by the districts;
- provides school districts with an appropriate amount of time to inform parents, students, staff and communities about changes to assessments and report card standards.

Delegates approved amendments *opposing* legislation that:

- requires the transfer of any locally generated tax revenues to charter/community schools in the absence of approval by the locally elected board of education;
- uses profits from casinos and video lottery terminals to supplant other funding directed to public education.

Booklets containing the OSBA 2013 Legislative Platform will be mailed to all OSBA members in January. The platform also will be available on the OSBA website at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/legislative-platform](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/legislative-platform). For more information on the platform and this year's amendments, contact the OSBA legislative services division. ■



# Luncheon speakers enlighten, inspire conference crowd

*Margo Bartlett, freelance correspondent*

Two timely and talented speakers drew more than 850 attendees to the 2012 Capital Conference keynote luncheons.

The Nov. 12 event featured **Rosalind Wiseman**, an internationally respected expert on bullying, parenting and leadership. The luncheon was sponsored by CompManagement Inc.; FirstEnergy Solutions Corp.; Peck, Shaffer & Williams LLP; and PNC Financial Services.

The following day, former football star and cancer research crusader **Chris Spielman** spoke. His appearance was made possible by sponsors Bricker & Eckler LLP; CompManagement Inc.; Freund, Freeze & Arnold LPA; Huffmaster Crisis Management; the OSBA Insurance Agency LLC in partnership with Assurant Employee Benefits; and Piper Jaffray + Co.

## **Words have to matter**

Writer and educator Rosalind Wiseman doesn't make nice.

Not that she failed to greet her Monday Conference Luncheon audience with genuine pleasure. On the contrary, she thanked the 351 attendees both for their presence and for their professional contributions.

"You all do incredible work," Wiseman said. "My hope is that something I say you can impart to your own communities."

She then read a letter she first shared with teachers in a training session. The letter writer, also a teacher, was objecting to Wiseman's belief that teachers have an important role in making a school into what she calls "a place of dignity and worth." The goals include ethical leadership, social confidence and bullying prevention — but not all teachers buy that agenda.

"I am busy teaching," the letter writer wrote. "I'm a foreign language teacher, not a psychologist or a counselor. ... You

raise your children; I will teach them French."

In the training session, Wiseman told her conference audience, that letter elicited an awkward silence followed by laughter followed by applause — all inappropriate reactions, in Wiseman's opinion.

"I thought, 'She needs a little time away from kids,'" Wiseman said, and her OSBA listeners tittered, perhaps because they were stifling their own urges to applaud.

*"Where do we get to a place where kids can say things and adults are disempowered and cannot speak? Words have to matter."*

— *Rosalind Wiseman*

In fact, busy, over-scheduled teachers may attempt to avoid confrontations, Wiseman said. Though the author of the 2002 book *Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends and Other Realities of Adolescence* clearly believes teachers can and must assume responsibility for defusing school bullying, she does understand that a teacher's day already is packed.

Nevertheless, Wiseman said, teachers who "write up" bullying students, effectively passing them on to the school principal, know that almost certainly the bully will continue his or her tormenting ways unimpeded. Other teachers may dismiss victims with disingenuous comments such as "Ignore it," "I'm sure he/she didn't mean it," or "They're just jealous."

"It's the child's experience; don't take it away," Wiseman said.



That teachers often have no more desire to stand up to student bullies than student victims do is in itself an ominous development, she said.

“Where do we get to a place where kids can say things and adults are disempowered and cannot speak?” she said. “Words have to matter.”

And because many adults duck responsibility with insipid words or actions, it is necessary to acknowledge that some adults do not merit children’s respect.

“If we don’t, kids will never report what’s going on,” Wiseman said. “If teachers are good, then children will want to talk to them.”

She offered as an example a teacher who sees a scuffle in a school hallway. As she approaches, she hears a telling phrase — “You’re so retarded,” perhaps. Maybe, “We’re going to deport you.”

“Are they bothering you?” the teacher asks the obvious victim. To that, Wiseman said, a bullied child can give only one answer: “No.” And the teacher is stamped as incompetent or clueless in the eyes of all the students, the victim included.

What *should* a teacher do, given this scenario?

First, Wiseman said, assess the situation on the approach, not upon arrival. Second, never ask a group who is responsible. Inviting a student to act as a spokesman for the rest will identify the group’s most verbal member and probably the one with the most social clout. That reduces the situation to a contest between the teacher and the students’ best competitor. Instead, say, “Using (the bullying expression) is unacceptable. Get to your class.”

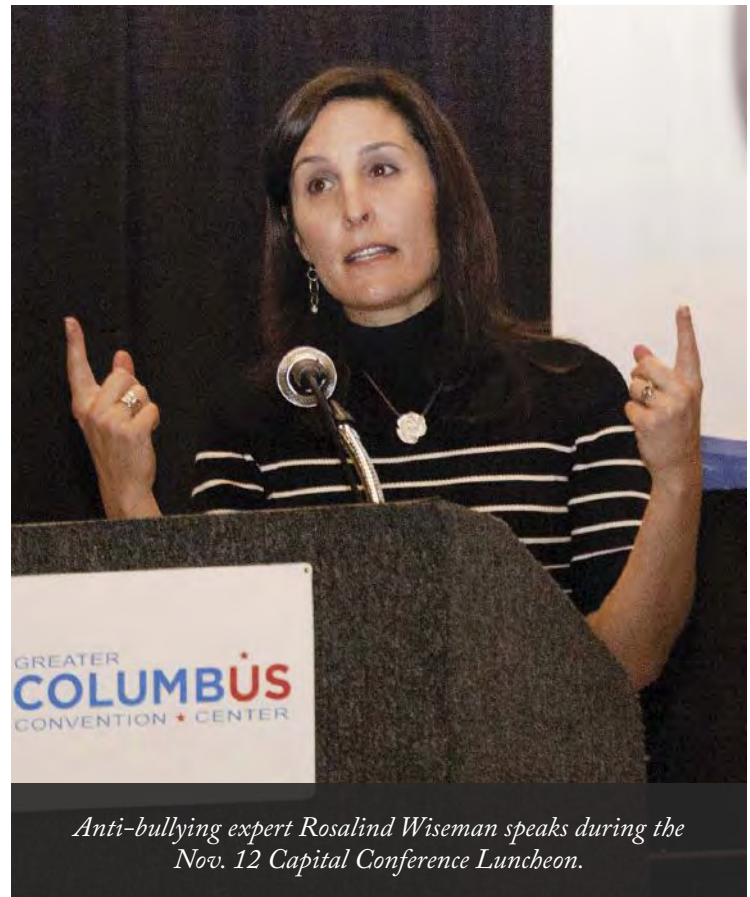
Acknowledging that her brief speaking time was inadequate to cover her subject, Wiseman raced through her points like a teacher trying to get through her notes before the bell.

On school sports: Athletics are amazing, she said, but “(If that is all we see in school, it shows a message of who counts.”

When she walks through a school and sees the same student athlete’s name in every trophy case, Wiseman said, the take-away is clear: “If you go against *this* child, you will lose.”

Schools that celebrate accomplishments of every stripe — sports, student government, theater, music, science fair, debate — send a different, better message, she said. That message is, “Everybody counts; everybody matters.”

On protecting victims: If a bully is annoying another student, don’t handle the situation by escorting the victim



to and from class. Instead, escort the bully. That tells him or her, “*You* are the problem. *Your* life must change.”

And while escorting the miscreant, Wiseman added, speak up. Say, “Why am I doing this? You’re a better kid than this.”

“These are ethical choices we’re making,” Wiseman said, referring to schools’ handling of bullies and bullying situations. “If we don’t do this, it’s one of the primary reasons children don’t want to go to school.”

Wiseman’s *Queen Bees and Wannabes* was updated and re-released in 2009 as *Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends and the New Realities of Girl World*. She also wrote *Queen Bee Moms and Kingpin Dads* (2006), and *Owning up Curriculum: Empowering Adolescents to Confront Social Cruelty, Bullying and Injustice* (book and CD, 2009), among other books. Wiseman writes a column for *Family Circle* magazine and worked on the film “Stop Bullying: Speak Up,” that was shown in spring 2012 on the cable channel Cartoon Network.

### What is your purpose?

Some 510 people attended the Tuesday Conference Luncheon, not so much because they were hungry. They came to hear former Ohio State University and NFL football star Chris Spielman discuss his life, both before



and after his wife, **Stefanie**, died of breast cancer.

Attendees may have hoped for an inspiring speech. If so, they got what they wanted and then some. Spielman, who now works as an ESPN college football analyst, spoke as if he had an urgent message to share with one particular listener — and every single person thought he or she was that one.

After thanking the hundreds of educators before him — “You’re a group that I admire” — Spielman launched into his story.

He grew up believing he’d be an NFL player. Long before he played for **Massillon City’s** Washington High School Tigers, Spielman anticipated a career on the field.

“I turned everything into a football game,” he said. His G.I. Joe figures played football. “I’d break their limbs off and say, ‘This guy gets hurt all the time, Dad!’”

Speaking of dad, Spielman’s father coached at **Canton City’s** Timken High School. By age 4, Spielman was attending two-a-day practices. It’s almost anticlimactic to note that after being named Parade All-American at Massillon, Spielman played football for the Buckeyes and then, just as he’d predicted, in the NFL.



*Chris Spielman, anti-cancer crusader and former Ohio State University football star, leads the Nov. 13 luncheon.*

Spielman described a pre-game ritual that included stuffing smelling salts up his nose and drinking lots of coffee to get himself in a bad enough mood to play football.

“This worked for nine years,” he said. Then one night, “as

*“I have a cure to find, money to raise. ... I have a mission and I have a passion and the question I will leave with you is, ‘Do you?’”*

*— Chris Spielman*

I was going through this psychotic routine, something happened.”

What happened was this. He heard a message: “What is your purpose?”

Spielman tossed off the only answer he’d known since he was old enough to break a plastic G. I. Joe arm: “My purpose is to be a football player.”

But the question came again, at the coin toss 90 minutes later. During the game he was paralyzed for 20 seconds after hitting an opposing player.

“Being an educated guy and a star athlete, as you heard, I got up and continued to play,” Spielman said dryly. When temporary paralysis happened half a dozen more times, however, he saw a doctor. A ruptured disc and a bruised spinal cord were the culprits, and soon Spielman was undergoing surgery.

He woke to a question: “What is your purpose?”

This time, his answer was different: To come back from his injury. If he did, he’d be the first player to do it.

At that time, he and Stefanie had two children, with a third on the way. But Stefanie suffered a miscarriage, and that’s when the doctor discovered the lump. It tested positive for cancer on July 7, 1998.

Spielman’s first reaction was angry resolve — “We’re going to beat this, attack it, blitz it with everything we have” — blended with pure anger — “Are you kidding me? Are you freaking kidding me? I might not be able to play football? We lose a baby? You have breast cancer? What’s happening?”

To this rant, Spielman said, Stefanie responded with disgust. “How dare you?” she said. “For once in your life, just once, why don’t you stop looking ahead for the next

favor, the next blessing. ... Look at all the good things we've had for the first 30 years."

And Spielman again heard the question: "What is your purpose?"

"I found my purpose," he told his listeners, who were so profoundly quiet a blindfolded person might have thought they'd all left the room. "My purpose is to serve God, to serve my family, to serve my community."

He called a press conference and left the Buffalo Bills. Then he not only took charge of his family, he also took charge of community fundraising for cancer research. He hoped, he said, to raise \$250,000. That fund has passed the \$11 million mark and continues to climb.

After battling cancer for 11 years, Stefanie died in 2009.

Spielman reacts to pity and solicitude by brushing it away.

"We got a tough break? Get in line; everybody's got a story," he said. He hears a lot of them, and then he's asked, "How do I be brave?"

Spielman has no pat answers, but he does say this: "If you have a faith, stand firm in it. That will be your rock and your foundation. ... Above all, do everything with love. That's how I'm living."

He suggested his OSBA audience live by the pledge, "I am an educator of children. I will always give 100% to my students, for the good of my students."

Then he added, "The standards that you set as an educator must never be lowered," and was answered by a burst of applause.

"Do you understand God's gift to you? The awesome responsibility that you've been given?" Spielman said. "You're in a position to have a positive impact on other people's lives every day. What a gift."

Meanwhile, he said, "I have a cure to find, money to raise. ... I have a mission and I have a passion and the question I will leave with you is, 'Do you?'"

Spielman stopped speaking, and applauding audience members jumped to their feet. ■

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

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# The data made me do it

## *Early Bird Workshop explores understanding and effectively using data*

*Gary Motz, managing editor*

**K**atheryn Gemberling opened her Nov. 11 Early Bird Workshop session by praising the dedication of the 100-plus school district leaders settling in for her three-hour Capital Conference presentation.

She said she was especially impressed by the turnout since it was a beautiful, balmy autumn afternoon. Especially because it was a Sunday, during football season, in Ohio. And — most especially — because her topic was data.

“I’d like you to complete the following sentence,”

Gemberling said in kicking off her session. “When I think about data I ...”

“I wonder how someone is manipulating the data right now for their benefit,” was the first response. Another attendee said, “I think about poor-performing schools.” And yet another said, “I cringe, because there’s just so much data.”

Gemberling took it a step further, saying that a school board member once told her thinking about data made her nauseous.



*School board member Fred Szabo listens intently during the Capital Conference Early Bird Workshop, featuring data expert Katheryn Gemberling. Szabo serves on the Berea City and Polaris Career Center school boards.*

Such reactions are normal, she said.

“In other words, data can be very overwhelming,” she said. “But there’s something I want you to think about if you don’t feel comfortable about data. Think about the public out there being asked to understand it. Our job is to make data understandable for them.”

*“Use data as a flashlight, not as a hammer. ... Using data changes the discussion. It drives the decisions on behalf of the children, instead of the adults.”*  
— Katheryn Gemberling

Gemberling — a veteran educator and one of the nation’s foremost experts in data-driven decision-making — has spent years helping educators understand data. The former deputy superintendent for Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland earned national recognition for her pioneering strategic plan that dramatically improved student achievement in the district of more than 150,000 students. She also co-authored the National School Boards Association’s *Key Work Guidebook*, which focuses on the school board’s role in improving student achievement.

Her session — “The data made me do it: using data for continuous school improvement” — was interactive, informative and engaging. That made spending three hours in a conference room on a beautiful fall day more than worthwhile.

In putting data in the context of school board governance, she discussed how the federal accountability mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the implementation of the Race to the Top program greatly accelerated the use of data in schools.

“After NCLB, we could no longer not look at student achievement,” Gemberling said, “and we could no longer not notice that certain groups of students were not making it, predictable groups of students, time after time.

“Now, with Race to the Top, the feds aren’t just talking about accountability and how well you do it; they are telling you *how* to do it. ... (T)hey are paying you to do some things and withholding money if you don’t. One of the major things they are looking at is teacher quality, and with teacher evaluations coming in 2014, understanding data is important.”



*Data expert Katheryn Gemberling makes a point during her Early Bird Workshop presentation.*

Gemberling shared five “data basics” that can help school boards understand and use data:

- A picture is worth a thousand words, meaning that graphics and charts make data more user-friendly and easier to understand.
- Use color consistently to get more information. For example, green shading on a graphic indicates a target was met, while red shows where students have come up short.
- Ask the “guiding questions” — how are we doing compared to local, state and national standards; how are we doing compared to ourselves, which looks at trends over time; and how are we doing compared to other districts?
- Focus on distribution of results. Consider what distribution models best meet your district’s needs.
- Disaggregate the results using different methods. For example, 100% stacked columns (vertical pie charts) are useful for summary reports, comparing group and trend data, and seeing the range of results. A scatter plot helps to easily identify subgroups.

A common mistake many make, Gemberling said, is using averages when analyzing data, because it can direct attention away from problem areas. She illustrated this concept with an analogy: “If you have your head in a freezer and your feet on a hot stove, your average temperature might be OK, but, in reality, you are not OK.”



Effectively using data is essential when tackling the difficult job of evaluating teachers, Gemberling said, a task made even more challenging by the many parties with a stake in the process: unions, the public, legislators and teachers themselves.

“You face a lot of hard choices and a lot of conflicting priorities and a lot of political ammunition coming at you,” she said. “Using data is not going to make those decisions easy, but it will help you explain why you made the decision you made.”

She led the audience in a number of exercises showing different data-based teacher evaluation methods and recommended websites to guide them, including [www.data-first.org](http://www.data-first.org) and [www.centerforpubliceducation.org](http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org). She also said districts must make the relatively small investment in a monitoring system to connect all the data for analysis. Through it all, she said, continuous improvement should be front and center.

“Once you’ve got your system in place, make your focus on continuous improvement; that is what school boards believe in,” Gemberling said. “It’s what makes for quality education, it’s what makes for quality teachers and it’s certainly what makes for quality students.”

“Make sure you know all the changes with Race to the Top and AYP and how that’s going to affect your district. I particularly urge you to look at your teacher data in terms of distribution and assignment. Where are your non-tenured teachers? What schools, what grades, what groups of students?”

That information is important, she said, because districts traditionally assign tenured teachers to high-performing schools and place newer teachers in lower-performing buildings.

“I wouldn’t want to have that system in medicine, where the experienced surgeon does my tonsillectomy and the rookie intern does my brain surgery,” she said.

Questions are more important than answers when trying to understand data, Gemberling said. And, it’s important to know what questions to ask and how to ask them.

“Use data as a flashlight, not as a hammer, but use it,” she said. “Using data changes the discussion. It drives the decisions on behalf of the children, instead of the adults.” ■

*Editor’s note:* Britton, Smith Peters & Kalail Co. LPA sponsored the Early Bird Workshop.

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## Roots in the Future

One of the largest high schools in the Midwest is not afraid to test new technology, and its partners keep them on the leading edge.

The year 1965 brought fantastic advances in space flight. Ranger 8 helped map possible Moon landing sites. Gemini 3 took a duo of astronauts into space for the first time, and the Soviet Union sent the Venera 3 probe to Venus. These events had people all around the world glued to televisions and radios while envisioning a future in which space travel would become as common as a cross-country flight.

This same year marked another milestone: The public school board in Lincolnshire, Ill., created a new district, and within it, a new high school that it named in posthumous honor of one of the most popular politicians of the age. Today, Adlai E. Stevenson High School (AESHS) is recognized as one of the most technologically superior schools in the state, a fitting tribute to the year of its birth.

With a population of more than 4,200 students covering 10 area communities, AESHS relies heavily on technology to help manage the day-to-day requirements of operations and administration. The school adopted a common university practice of distributing key cards which serve as both identifiers for students around the school and reloadable cash cards that allow students to purchase meals and snacks during lunch.

Realizing the benefits of implementing such technology, AESHS wanted similar solutions in helping manage the safe movement of students between home and school, to athletic events and on field trips. The school turned to its transportation partner of more than 25 years – First Student—for the answers.

“Back in the ‘90s, we worked with First Student to add GPS (Global Positioning Systems) and cameras to our buses to help us track their location and monitor student activity in transit,” said Mark Michelini, assistant superintendent for business at AESHS. “Now we are adding the ZPass System, and it’s a very exciting time for us.”

ZPass is a student tracking solution that uses Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to reliably track students as they get on and off the bus. The system provides both the school and concerned parents with specific times and locations of boarding and disembarking, allowing the schools to more efficiently monitor student movement, and giving parents peace of mind.

First Student reached out to their partner, Zonar, the producer of the ZPass system to help put together a program to fit the needs of AESHS. Jim Kingston, location manager for First Student, worked with Zonar to add ZPass as a pilot program for the school.

“Currently, we handle 56 regular education routes as well as curricular and athletic trips for Stevenson High School,” said Kingston. “ZPass gives administrators live data so they can see when and where students get on and when and where they get off, in the morning and the afternoon. They have been very happy with it.”

The ability to deliver ZPass and other new technology into its highly scalable, turnkey transportation service offering has enabled First Student to maintain longstanding relationships with AESHS and other schools. In addition, its practice of hiring local drivers, many of whom are parents of children who ride the buses, as well as its predictable cost model, have created a deep-rooted relationship between the company, the high school and the community.

AESHS plans to expand its employment of technology solutions to streamline its operations, and according to Dean of Students Steve Tucker, First Student will be along for the ride. “You can’t stop technology,” said Tucker. “It is improving at a fantastic rate, and here at Stevenson we want to take the initiative and jump on board and take advantage of new innovations. First Student is keenly aware of what our expectations are and they continue to help us meet our goals.”

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# Top of the class



2012 All-Ohio School Board members recognized during the third General Session of the Capital Conference are, from left, Sue Steele, W. Bryce Watt, Nancy Decker and Doug G. Stuart. Honoree Jaynie Lambert was unable to attend.

## Five board members earn OSBA's highest honor

*Bryan Bullock, assistant editor*

Five Ohio school board members have been recognized with OSBA's most prestigious honor. The outstanding school district leaders were named to the 2012 All-Ohio School Board on Nov. 14 during the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show in Columbus.

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

The 2012 honorees are:

- **Nancy Decker, Springfield Local (Lucas);**

- **Jaynie Lambert, Fairbanks Local (Union) and Tolles Career & Technical Center;**
- **Sue Steele, Goshen Local (Clermont) and Great Oaks ITCD;**
- **Doug G. Stuart, Rittman EV and Wayne County Schools Career Center;**
- **W. Bryce Watt, Muskingum Valley ESC.**

One school board member from each of OSBA's five regions — Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest — is named to the All-Ohio School Board every year. Candidates' school boards nominate them and each region then selects its winner.



“Each year OSBA recognizes school board members who have demonstrated their commitment to public education in their respective communities,” OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis** said before introducing the honorees. “Competition is heavy and the qualifications are considerable. Earning the award is not an easy feat and it is considered OSBA’s most prestigious award. It is my pleasure to now introduce to you the 2012 All-Ohio School Board.”

### Northwest Region

#### Nancy Decker

Decker has advanced the cause of public education in and outside the classroom.

Decker, a board member with Springfield Local (Lucas), has served on the board of education for 17 years. She has served as board president or vice president for four of those years.

Decker is a teacher with **Maumee City Schools**. Her experience as a teacher contributes to her expertise as a board member.

Decker shows her dedication to students by regularly attending school activities, including plays, athletic events and school programs.

She is actively involved with OSBA, and has served as a student achievement liaison. Her affiliations with professional organizations include membership in the Maumee Education Association and National Education Association. She also is involved with the Maumee City Schools staff development committee.

Decker has attended a number of recent conferences and workshops on topics like Common Core standards, inclusionary practices and formative assessment training.

In nominating Decker, her board colleagues wrote: “Over her 17 years on the school board, Nancy has worked hard to provide insights into the world of education. In doing so, she has assumed a vital role in our board, making excellent decisions that have positively impacted our students.”

Decker and her husband, **Jim**, live in Maumee. She has three children.

### Central Region

#### Jaynie Lambert

A local business owner, Lambert believes a strong community requires strong schools.

Lambert, a board member with Fairbanks Local (Union) and Tolles Career & Technical Center, has served on boards of education for more than 10 years. She has served as board president or vice president for three of those years.

The owner and operator of Lambert Jewelers in Marysville, she is very engaged with her schools and community. Lambert volunteers as an elementary school reading tutor and teaches Sunday school at her church.

She is actively involved with OSBA, where she belongs to the Delegate Assembly and Central Region Executive Committee. Her affiliations with professional organizations include Jewelers of America and the Union County Chamber of Commerce.

Lambert is committed to continuing her education through professional development. She has attended a variety of recent conferences and workshops, including the OSBA Capital Conference and National School Boards Association Annual Conference.

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In nominating Lambert, her board colleagues wrote: “Lambert is a tireless worker for the kids in our district and the kids who attend Tolles (Career & Technical Center). Her experience, knowledge and good common sense make her someone whose judgment you can trust and rely on.”

Lambert and her husband, **Keith**, live in Marysville. She has two children.

### Southwest Region

#### Sue Steele

Steele is a dedicated supporter of her schools and community.

A board member with Goshen Local (Clermont) and Great Oaks ITCD, she has served on boards of education for 15 years. She has served as board president or vice president for 11 of those years.

She is a PTO member, volunteer tutor and regular face at student events and activities. Steele also serves on various

committees with Goshen Local and Great Oaks ITCD.

She is actively involved with OSBA, where she belongs to the Delegate Assembly, Legislative Platform Committee and Southwest Region Executive Committee. Her affiliations with professional organizations include the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), Clermont County Chamber of Commerce, Goshen Chamber of Commerce and the National School Boards Association, among others.

Steele has attended several recent conferences, including the OSBA Board Leadership Institute, OSBA Capital Conference and the National ACTE Conference.

In nominating Steele, her board colleagues wrote: “Sue’s greatest attribute is her clear-cut focus on kids and her love of our schools and community. There is not a harder-working board member in the state of Ohio.”

Steele and her husband, **Joe**, live in Goshen. She has three children.



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## Northeast Region

### Doug G. Stuart

Stuart is a board member who always makes students his top priority.

A board member with Rittman EV and Wayne County Schools Career Center (WCSCC), Stuart has served on boards of education for nine years. He has served as board president or vice president for eight of those years.

As a board member, Stuart oversaw a successful renovation project in WCSCC, as well as the construction of new facilities in Rittman schools.

He was actively involved with the formation of the Administrative Compact, an innovative, cost-cutting solution that allowed Rittman schools to share a superintendent and treasurer with multiple neighboring districts.

Stuart serves on various committees with Rittman schools and WCSCC. He is very involved with OSBA, where he participates on the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee and Capital Conference Planning Task Force. He also is Northeast Region president and serves on the region's Executive Committee. His affiliations with professional organizations include the Greater Wayne County Credit Union Board of Directors, Teamsters and UPS Comprehensive Health and Safety committee, among others.

Students are always Stuart's top priority, and he made that clear with his theme of "It's all about the kids" at the OSBA Northeast Region fall and spring conferences.

He has participated in recent conferences, including the OSBA Board Leadership Institute, OSBA Capital Conference and Education Week Leadership Forum's Scaling Up Student Success.

In nominating Stuart, his board colleagues wrote: "Doug truly believes in public education. His open-minded and fiscally responsible decision-making has assisted numerous boards in achieving positive results for all our students."

Stuart lives in Rittman with his wife **Diane**. He has four children.

## Southeast Region

### W. Bryce Watt

A second-generation school board member, Watt is a tireless advocate for public education.

A board member with Muskingum Valley ESC, Watt has served on boards of education for 27 years. He has served as board president or vice president for five of those years.

Watt began his board service with **Franklin Local**

(**Muskingum**) in 1975. Bryce's commitment to education was passed down by his parents. His father served as a school board member for nearly 50 years and his mother taught for more than 40 years.

The veteran board member shows his passion for students by regularly attending school activities, programs and athletic events. Watt is deeply involved with OSBA, where he belongs to the Board of Trustees, Board Member Cabinet and Nominating Committee. He also is immediate past president of the Southeast Region and serves on the region's Executive Committee. His affiliations with professional organizations include AARP, National School Boards Association and Ohio Farm Bureau, among others.

Watt has attended a variety of recent conferences, including ESC workshops, OSBA Board Leadership Institutes and OSBA Capital Conferences.

In nominating Watt, his board colleagues wrote: "Bryce is committed to students receiving learning opportunities and has compassion for children, teachers and the great institution we call public schools."

Watt and his wife, **Cheryl**, live in Zanesville. He has two children. ■

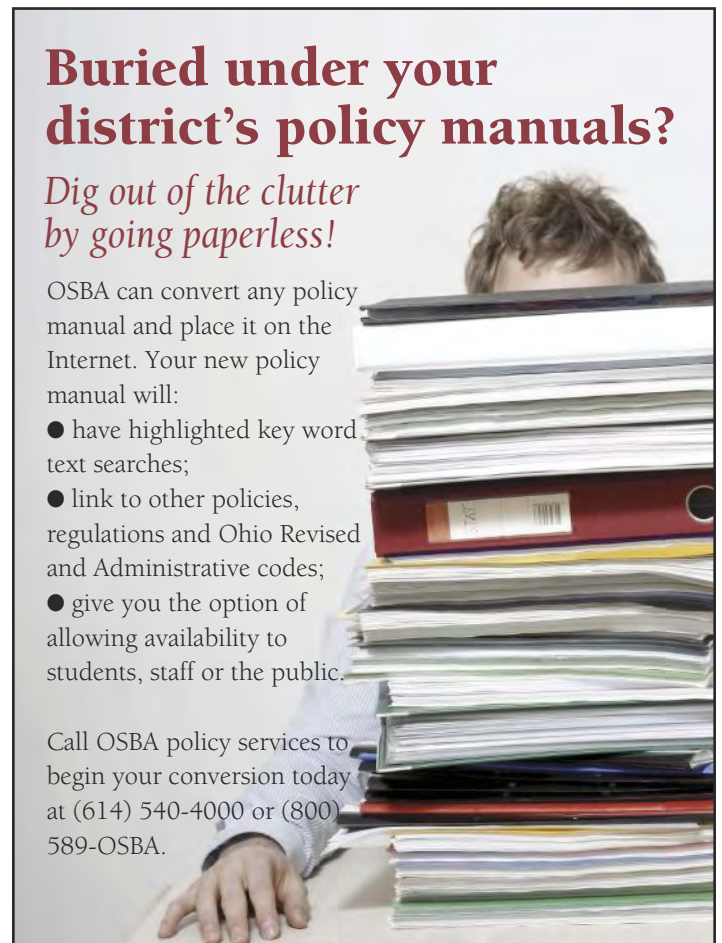
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# A salute to veteran school board members

*Bryan Bullock, assistant editor*

School board members help shape the future of their school district and community. It's rewarding but challenging work — and not everybody is up to the task.

Each year, OSBA is proud to recognize board members who go above and beyond in their commitment to public education by reaching an astounding milestone: 25 years of board service.

Veteran board members from across Ohio were recognized for the achievement on Nov. 14 during the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show.

The dedication shown by these board members is highlighted by the fact that:

- 17% of Ohio school board members are in their first year of service,
- 42% of board members are serving their first term,
- 17% of members have more than 12 years of service.

“Serving as a school board member requires a tremendous amount of time, energy and dedication — and 25 years of board service is an extraordinary accomplishment,” said OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis**. “These veteran board members have demonstrated a commendable commitment to their local schools and communities.”

Veteran school board members recognized at the Capital Conference include:

- **Mark Baden, Central Local (Defiance);**
- **Kenneth Burnett, Geauga County ESC;**



*Board members who have completed 25 years of service take the stage during the 2012 Capital Conference.*

- Don E. Carpenter, Barnesville EV and Belmont-Harrison Career Center;
- Hugh Coffman, Ohio Valley ESC;
- Ancil B. Cross, Jackson City;
- James Dillard, Painesville City Local (Lake);
- Robert L. (Larry) George, Jefferson County ESC and Jefferson County JVSD;
- William Hendricks, Steubenville City and Jefferson County JVSD;
- Susie Lawson, Tri-County ESC and Wayne County Schools Career Center;
- Sharon E. Manson, Waverly City and Pike County Career Technology Center;
- James R. McIlvaine, Wadsworth City;
- Ruth M. Nau, Noble Local (Noble);
- Douglas Peterman, formerly of Dover City and Buckeye Career Center;

- Dr. Ralph Smith, Maysville Local (Muskingum);
- Joseph P. Uphaus, Ottawa-Glandorf Local (Putnam);
- Kay Van Ho, Euclid City.

Veteran board members unable to attend the event include:

- Dr. Marguerite Bennett, Mount Vernon City and Knox County Career Center;
- Larry Bowling, Hamilton City;
- Karen Dendorfer, Parma City;
- P. Joseph Grooms, Western Local (Pike);
- Marie Huenefeld, Mariemont City;
- Brent Porteus, River View Local (Coshocton);
- Diana Sabitsch, Revere Local (Summit);
- Deborah Shaw, Logan Elm Local (Pickaway);
- Dr. Robert Wilder, Medina City and Medina County Career Center. ■

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# Achievement fair drums up excitement, large crowds



Students participating in the Clyde-Green Springs EV S.T.A.R.S. (Students Taking a Right Stand) program share the principles of the district's anti-bullying program.

*Crystal Davis Hutchins, editor*

The 14th annual Student Achievement Fair at OSBA's Capital Conference and Trade Show drummed up an extraordinary amount of attention — and it may be one for the history books.

“It seemed to be the largest number of visitors that I have experienced in the past 10 years,” said OSBA Director of School Board Services **Kathy LaSota**. “The booth topics were very diverse.”

Districts from around the state were selected to set up booths at the Greater Columbus Convention Center on Nov. 13 and share their innovative programs designed to boost student achievement and leadership.

“We had the maximum — 100 booths — registered for the Student Achievement Fair, as always,” said **Cheryl W. Ryan**, OSBA deputy director of school board services and fair coordinator. “The variety of projects and performances was great!”

Fair participants were chosen based on creativity, what others might learn from the project and the program's impact on student achievement.

“The Student Achievement Fair continues to be an ideal forum for recognizing the good work of students and staff from across the state,” LaSota said. “Visitors walked away with multiple creative and proven strategies for implementation in

their own districts. The networking that took place this year will also have a long-lasting positive impact.”

During the four-hour fair, students explained their programs to school board members, administrators and guests. Programs included: recycled bottle cap art; a simulation of the process of the United Nations; culinary arts; anti-bullying, diversity and family engagement initiatives; robotics; guitar building; teaching science and math through the construction of a mini-golf course; a gardening club for first- and second-graders; a student-operated virtual airline business; a wind turbine energy project; graphic arts technology; and rocket building.

“So many members told me that the Student Achievement Fair is one of their favorite parts of Capital Conference,” Ryan said.

“We understand that districts must prioritize the use of scarce resources,” LaSota said. “In light of that, we appreciate those districts that continue to make showcasing their programs a priority and put forth the effort and resources to allow their students and staff to be a part of this meaningful event.”

Part of the attention the fair drummed up this year came from, well, drums. One of the fair’s student entertainment groups played large Japanese drums and danced while performing. All of the Kuroi Taka Taiko Drum Group’s instruments were handmade by students, parents, directors and community members. The group is from **Mississinawa Valley Local (Darke)** in OSBA’s Southwest Region.

The Kuroi Taka Taiko Drums was one of five groups picked to provide entertainment at the fair. One group from each of OSBA’s five regions was selected based on talent, grade level and variety. Other districts represented this year were:

- Central Region, **Westerville City** — Genoa Middle



*Mississinawa Valley Local’s (Darke) Kuroi Taka Taiko Drum Group entertains attendees during its Student Achievement Fair performance.*

School Jazz Band;

- Northeast Region, **Marlington Local (Stark)** — Dukes of Harmony;
- Northwest Region, **Arcadia Local (Hancock)** — Arcadia High School Concert Band;
- Southeast Region, **West Muskingum Local (Muskingum)** — West Muskingum High School Jazz Band.

“The performing groups were popular with the whole crowd,” Ryan said. “We try to select different performing groups each year, and also to have some variety as to the age of the

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*A Cuyahoga County Career Center student explains the center's literary outreach program to an attendee.*

students and the types of music they perform.

“We realize that bringing groups of students to Columbus is a stretch for some districts and we will continue to work toward making the trip as easy and enjoyable as possible. Districts should continue to keep track of developments over the year as we strive to improve the ways we serve those who come to Capital Conference for the Student Achievement Fair.”

Britton, Smith, Peters & Kalail Co. LPA sponsored the student performance area.

Another popular part of the fair was the student art exhibition, featuring nearly 100 visual art projects. Pepple & Waggoner Ltd. sponsored the student art show.

“This year, State Board of Education members again played an active part by visiting booths and getting hands-on with the student projects,” LaSota said.

State Board members also personally presented participating programs and performers with certificates of appreciation.

“Although we value returning districts, we would like to see new districts nominate programs for 2013, to keep a steady stream of fresh ideas flowing from all over the state,” LaSota said.

Planning has already begun for the 2013 Student Achievement Fair. The deadline for submitting nominations is May 24, 2013. Nomination forms are available at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/SAF](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/SAF). Be sure to get your nomination in early, since participation is limited to 100 booths. The names of districts that participated in the 2012 Student Achievement Fair also are posted on that Web page.

For additional information, please contact LaSota at (614) 540-4000; (800) 589-OSBA; or [kLasota@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:kLasota@ohioschoolboards.org). ■

## Student services result in more relaxed crowd

Take a deep breath and say, “Ahh.”

In addition to the districts that participated in the Student Achievement Fair, more career centers offered their services at the 2012 Capital Conference than ever before. That means there were more free massages, blood pressure checks, cosmetology makeovers and other services provided this year, which helped make the conference perhaps the most relaxing, healthful and beautiful one yet!

Career centers prepare secondary students to succeed in the 21st century workforce and to value learning as a lifelong process. Students and staff from nine career-tech and local district programs demonstrated their “ahh-mazing” skills during this year’s conference, including:

- Coshocton County Career Center – blood pressure checks and cosmetology;
- Dayton City’s Ponitz Career Technology Center – Capital Conference Student Documentary Video Team;
- Delaware Area Career Center – OSBA Bookstore landscaping;
- Eastland-Fairfield Career and Technical Schools – hand and arm massages and manicures;
- Mahoning County Career & Technical Center – blood pressure



*A Trumbull Career & Technical Center cosmetology student gives an attendee a manicure. The center’s students also provided hand and arm massages.*

screenings;

- Morgan Local (Morgan) – blood pressure screenings;
- Tolles Career & Technical Center – hand and arm massages and manicures;
- Tri-Rivers Career Center – blood pressure screenings;
- Trumbull Career & Technical Center – hand and arm massages and manicures.



# Learning Sharing Leading



## Ohio School Boards Association Board Leadership Institute

April 26–27, 2013 • Hilton Columbus/Polaris, north Columbus

Learn what it takes to be an effective school board member during this two-day workshop. The 2013 Board Leadership Institute will be held April 26–27 at the Hilton Columbus/Polaris. The cost to attend is \$240. For registration information, contact Laurie Miller. For all other questions, please contact Rob Delane. You can reach Miller and Delane at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA, or visit OSBA's website at [www.ohioschoolboards.org](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org). An agenda will be posted on the association website in February.

Also, OSBA secured a reduced hotel rate for BLI attendees: just \$123 per night if the room is booked by April 5. To reserve your room, contact the Hilton Columbus/Polaris at (614) 885-1600 and mention you are with OSBA.

# Students display their talents at the conference

► *The Columbus City West High School JROTC Color Guard presents the colors during the first General Session.*

▼ *A Franklin City student stands before the district's Hands on the Past program display in the Student Achievement Fair.*



▲ *The Northwestern Local (Clark) Elementary School Select Choir performs during the third General Session.*

► *Greene County Career Center Auto Collision Repair students show off the 1930 Ford Model AA truck they restored and brought to the Student Achievement Fair.*





◀ Students deliver poetry readings at Westerville City's Poetry Café in the Student Achievement Fair.

◀▼ A Student Achievement Fair attendee learns more about the Barnesville EV Junior High School Models the United Nations program.

▼ West Muskingum Local's (Muskingum) High School Jazz Band entertains at the Student Achievement Fair.



▲ The Arcadia Local (Hancock) High School Concert Choir performs during the Student Achievement Fair.

◀ A student explains West Clermont Local's (Clermont) Ohio's Greener Farm program to a Student Achievement Fair attendee.



# Tax policy experts go to bat for public schools

*Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator*

The relationship between public education and Ohio tax policy is increasingly complex, and school district leaders often find it difficult to get all the information they need to master those complexities.

That's where the Education Tax Policy Institute (ETPI) comes in. Through expert research and analysis, ETPI provides school district management teams the information they need to effectively understand the impact tax policy has on education funding.

Since its inception, ETPI has been providing important data about the effect of tax and state policy decisions on Ohio's public school districts and taxpayers. The nonprofit research group has become known as Ohio's premier tax, school-funding and education public policy resource. Backed by the consulting firm of Driscoll & Fleeter, ETPI consistently presents credible data that benefits school districts and policymakers alike.

It's no secret that school districts are facing tough economic times. With major political changes in 2012 and in the coming year, public education has been — and will continue to be — impacted. School districts will continue to need vital information about financial and tax issues, and ETPI can help fill the void. With districts facing unprecedented challenges, it is more important than ever for them to join ETPI.

ETPI members enjoy access to the institute's published studies and analysis, supported by Driscoll & Fleeter's in-depth research on public policy and tax issues. The institute also educates legislators, state and local policymakers, the media and the public about the implications of changes in state and local tax policies.

Another major benefit of ETPI is that it has the expertise to respond quickly to legislative proposals and evaluate the long-term effects of existing law.

ETPI also plays a critical role during the state budget

process. The group serves as the "go-to" organization for policymakers, furnishing key analysis on the current state budget for fiscal years 2012-13.

This year, ETPI's expert analysis of the American Electric Power (AEP) rate case before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) greatly contributed to PUCO's decision to sharply scale back AEP's proposed rate increases. That success is translating into major cost savings for school districts, enabling them to direct more money to the classroom.

*ETPI provides school district management teams the information they need to effectively understand the impact tax policy has on education funding.*

In 2012, ETPI analysis benefited school districts on a variety of issues, including:

- the mid-biennial budget review legislation;
- House Bill (HB) 136, which called for expanding the school voucher system;
- HB 191, a bill that would have limited the school year to the time between Labor Day and Memorial Day;
- college remediation statistics;
- taxation of shale drilling in Ohio and other states;
- casino tax fiscal issues and estimates;
- costs of the third-grade reading guarantee.

ETPI consultant Dr. **Howard Fleeter** also presented testimony before a specially appointed school-funding committee. He testified on the third-grade reading guarantee; taxes that fund education; and methods used to

evaluate the fairness of school-funding systems.

Most importantly, ETPI will be researching and analyzing Gov. **John Kasich**'s new school-funding reform proposal once it is introduced next year. And, the institute's research continues to be instrumental to OSBA's advocacy efforts on behalf of school districts.

In addition to expert analysis and support on public education's behalf before legislators and other policymakers, ETPI members receive quarterly newsletters, briefings and special case studies on Ohio tax issues.

That's why school districts need the expertise of ETPI in their corner during these complex and challenging times. And that's why your district should tap into the benefits of the institute by joining today. It's an investment that will repay itself many times over.

ETPI currently has 120 members, and membership is open to any school district or organization. The institute is funded by financial support from its member organizations. That funding enables ETPI to conduct studies, issue reports and speak up on the many tax and public policy issues affecting Ohio's public schools.



*ETPI consultant Dr. Howard Fleeter explains current school-funding issues at the 2012 Capital Conference.*

For more information about ETPI or to become a member, please contact OSBA's **Marcella Gonzalez** at (614) 540-4000; (800) 589-OSBA; or [mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org). Information also is available on ETPI's website at [www.etpi-ohio.org](http://www.etpi-ohio.org). ■



## First Class Support

Eugene Hollins and the law firm of Wiles, Boyle, Burkholder & Bringardner would like to express our appreciation to the OSBA for its support in the Westerville Levy "Repeal" Litigation.

We'd also like to take this opportunity to announce our merger with Isaac Brant Ledman & Teetor. In the coming year, the law firm of Isaac Wiles will specialize in the representation of governmental entities, including litigation and property valuation appeals.

Again, we thank you for your first class support. And, we stand ready to deliver the same for your district's legal representation needs.

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# Board members give their time, now we give our thanks

*Crystal Davis Hutchins, editor*

**K**eeping up with board business can be a difficult, time-consuming task, even when school is not in session. School board members work for their districts year-round, while teachers and students get summers and holidays off.

Board members attend countless board, committee and community meetings, where they are called upon to make the tough decisions necessary to move their districts forward. OSBA's 2012 board member survey indicated that most respondents, 38%, on average, spend 16 hours or more a month on board business; 26% devote 11 to 15 hours per month; and 27% spend six to 10 hours a month.

Besides attending to their regular board duties, you also may see board members cheering on school sports teams or at other extracurricular events; serving as chaperones at dances or on student trips; judging scholarships; representing the board on building projects; or talking to kids in the halls. They also represent their districts at other community organizations' events.

With the increasing time demands placed on board members these days, it's perhaps more important than ever to give them a heartfelt "thanks." January is the perfect time to honor them as part of School Board Recognition Month, a nationwide celebration of outstanding public service.

Many Ohio districts conduct a brief recognition program during a January board meeting to say thanks. Others plan elaborate events involving students, staff and community members. Students and staff may paint signs, bake treats, create and give crafts, or sing to board members to show their appreciation. Chambers of commerce, city councils and other clubs pass resolutions. Some newspaper editors write editorials praising the dedicated community servants.

Outside of being center stage during graduation and award ceremonies, the rewards of being a school board member can be few and far between. That's why OSBA prepared an extensive resource kit to help districts celebrate School Board Recognition Month.

The kit contains hundreds of ideas and samples of what other Ohio districts have done to show their appreciation. Sample newsletter articles, editorials, public service announcements, letters and artwork are available online at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month).

Each district will receive a large poster, along with personalized certificates to present to board members at recognition events.

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

## Submit your board recognition articles, photos to OSBA

Districts are highly encouraged to submit articles and photos to OSBA highlighting their January School Board Recognition Month activities. Your submissions will be featured in the association's *Journal* magazine and on its website. A resource kit to help you honor board members is available at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month).

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

The submission deadline is Feb. 15.

## School Boards Make a Difference



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