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December 2013 • Volume 57, Issue 6

JOURNAL

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Table Of Contents

JOURNAL

OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

ON THE COVER

'Cheers' to an engaging conference, p. 16



Cover photo: Worthington City's Slate Hill Elementary Drum Team performs before the OSBA Capital Conference's First General Session. — photo by Bryan Bullock

FEATURES

p. 34



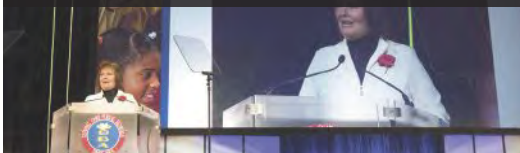
Rocky River PTA promotes student philanthropy 14
PTA's mini-grant program lets students support programs they like.

Saluting board service 34
Five board members earn OSBA's highest honor.

A record-setting Student Achievement Fair 38
Districts showcase how they are boosting student achievement during the 2013 Student Achievement Fair.

NEWS

p. 26



Delegates select OSBA president-elect 26

Luncheon speakers provide fresh perspectives 28

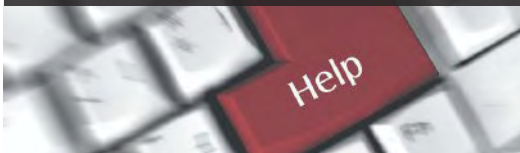
Lessons learned on Hill 512 31

Honor school board members in January 44

ETPI membership proves to be a worthy investment 48

DEPARTMENTS

p. 6



Executive Outlook 3

According to Law 6

Management Insights 8

Boardmanship 9

Capital Insider 10

OSBA: Working for You 12

New digital edition available!

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

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Mission Statement

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

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Correction

An item on page 47 of the October *Journal* misspelled a reporter's name. The list should have identified her as **Crissy Clutter**, WTOV-TV. The *Journal* apologizes for the error.

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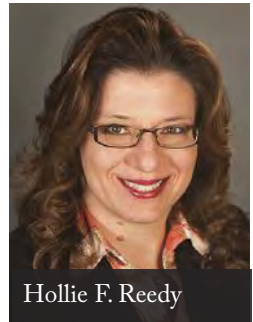
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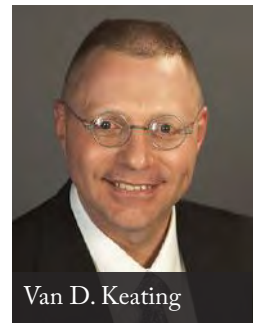
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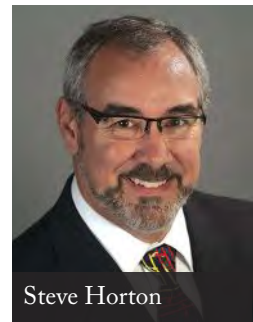
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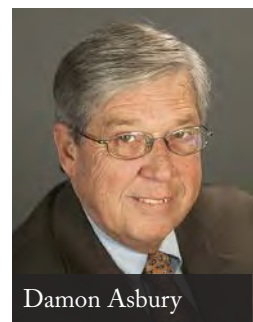
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Steve Horton



Damon Asbury

OSBA: Dedicated to serving you

Richard Lewis, CAE, executive director

The Ohio School Boards Association strives to know how each and every one of our 714 member districts is unique. As an association, we understand your diversity and enthusiastically accept the challenge to represent the needs of the entire membership. Our leadership and staff serve districts of every type, every day. We know that one size does not fit all.

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

The legislative platform your delegates adopted at the Capital Conference comprises the collective insight of every board in the association. It is not propelled by any political party or agenda, nor driven by a personal vision. It was forged by the experience of your predecessors and preserved by the wisdom of your peers. The document guides your advocacy team throughout the year, and that team was a pivotal player representing public education in 2013.

While the General Assembly didn't do everything OSBA requested throughout the budget process, legislators did respond to your advocacy efforts by removing ESC governance changes; returning budgeting to a per-pupil, base-aid funding component; dropping a proposed trigger that would have allowed parents to reconstitute low-

performing schools; removing monthly average daily membership counts and replacing them with three annualized enrollment counts; eliminating changes to payment in lieu of transportation; and dropping language prohibiting school districts from transporting K-five students using public transit systems.

The association's infrastructure, processes and resources remain sustainable, flexible and dynamic. Your Board of Trustees continually evaluates itself, seeking opportunities for improvement. The board practices strong fiscal oversight and your Audit Committee assures compliance with the highest standards. Your staff constantly explores new member services, internal programs and models of effectiveness and efficiency. These efforts go to the core of OSBA's unwavering commitment to be a sound steward of your district's dues and confidence.

In 2013, we delivered on our ongoing pledge to provide superior service and creative solutions. Staff attorneys answered thousands of calls from members seeking legal information, saving districts tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees. They issued alerts on hot topics you needed to know about, and OSBA's Legal Assistance Fund worked hard to win favorable legal interpretations for Ohio public schools.

OSBA continues providing valuable services like training, communications consulting, board development, executive searches, policy development and labor relations assistance. But, we also have launched several new initiatives to offer expert assistance on transportation, staff handbooks,

financial and levy issues, and school safety and security.

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. Since 2010, in cooperation with the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, we have saved members nearly \$24 million in workers' compensation premiums.

The associations, along with the Ohio Schools Council, continue to offer Power4Schools, an electricity-purchasing program that has saved schools more than \$8 million this year. Our work with BoardDocs — the paperless meeting agenda solution — has transformed school board meetings across the state while saving individual boards tens of thousands of dollars. And our insurance program, the Ohio School Plan, is the largest in the state.

In these difficult times, a strong professional association representing school boards is more important than ever. OSBA is that association — the *only* organization representing publicly elected boards of education. Your officers, Board of Trustees, association committees and staff work very hard behind the scenes. Talented and dedicated, they serve you with passion and teamwork.

The OSBA staff is proud to serve Ohio's school board members. While we may not walk in your shoes, we have walked alongside you as tireless advocates for 58

years. Simply put, we believe in you.

Our relationships with groups sharing a goal of a strong education system are ever expanding as we participate with scores of committees and task forces around Ohio. We highly value our relationships with BASA, OASBO, the State Board of Education and the Ohio Department of Education.

OSBA's outreach to higher education also has made great strides. We've collaborated on initiatives with the State University Education Deans and private teacher education colleges to improve teacher preparation.

OSBA holds several leadership roles with the National School Boards Association. We are very proud that President **Charlie Wilson, Worthington City**, has been nominated to serve as a member of the NSBA Board of Directors, clearly a reflection of OSBA's commitment to public

education at the federal level. We also network closely with other state school boards associations — efforts that extend well beyond the day-to-day business of running an association.

For example, when a deadly tornado struck Moore, Okla., in May, OSBA quickly reached out to the Oklahoma State School Boards Association. OSBA staff and members collected donations and supplies to send to Oklahoma. More importantly, Ohio's **Lake Local** school board members — whose Wood County district was hit by a tornado in 2010 that claimed seven lives and destroyed its high school — stepped forward to offer its support and experience to Moore.

In 2013, few issues were more widely discussed than school safety. OSBA worked with the Ohio attorney general on safety initiatives and discussed ways to coordinate efforts on legislative issues and practical considerations related to arming school employees. We worked

with the state fire marshal to convey the absolute necessity of schools being able to lock down classrooms as securely as possible with a method affordable to cash-strapped districts.

OSBA was quick to reach out to Connecticut following the horrific shooting in Newtown in December 2012. OSBA and **Chardon Local** leaders — whose Geauga County district also was devastated by a school shooting last year — reached out to Newtown Public Schools and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education to offer assistance. The parents of one of the young victims of the Newtown tragedy spoke at the OSBA Capital Conference last month to share how they are working to help make schools around the nation safer.

As a new year begins, take pride in the collective accomplishments of school boards and OSBA. Together we are making a difference in millions of lives. ■



Get on board with OSBA School Transportation SERVICES

OSBA consultants can help districts assess their transportation needs and offer personal assistance with transportation rules interpretations, policy questions and technical advice. Consultants also provide the following services:

- transportation operation cost analysis and benchmarking studies;
- routing analysis;
- fleet management assistance;
- general operations evaluation;
- regional coordination studies;
- in-service presentations for drivers and administrators;
- bus purchasing and specification development;
- evaluation of specific transportation services, including payment in lieu of transportation;
- driver qualifications compliance review;
- transportation emergency plan development;
- development of local student transportation handbooks.

To learn more, contact **Pete Japikse** (pjapikse@ohioschoolboards.org) or **Mike Miller** (mmiller@ohioschoolboards.org) at (614) 540-4000; (800) 589-OSBA; or schoolbus@ohioschoolboards.org.

Ever Wonder What You Can Do With BoardDocs?

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How can we help you?

Hollie F. Reedy, chief legal counsel

The OSBA legal division would like to welcome all new school board members to service and congratulate incumbents who have been re-elected. I'd like to tell you how the legal division can help you. We have more than 50 years of resources and experience, and not every OSBA member may know what is available or how to access it.

Publications to boost your skills as a board member

We have a variety of free publications available to members on the legal division section of the OSBA website. To view these resources, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org. Click on "Products and Services" on the menu bar, then click on "Legal Services." Finally, click on "Resources by Topic." Bookmark this page. From here, you can click on any subject that interests you. These resources are for OSBA members only, so you need a password to access the content. You can obtain your password by calling OSBA's **Ann Herritt**. If you simply forgot your password, click on "Forgot Password?" in the member login area for assistance.

You could, for example, visit the "Resources by Topic" page to learn about criminal records checks and employee misconduct. Clicking on that topic opens a page that has a fact sheet on both; a list of disqualifying offenses for teachers, non-teachers and bus drivers; articles about when to remove an employee from the classroom; and whether offenses have to be reported. You will find the specific statutes listed and, one click away, the Ohio Department of Education misconduct reporting form, the licensure code of

professional conduct for educators and more.

Other popular issues covered on the "Resources by Topic" page include rehiring retirees, administrative contracts, ethics, public records, regulating staff political activities, JVSD governance changes and many more.

It's a good idea to click through the resources to see everything you can print, read and learn. We have collected and organized it in topic areas so whenever you want more information about a topic, it's a click away. Don't reinvent the wheel. Go to our "Resources by Topic" page and see what we have compiled for you.

The legal division also publishes a variety of booklets for a small fee, including the *Ohio School Ethics Guide*; the newly updated *Sunshine Law for Schools*, which includes open meeting and public and student records laws; the *Ohio Sports Law Handbook*; the *Family and Medical Leave Act* guide; and the *Ohio Public Student Attendance and Tuition Guide*, among others. Obtain a copy of any of these by calling the OSBA mailroom. You also can order and browse publications at OSBA's online bookstore, www.ohioschoolboards.org/catalog.

We also have years of articles from the *OSBA Journal*, the publication you are reading. Topics we have written about and will share with you upon request include sex offenders at school, juvenile sex offenders, board compensation, paying a teacher without a license and a variety of other issues. The *Journal*, which publishes every other month,

is sent to every OSBA member as a membership benefit. Other OSBA publications, like *School Management News*, *Policy Development Quarterly* and *Briefcase*, are available via subscription.

OSBA legal blog keeps you up-to-date

The legal division has a blog called "The Legal Ledger," posted at www.ohioschoolboards.org/wpmu. The blog features updates on the newest cases, hot topics and legal developments in state and federal laws, statutes and regulations. Blog subscribers will receive the latest updates as they are published; to subscribe, visit the page and scroll down to the "Subscribe to Updates" link on the right side. In addition, past blog entries are archived for easy access. There also is a link to "The Legal Ledger" on the "Legal Services" page.

High-quality training opportunities offered year-round

We offer cutting-edge, content-focused training on specialized legal issues throughout the year. The division seminar calendar includes the Special Education Law Workshop (March 21); Cyberlaw Seminar (March 28); Sports Law Workshop (June 20); Attendance, Tuition and Custody Law Workshop (Aug. 1); School Law for Treasurers Workshop (Oct. 17); and Intensive Legal Workshop (Oct. 22). Division attorneys also present at many other OSBA professional development events. In addition, the legal division offers a number of webinars; look for more information on those early next year. Attorneys also are available to present customized training sessions, which is a fee-based service.

OSBA attorneys feature prominently in the New Board Member Academy, at which we provide information for new board members on such critical issues as the Sunshine Law, public records, ethics and other key legal issues. The two-day New Board Member Academy will be offered Jan. 11-12 in Dayton and Independence, and Jan 18-19 in Columbus and Findlay. For an agenda and to register, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/event_listing and click through to January.

Phone consultation — create a connection

If you haven't yet called the OSBA legal division to speak to one of its three attorneys, I invite you to do so. Deputy Director of Legal Services **Sara C. Clark**, Staff Attorney **Candice Christon** and myself are happy to assist you with legal information. Senior Administrative Associate of Legal Services **Lenore Winfrey** ably assists us in our work. She will help you connect with an OSBA attorney, send resources and ensure excellent customer service.

Your district paid member dues to OSBA, which provide you the opportunity to seek assistance from our legal division. Making a connection with the association's legal division is a great way to take advantage of your membership.

After 13 years with the association, I can honestly say that when I see board members I have gotten to know at the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show, it's like a class reunion. Some have been frequent callers over the years, and after a while, we get to know you. The division receives more than 2,000 calls a year, which is a reflection of how deeply we engage with members. Fielding so many calls — from every type of school district — enables us to stay on point with board members' concerns and develop resources to meet your needs. That's why we are here. OSBA attorneys do not represent school districts as counsel or render legal advice to school districts; we offer legal information. With almost 20 years of

shared experience, we draw on all the resources of OSBA and our legal training to help you find the information you need.

Because we do not represent districts, there is no competition with other attorneys. We maintain positive and professional relations with attorneys representing school districts, and work cooperatively to provide information and resources for school board members across Ohio, as well as reinforce the school board-counsel relationship. Even your lawyer can contact OSBA for legal information if he or she is a member of the Ohio Council of School Board Attorneys. We all are active, licensed attorneys in Ohio with one client: the Ohio School Boards Association.

You don't have to worry about whether you can call the legal division and ask a question — as an OSBA member, you can always call us. The attorneys know the scope of the service we can provide, and will discuss your issue with you to the extent we are able. If it is necessary for you to consult counsel for legal advice, we will refer you to your district counsel or help you find counsel through the Ohio Council of School Board Attorneys.

Legal Assistance Fund and *School Law Summary*

Your district should receive an invoice for the Legal Assistance Fund (LAF), a separate trust established to provide financial assistance and amicus curiae ("friend of the court") briefs to achieve favorable interpretations of the law for Ohio school boards. More information about LAF is available at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/80619>. As a member of LAF, your district will receive *School Law Summary*, a quarterly publication with summaries of case law affecting Ohio schools, including selected arbitration awards. We read the cases and summarize the facts and the court ruling in a condensed format, delivering it to you electronically, with clickable links to the cases and other resources.

Now that you know something about our resources, let me give you an example of them. OSBA attorneys constantly watch for case law affecting Ohio schools. Below is a case that I recently came across about a parent who punched a coach at an athletic event.

Parent assaults coach: In a case that came from the Hardin County Court of Appeals, a parent convicted of a felony assault on a school district employee appealed his conviction.

The altercation, which began with an argument with the coach about the playing time of the eighth-grade son of the assailant, occurred after a **Kenton City** basketball game and resulted in the felony conviction and probation. The probation restrictions included barring the parent from attending any Kenton City athletic events for a year. The parent appealed the conviction on two claims, one of which was that the probation restriction — being barred from any school athletic event — was overbroad because it applied to all athletic events, not just basketball games. He alleged it was an infringement of his liberty. The court of appeals upheld the ruling of the trial court imposing the probation restriction. It held the court correctly determined that his attendance at future athletic events had some relation to his crime of felony assault on a school district employee. It found the restriction reasonably related to keeping the parent out of situations in which he would encounter the multi-sport coaching employee and ensuring good behavior (*State v. Oates, 2013-Ohio-2609*).

Find cases like this and more in *School Law Summary*, on our legal blog and in articles we write. Let me know how we can assist you. ■

"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.



Transportation training series launching in 2014

Van D. Keating, Esq., director of management services

The OSBA management services division continually tries to stay on top of what is new and what our members need in order to provide the highest quality training and services. Unbeknown to most of you, many of our ideas come from conversations with board members and administrators who contact OSBA with various questions and concerns.

Your problems, in a roundabout way, can become our services, or perhaps a seminar or two. This has proved especially true in the area of transportation. The scope of our transportation services offerings has continually expanded over the last year-and-a-half and will continue to do so for the immediate future, thanks in large part to our conversations with you, our members.

So, for 2014, we are pleased to announce a new transportation training series: the Pupil Transportation Administrator Training Program. An important point about this training is that we developed a complete curriculum to support public school administrators responsible for student transportation.

We've incorporated our knowledge and resources in the areas of student transportation, safety practices, board policy and labor relations with the goal of providing learning opportunities in the many key areas affecting transportation. Another goal is to educate member districts on the many legal sections and reference materials essential to the transportation professional. We designed the training to be comprehensive and rigorous.

In addition to a class curriculum that will prove valuable to different school administrators, individuals whose primary function is managing school transportation also may benefit even more by pursuing recognition as a Master Transportation Administrator (MTA). These individuals must participate in the class curriculum as well as complete focused projects that benefit the school district.

This training is a complete curriculum to support public school administrators responsible for student transportation.

The complete curriculum includes classes in each of three proficiencies — compliance and safety; operations management and governance, including policy; and fiscal matters. This is a three-year curriculum, with each year focused on one of these proficiencies. For those pursuing the MTA recognition, each year also will include a project related to the year's focus.

Districts may contract with OSBA for this program in one-year increments. Each increment will include attendance at four to five seminars, mentoring and guidance on a related project that will benefit the school district and reference materials on the subject matter relevant to the focus.

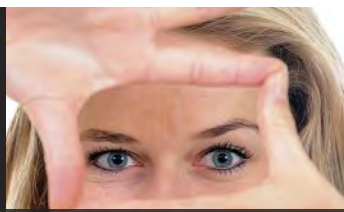
Individuals who successfully participate in the seminars and demonstrate their proficiency through a successful project will be acknowledged with a certificate of competency in that focus area and will be listed on OSBA's transportation accreditation Web page.

Individuals who already have accumulated knowledge and training in the specific subject matter presented may receive partial credit for equivalent experience based on proficiency assessments, but in all cases will be required to attend some seminars and complete the focus area project.

Individuals who successfully complete all three focus years will be acknowledged as a Master Transportation Administrator by OSBA. District staff and administrators also may register and attend seminars without participating in the annual contract for training service, but will not be eligible for accreditation.

We are excited about this new offering and believe it will benefit individuals involved in student transportation as well as the school districts that employ them. The first class in this series is Jan. 8. All classes will be held at the OSBA offices in Columbus; attendees can conveniently register online.

Additional information on the program can be found on our website or by contacting **Pete Japikse**, senior transportation consultant, or **Mike Miller**, transportation consultant, at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA. ■



Changing viewpoints

New perspectives on board service

Steve Horton, school board services consultant

As the son of a school district superintendent, I grew up acutely aware of boards of education. In my father's 20-plus years as a school administrator, he had the privilege of working with many wonderful and highly effective board members.

However, I also learned there were certainly enough problematic board members to go around, and I remember asking dad why he had to work for a board? After all, couldn't he do his job better if he did not have to deal with all those board members?

His answer has served me well. He explained that it is important for the community to be involved in public education and that he, as superintendent, needed to know what people in his district wanted from their schools and how he could help meet their expectations. He pointed out how important the board was in that process and how vital it was that he worked with board members, even if he did not always agree with them.

Now, fast-forward a few years to when I found myself wondering if I should take the plunge into the vast ocean of board service. In my board candidate mind, I was going to single-handedly solve a very clear disconnect among the community, the board and the schools. I was going to lead an effort to restore the community's trust in the district's leadership and bring student pride in our schools back to where it was when I was a student there. I could almost see myself with a giant "S" on my chest! Yeah ... right.

What I discovered is that I had a lot to learn. Despite my zeal to effect change

and move my district forward, I was to become one of five board members. This is not news to veteran board members, but it often is not a clear reality to those who are newly elected. I learned that as smart as I thought I was, I was not all that smart, and when you are actually a board member, as well intentioned as you may be, simple principles of boardmanship are easily fouled up.

Effective leadership teams can and do disagree. However, the good ones learn to communicate in a respectful way.

Perhaps most importantly, I was reminded that every story, situation and relationship has *at least* two sides. The truth is never squarely on one side or the other and rarely is it in the middle. In reality, it is always somewhere in between, or is a combination of different pieces of each perspective. Perhaps the most jarring realization is how often that which initially seemed so clear and apparent was so often far from the truth. This is politics and, sadly, politics plays far too great a role in the work of school boards, the work we say we are doing on behalf of our students.

Fast-forward yet again. I recently joined OSBA as a school board services consultant. Here, I am gaining an entirely new perspective. I now get to look at boards and superintendents "close up," yet still from the outside.

There are no general statements to be made about observations of various school boards, but one consistent point rises to the surface in many instances. That is, the effect of the overly ambitious, overly passionate, overly vocal board member can be very disruptive, and even damaging. Typically, that person is not really aware of the discontent he or she is causing. In fact, most often that board member feels he or she is doing most of the heavy lifting.

Board service absolutely requires passion and commitment. I am in no way advocating for the status quo, or that boards should go with the tide of majority opinion simply because it is the easiest path. Consider the case of the horrible boss. Seemingly all of us have worked for this person at one time or another. When do harsh words, coarse actions or rash behavior ever inspire trust or confidence in leadership?

Here is my take-away. Having learned from my roles as a student, teacher, parent, community member, board member and now a board services consultant, it is clear the most effective board leadership teams are those that can and do disagree. Through all that, however, the good ones learn to communicate with each other, the community and superintendent in a clear, concise, respectful and honest way.

As I often say, "If it was easy everyone would do it." In this case, if everyone did do it (that is, go about board work in the right ways), we would have far more effective boards of education, show our communities far greater leadership and perhaps see far better public school systems. ■



Boosting standards

Common Core is crucial to student success

Damon Asbury, director of legislative services

The transition to Ohio's new learning standards and the accompanying next-generation assessments has been the focus of conversation among professional educators and other stakeholders for several years.

The new standards often are referred to as the Common Core, since they have been adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia. However, a recent survey conducted by Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) and Gallup found that public awareness and understanding of the new standards are spotty, at best.

According to the study, "Nearly two out of three Americans have never heard of the Common Core State Standards, and among those who have, fewer than half believe the new, more rigorous academic goals in English/language arts and mathematics will make the United

States more competitive in the world." Public school parents did not fare much better. More than half did not know about the new academic standards, despite the fact that many educators have already begun putting them into practice in classrooms and school districts have been warning that initial test scores likely will drop as a result.

And, as is often the case with change, objections to the Common Core have emerged across the country, as well as here in Ohio. This, despite the fact that the State Board of Education adopted the new standards in 2010 and many districts across the state are well along in the implementation process. However, legislation, in the form of House Bill 237, sponsored by **Andy Thompson** (R-Marietta), has been introduced in the Ohio General Assembly that would prevent Ohio from implementing the Common Core standards. While

only two hearings have been held to date, Thompson is hopeful that more opportunities will be forthcoming in the near future. Given the potential for additional controversy, it is important for school board members to be fully informed about the Common Core, its components and where their local district stands with regard to implementation.

The Common Core standards evolved from the work of the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices and with the full support of the Council of Chief State School Officers. The standards are designed to prepare students for the new reality in which American students are competing with peers around the world for future jobs and success. **Thomas Friedman's** 2005 book, *The World is Flat*, was one of the early warning signals about the coming world shift and made many painfully

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aware of the emerging challenges facing our education system. This awareness helped lead to the new standards.

The Common Core standards represent a reaction to, as well as a preparation for, that eventuality. By adopting new, more rigorous standards, education policy leaders hope to see significant changes to expectations for student performance in elementary and secondary schools so that students will be able to compete successfully in the global marketplace.

Accompanying the new standards will be a new set of tests or assessments. Ohio is one of 22 states working together in an assessment consortium, called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math. The assessments will be based on what it takes to be ready for college and careers. The time line calls for the new assessments to be ready to administer during the 2014-15 school year.

The PARCC assessments are designed to:

- determine whether students are college- and career-ready or on track;
- assess the full range of the Common Core standards, including standards that are difficult to measure;
- measure the full range of student

performance, including the performance of high- and low-performing students;

- provide data during the academic year to inform instruction, interventions and professional development;
- provide data for accountability, including measures of growth;
- incorporate innovative approaches throughout the assessment system.

One of the more controversial aspects of the new assessments is that PARCC assessments will be administered via computer and use a combination of automated and human scoring. Because the assessments will be delivered electronically, they will require students have ready access to computers. The difficulty that some districts and areas face in securing appropriate equipment and Internet access poses additional problems for school boards and administrators to address. The Ohio Department of Education website has a tool that districts can use to assess their capacity (<http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/33354>). It is important to assess your local capacity to handle the new assessments and make appropriate preparations.

Finally, keep in mind that the new learning standards establish the knowledge and skills that young Ohioans will need to succeed in the

global economy. Further, even with the new standards it will be the local board of education, along with their teachers and administrators, who will continue to determine the curriculum, instructional approach and materials that best fit their students. And, as the PDK/Gallup survey results indicate, it will be important that you help promote awareness and understanding of the new learning standards in your community.

As noted by OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis** in an op-ed piece with the executive directors of the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and Ohio Association of School Business Officials, “The Common Core standards are not a substitute for a local school board’s responsibility for adopting curriculum and providing resources to ensure student achievement. Yet, they will allow districts to know what their students must be capable of achieving in order to be prepared for the future. School districts will continue to have the freedom to determine how the standards will be met inside their classrooms.”

We must meet parent expectations for a high-quality education in all Ohio schools. Parents must be confident that, when their children enter a public school, the standards for learning will match their needs to ensure success in the future. ■

You really can make a difference ... because all kids count!

Children are our future and there is no greater investment than a child’s education. By joining *Kids PAC*, OSBA’s political action committee, you are helping to ensure all children in Ohio receive the quality education they deserve!

You can donate online at www.kidspac.org. To learn more about *Kids PAC*, contact **Marcella Gonzalez** at mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org or call (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA.





Your OSBA membership: a modern investment

Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

When you think of your OSBA membership, you may not think of it as a modern investment, especially if your school district has been a member since 1955. However, your association membership truly is a modern, worthwhile investment.

Although OSBA's commitment and dedication to serving board members and their districts has remained the same for the last 58 years, the association is always evolving and revolutionizing the services offered to

members. Essentially, OSBA "modernizes" the superior services and solutions offered to your district to ensure programs and training are both relevant and essential. What was crucial to district operations 30 years ago may no longer apply, so OSBA constantly strives to move forward and stay ahead of the times.

Some of the newest services OSBA has added are a direct result of anticipating member needs in areas of increased importance. Two of those specialized areas include school safety and security,

and transportation.

OSBA's school safety initiatives

Creating a safe and secure school environment for students, teachers and staff is critical. Districts face greater challenges keeping schools safe and secure than ever before. Because of this vital need, OSBA offers members a range of school safety and security services.

Over the past year, OSBA has been assisting districts with safety and security assessments, analyzing

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potential risks and threats and providing training to staff and community members.

Several association workshop and training options are available to your district. More information about these services can be found at www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-safety-and-security.

Other areas of collaboration include the addition of OSBA's newest endorsed program, NaviGate Prepared, a school safety software program.

NaviGate Prepared provides effective and affordable emergency management. This cloud-based system offers a variety of features that make creating a safe environment as simple as possible for school districts. Administrators and first responders can be confident in knowing that NaviGate Prepared:

- secures schools' critical information in an easily accessible cloud environment;
- provides first responders accurate information prior to arrival on the scene of an emergency;
- creates greater eyes-on visibility.

To learn more about NaviGate Prepared, visit www.navigateprepared.com.

Setting the wheels in motion

School transportation is an important part of a district's daily operations. Paying close attention to laws, rules, regulations and careful planning makes student transportation a challenging responsibility. Additionally, it is fundamental to ensure parents and students are "on board" and understand rules, policies and information.

To assist with the complicated task of navigating school transportation, OSBA has two staff members providing expert consulting services. These services are focused on safety, operations and financial matters districts must face when it comes to student transportation.

OSBA can offer your district comprehensive transportation services, including:

- board member in-service presentations;
- driver training seminars;
- administrative training seminars;
- routing efficiency audits;
- assistance with legislated procedures, including payments in lieu of transportation;
- driver qualifications assurance studies;
- emergency plan development;
- general transportation consulting and assistance.

For more information about these services, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/transportation-services.



New OSBA offerings include services and training on school transportation and safety and security.

OSBA offers so many progressive programs and services to your district that the value of membership repays the investment in dues many times over. Remember, no matter the circumstances, OSBA truly *is* working for you.

For further information on any of OSBA's programs or services, contact the association at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA, or visit www.ohioschoolboards.org. ■

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Rocky River PTA promotes student philanthropy



The Rocky River High School Marching Band was one of the beneficiaries of a student philanthropy program at the school when it applied for and received a PTA mini-grant to buy sheet music. Supported by the PTA, the program promotes the importance of philanthropy.

Dr. Michael G. Shoaf, superintendent, and Dr. Dianna R. Foley, executive director, communications & technology, Rocky River City

Rocky River City students are getting hands-on experience in planning, funding and implementing philanthropic projects — and program organizers hope these lessons stick with students throughout their lives.

Leaders of the Rocky River High School (RRHS) PTA sought to expand the group's mission by teaching students the value of philanthropy through action. The challenge for PTA leaders was to develop a meaningful process that encouraged students to be active decision makers while teaching the values

inherent in philanthropic ventures.

With leadership from President Dr. **Dianna R. Foley**, the RRHS PTA launched a new initiative in 2011 to help students explore the importance of philanthropy through their interest in being benefactors for schools. The PTA's expanding vision was twofold: to create a new avenue of service and support for the high school through student actions, and to educate students in the value of philanthropy through their interests and choices. Through this initiative, students were

provided an opportunity to apply for mini-grants to support programs they had an interest in.

This philanthropic venture created an entirely new learning opportunity for students, teachers and parents.

News quickly spread that the PTA wanted to make funds available that students could direct to specific programs. PTA leaders introduced the program with this announcement:

“The RRHS PTA has decided to change its philanthropic focus this year from awarding scholarships to funding mini-grants. The rationale is that while scholarships are awarded to two or three recipients, the mini-grants will benefit more students.

“It is anticipated that a minimum of \$2,500 will be available for these grants. Donations received from members will be earmarked for mini-grants. Students may apply for mini-grants of up to \$250. These mini-grants can be used to fund a project for a RRHS class, club, activity or sport.”

Following the PTA’s announcement, students explored opportunities, planned for the grant applications and submitted grant requests to the RRHS PTA Executive Board for review and approval. In some cases, the board requested additional information from applicants or offered suggestions for enhancing the grant.

The paperless application process is accessible on the district’s website. Students identify measurable goals, quantify beneficiaries of the grant and commit to submitting an evaluation at the end of their project, if funded. Students who apply for a grant must have one parent who is a member of the RRHS PTA, and the staff member teaching, coaching or advising the targeted class, club or activity also must be a member.

First-year grants totaled \$2,500, and were awarded during the 2011-12 school year. Groups and projects funded included:

- Forensics Team — scripts to help the team prepare for performances;
- Science Olympiad — components to build a robotic arm for a competition;
- Girls Cross Country Team — guest speaker on relaxation techniques;
- Swimming and Diving Team — uniform swim caps to build team spirit;
- Freshman Mentoring Program — board games and books;

- Key Club — a dance to help special needs students practice their social skills;
- Senior class — Quidditch game materials for a Harry Potter-themed winter formal dance.

This school year, 12 mini-grants of \$250 each will be awarded.

“Student mini-grants give students the opportunity to contribute to funding something that they are passionate about, much like the way that the PTA contributes to kids,” said teacher **Jenneva Hill**, Science Olympiad adviser. “The idea of mini-grants for students models altruism and empowers students to advocate for their club or project and its needs ... much like a community advocates for its children’s needs. Student mini-grants are a real-life learning opportunity for students.”



The Rocky River High School Fencing Club used funds from a PTA mini-grant to buy new foil masks with removable bibs. This allows fencers who do not own a foil mask to use a team mask with a removable bib that can be washed between uses.

The opportunity to provide funds directly to students remains a priority. This philanthropic venture created an entirely new learning opportunity for students, teachers and parents. The PTA helped students further school programs, while teaching a valuable lesson about philanthropy.

Rocky River City has a robust PTA Council and is building PTA units that benefit students, teachers, parents and the community. The leadership provided by each PTA unit and the PTA Council provides meaningful opportunities for parents to work closely with teachers for the benefit of all students.

Student philanthropy now has a prominent place in the culture of Rocky River High School as a result of this unique program launched by the RRHS PTA. ■

Editor’s note: For more information on Rocky River City PTA’s student philanthropy program, contact Dr. Dianna R. Foley at (440) 356-6002 or foley.dianna@rrcs.org.

'Cheers' to an engaging



More than 9,400 public education leaders, staff, students and guests attended the 2013 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show.

Riveting speakers and events draw thousands

From a humorous and motivational speech by “Cheers” sitcom actor **John Ratzenberger** to a mock school bus hostage demonstration, the 2013 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show kept attendees engaged, inspired and entertained.

Ninety-one percent of Ohio’s school districts attended the 58th annual conference, which hosted more than 9,400 public education leaders, staff, students and guests from across the state and beyond. Held at the Greater Columbus Convention Center from Nov. 10 to 13, top-tier keynote speakers like

Ratzenberger attracted crowds to the nation’s second-largest education convention.

The numbers from this year’s event speak to its success: 601 Trade Show booths were filled; 544 people enjoyed the two Conference Luncheons; 110 participants attended the Early Bird Workshop; 101 school groups shared displays in the Student Achievement Fair; and 100 attendees dined and learned at the OSBA Black Caucus dinner. Thousands of board members, superintendents, treasurers, students, teachers and guests filled the convention center’s Grand Ballroom for

conference

Crystal Davis, editor

the three General Sessions.

The 2013 conference embodied “Leadership for Learning,” a message proudly displayed throughout the convention center and heard in workshops, seminars, information sessions, luncheons, networking receptions and other events.

Conference workshops were organized into 15 learning tracks focused on the hottest topics in public education. Tracks ranged from 21st century learning, student achievement and board development to community relations, human resources, and finance/facilities.

Special Spotlight Sessions examined career center governance changes and school safety issues, including ALICE safety training. Another Spotlight Session featured a mock school bus hostage situation enacted by the Columbus police SWAT team and the Columbus fire division’s bomb squad. The session was designed to encourage school leaders to think about their readiness plans for transporting students.

The conference General Sessions are known for featuring interesting, diverse and renowned speakers. This year’s keynote speakers were:

- **Wil Haygood**, an acclaimed biographer and prize-winning staff writer with *The Washington Post*. Haygood’s 2008 front-page story for the *Post* about longtime White House butler **Eugene Allen** is the inspiration for “The Butler,” a feature film released this fall. He previously wrote for *The Boston Globe*, where he was a Pulitzer Prize finalist. The author of five books, Haygood grew up in Columbus. In 2010, he was honored with the first star on the city’s Lincoln Theatre Walk of Fame, and earlier this year was inducted into the Columbus Hall of Fame.
- **Dr. Yong Zhao**, an internationally known scholar, author and speaker whose work focuses on the implications of globalization and technology on education. He has designed schools that cultivate global competence, developed computer games for language learning and founded development institutions to explore innovative education models. Zhao has published numerous articles and books and was named one of the 10 most influential people of 2012 in educational technology by *Tech & Learning* magazine. He is the presidential chair and associate dean for global education at the University of

Oregon College of Education.

- **Ratzenberger**, an Emmy-nominated actor, entrepreneur and philanthropist best known for playing Cliff Clavin on the sitcom “Cheers.” Ratzenberger has had numerous movie roles, including voice roles in every Pixar feature film. He also produced and hosted “Made in America,” a Travel Channel show. Ratzenberger encourages students to consider attending a career center or apprenticing to learn an industrial trade that will increase the strength of U.S. manufacturing.

See “Keynote speakers blend insight, inspiration” on page 20 for coverage of these outstanding speakers.

Jim Bearden opened the conference as the Early Bird Workshop speaker. A former Marine officer, decorated Vietnam veteran and corporate executive, Bearden has learned why some people rise to the challenge and others don’t. An advocate for heroic efforts, he helps leaders close the gaps between what sounds good and what gets done. Bearden is the author of *The Relentless Search for Better Ways*, as well as numerous articles, audio training programs and a radio show, “The Competitive Edge.”



Ohio Rep. Kevin L. Boyce shares a legislator’s view of Ohio education during the OSBA Black Caucus dinner.



Attendees participated in numerous workshops and networking sessions during the OSBA Capital Conference.

For more on Bearden’s presentation, see “Lessons learned on Hill 512” on page 31.

The OSBA Black Caucus dinner also was held on the first day of the conference. This year’s keynote speaker was Ohio Rep. **Kevin L. Boyce** (D-Columbus), who spoke about the future

of public education through the eyes of a legislator. A former state treasurer, Boyce was appointed to the Ohio House of Representatives in May 2012. Prior to his appointment as state treasurer, Boyce served eight years as a member of Columbus City Council. He previously was executive director of KnowledgeWorks Ohio, a nonprofit organization working to improve Ohio’s school systems through public development and advocacy.

The dinner also featured entertainment by **Dorian Sutton** of the Gold Gate Entertainment Group. Sutton is a rapper, actor, producer, writer and mentor to schools through music. Proceeds from the dinner benefit the Leo Lucas Scholarship Program, which provides graduating seniors funds for college expenses.

The Conference Luncheon speakers were senior *Slate* editor,

High schoolers turn their lens on Capital Conference

A group of high school seniors from **Grand Valley Local (Ashtabula)** and **ATech/Ashtabula County Technical & Career Campus** was the official student video documentary team for the 2013 Capital Conference and Trade Show. The interactive media program students, led by instructor **Nick Schick**, were chosen to document the conference based on the outstanding video work they submitted to OSBA.

“Overall, I think the kids had a great time working on this project,” Schick said. “It was great to see them interacting with and interviewing adult professionals with so much stature in the education community.”

The documentary team included four students: **Jake Brest**, **Nick Brown**, **Ray Marsch** and **Jake Naro**. The team filmed a number of events and conducted interviews during the four-day conference. Students will edit the footage into a 10-minute documentary, which will be streamed on the OSBA website, shared with other state school boards associations and used to promote the conference.

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

“All four of these students have an interest in going into a media-related field, so this experience was huge for them,” Schick said. “It gave them a taste of what’s to come.”

The students got a chance to interview **John Ratzenberger** on the final day of the conference. Ratzenberger is best known for playing the character Cliff Clavin on the sitcom “Cheers,” but he has had numerous roles in movies, including voice roles in every Pixar feature film. The actor and career-technical education advocate was the keynote speaker at the Third General Session on Nov. 13.



The Grand Valley Local (Ashtabula) and ATech/Ashtabula County Technical & Career Campus video team interviews First General Session speaker Wil Haygood.

“Most of these kids are 17 years old, so they don’t know ‘Cheers,’ but I told them who he (Ratzenberger) was and they got their phones out and started looking him up,” Schick said. “They realized he does a voice in the ‘Toy Story’ movies and they just loved him. He was a celebrity to them.”

He said interviewing a celebrity was a big thrill for students, an experience they later shared with parents and friends.

“I think they’ll definitely remember that,” Schick said.

Grand Valley Local and ATech/Ashtabula County Technical & Career Campus students in the interactive media program learn about all aspects of shooting, editing and producing videos. Students produce a professional news broadcast called GVTV, which airs every Friday. It includes segments such as sports, weather, Mustang of the Week and the Hall Time Quiz Show.

investigative journalist and anti-bullying expert **Emily Bazelon**, and author and physically challenged former NCAA Division I tennis champion **Roger Crawford**.

See “Luncheon speakers provide fresh perspectives” on page 28 to read about the highlights of their presentations.

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; honored past OSBA presidents; heard Executive Director **Richard Lewis**’ annual report on the state of the association; and elected **Susie Lawson**, **Tri-County ESC** and **Wayne County Schools Career Center**, as OSBA’s 2014 president-elect. She will assume the presidency of the association on Jan. 1, 2014. For details on Delegate Assembly action, see “Delegates select OSBA president-elect” on page 26.

Although the 2013 Capital Conference just wrapped up, planning for the 2014 Capital Conference already is in progress. So, now is the perfect time to submit your ideas. In addition to attending, consider applying to present a breakout session or nominating one of your school district’s outstanding programs and performing groups for the Student Achievement Fair (see ad, below). Workshop moderators also are needed. Watch OSBA’s publications, eAlerts and website for further information on the various ways you can participate.



Attendees had the opportunity to meet with more than 600 vendors in the Trade Show.

Next year’s conference is scheduled for Nov. 9-12, so save those dates now. With so many high-quality professional development offerings at such an affordable price, attending the Capital Conference pays for itself many times over by continuing to set your district up for future success. Now that’s something to cheer about. ■

OSBA Student Achievement Fair

Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2014 • Greater Columbus Convention Center

The OSBA Capital Conference Student Achievement Fair highlights outstanding initiatives from school districts across the state. OSBA is seeking fresh, innovative programs or practices your district is willing to share with thousands of Ohio school district representatives. One hundred programs and practices will be selected based on creativity and impact on student achievement. The fair will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 11, during the OSBA Capital Conference.

Five performing groups from across Ohio will be selected to entertain attendees during the Student Achievement Fair. To be considered, you must submit an audio or video recording of the performing group. DVDs or CDs can be mailed to OSBA or a video or MP3 can be submitted with the online application.

OSBA is now accepting nominations for district programs and performing groups. While multiple programs may be submitted for consideration, no more than two per district will be selected, so districts should prioritize their submissions.

Nominate your district at www.ohioschoolboards.org/saf-nominations. The nomination deadline is June 27.

Keynote speakers blend insight, inspiration



Columbus native and journalist Wil Haygood describes how he brought the story of White House butler Eugene Allen from The Washington Post to the big screen during the First General Session.

Gary Motz, managing editor

The three General Sessions are the marquee events of the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show, drawing thousands to the convention center's Grand Ballroom.

This year's keynote speakers — journalist **Wil Haygood**, international scholar and author **Dr. Yong Zhao** and actor, entrepreneur and vocational education advocate **John Ratzenberger** — shared their insights on a diverse range of topics.

After each session, the speakers took time to meet with attendees and sign their books. Ratzenberger stayed an additional 45 minutes with **Delaware Area Career Center**

students after he learned they had built the landscaping display next to the OSBA Bookstore. He talked with them about their work, posed for pictures and signed autographs.

Bringing the butler to life

Columbus native Wil Haygood opened his Nov. 11 presentation with a shout-out to public schools and a teacher who inspired him.

"It is wonderful to be here with so many of you who are so passionate about public education," Haygood said. "I am a product of the Ohio public school system."

He recalled a turning point in his life that took place in an

11th-grade classroom. As his teacher handed back an essay he had written, she told the class, “Wil’s essay is quite beautiful.”

“That was the first time someone had publicly acknowledged something I had written, and it was a teacher,” Haygood said. “I have never forgotten that, and it offered me great inspiration in my life, which now is all about words and traveling the world and meeting people and writing their stories.”

That inspiration and love of words took him to *The Boston Globe*, where he was a Pulitzer Prize finalist. He later went on to *The Washington Post*, where he wrote a profile about a long-serving White House butler whose story had never been told. That story was adapted into a feature film, “The Butler,” and now is known around the world.

Haygood shared how that story came about and how his pursuit of it enriched his life and the lives of many others.

It started in 2008 at a North Carolina presidential campaign rally for then-Sen. **Barack Obama**. After the rally, he saw three young white women crying and asked them what was wrong. They said they were upset because their fathers did not want them to support Obama.

“So they were practicing what Dr. **Martin Luther King Jr.** wanted us to do,” Haygood said. “They were judging the candidate not by the color of his skin, but the content of his character. They said they were going to defy their fathers ... they were going to keep supporting this candidate.

“... I was extremely moved. These were three young ladies standing up to their mythical daddies in the South. They convinced me that Barack Obama was going to win.”

That sparked Haygood’s journalistic instincts. He resolved to find an African-American who had worked in the White House during the segregation era and juxtapose that person’s story with Obama’s election. He wanted to find someone to whom Obama’s victory would seem unimaginable. That someone turned out to be **Eugene Allen** — the butler.

Allen, who retired from the White House in 1986, was still living in Washington, D.C., with his wife, **Helene**. During the first interview, the couple told Haygood they were born in the South and came to Washington during World War II. He was working at a country club when he landed a dishwashing job in the **Harry S. Truman** White House. He gradually rose through the ranks until he became chief butler, serving with presidents **Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter** and **Ronald Reagan**.

Haygood said the Allens’ basement was filled with gifts, photos and memorabilia from his White House days: an LBJ

Stetson hat, paintings by Eisenhower and one of Kennedy’s ties that **Jacqueline Kennedy** gave to Allen after the president’s assassination.

Allen was within earshot of the president and his top advisers during many of the pressing crises of the day: the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision that ruled racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional; the Cold War; the Sputnik launch; the murder of **Emmett Till**; and the assassinations of **Medgar Evers**, President Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Sen. **Robert F. Kennedy**.

“A wide sweep of American history he was a witness to,” Haygood said. “When a young Martin Luther King met with Vice President Nixon, King said to a staffer, ‘I want you to take me to my people.’ They walked to the White House kitchen where King met Allen and other kitchen staff.”

The Allens were strong supporters of Obama’s 2008 presidential bid. Sadly, Mrs. Allen died on Nov. 3, the day before Obama was elected. Obama had read Haygood’s *Washington Post* story, and invited him and Allen to his inauguration. On the way to the event, Allen told Haygood, “When I was at the White House, you couldn’t even dream that you could dream about something like this.”

“When Eugene got sick in 2010, he gave me a tie clip that President Kennedy had given him while the president was working on the civil rights bill in 1963,” Haygood told the General Session audience. “I’m wearing that tie clip right now.

“I’m sure that they have movie night in heaven. Now the man who used to fix the popcorn at the White House theater ... is up there with all of those presidents who have gone on and he’s telling them, ‘Hey, let’s watch a movie tonight.’”

A new paradigm

American education needs a new paradigm, one more aligned with preparing students to compete in an increasingly competitive global economy. However, the nation’s obsession with raising standardized test scores and “catching up” with other nations keeps the U.S. frozen in an old paradigm.

That was the challenge Dr. Yong Zhao explored in his Nov. 12 General Session presentation.

View conference photos on OSBA’s Flickr page

Relive your experience at the 2013 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show by browsing through the association’s photos from the event. Photos from General Sessions, breakout sessions, the Student Achievement Fair and other conference events are available on OSBA’s Flickr page, www.flickr.com/OHSchoolboards.



During the Second General Session, internationally known scholar and author Dr. Yong Zhao explains how the education paradigm must be recreated to meet the needs of the global economy.

“As you school board members very well know, American education has gone through some dramatic, significant, revolutionary changes over the last few decades,” Zhao said. “The big question when you talk about reform is, ‘Where do you want it to go?’”

Zhao, presidential chair and associate dean for global education at the University of Oregon, is an internationally known scholar, author and one of the world’s top experts on the impact globalization and technology have on education.

“We say our goal is to get kids ready for college, but a college education doesn’t always mean much these days,” Zhao said. “Right now, 53% of American college graduates are jobless or underemployed and 50% of the jobs are in fields that don’t require college degrees. This is a worldwide phenomenon.

“At the same time, a lot of jobs go unfilled. There is a talent mismatch. Is the mismatch because students need more education or that they’re getting the wrong kind of education?”

Although his topic was serious, Zhao infused his talk with humor to illustrate his points.

“My son just graduated from the University of Chicago — one of the nation’s most expensive schools — with a degree in art

history, not a very Chinese thing to major in,” Zhao said. “I asked him, ‘You’ve spent all my money and graduated, now what?’ He said, ‘First, I’d like to apologize for majoring in art history. I guess that makes me a failed Chinese guy.’”

“It was then I realized that one criteria of a high-quality education is if it keeps your kids from moving into your basement.”

Zhao said the old education paradigm is a homogenizing process focused on taking tests. He likened that process to “sausage making.” That worked well in the past because the U.S. economy needed people with similar skills. But that approach is no longer effective in today’s unpredictable job market that calls for continuously evolving talents.

“Homogenization reduces creativity because mediocrity is enough,” Zhao said. “But jobs requiring routine skills are shrinking. The assembly line was OK until the 1970s. Then technology and globalization took off and the value of the similar skills model plummeted. A job that took six people to do in 1910 now takes one; what about the other five people?”

A new paradigm must celebrate individual differences and tap into the power of multiple intelligences, cultural diversity, curiosity, passion and creativity to enhance employable skills, Zhao said. Also important is promoting entrepreneurial qualities like confidence, social capital, risk taking, alertness to opportunity and global competence.

“The goal of education must be to enhance these human talents,” he said. “The emphasis on standardized testing stifles them. You can see this in countries that score high on the international tests, but do not produce many entrepreneurs.

“We put China on a pedestal as having the best education; Shanghai has the top PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) score,” Zhao said. “But it comes at a cost. What would have happened to **Steve Jobs** in China? Well, he would have been a good test-taker.

“They’ve been saying for 50 years that U.S. education is in decline. But, despite 50 years of bad test-takers, America is

Conference workshop materials posted online

Handouts from most of the breakout sessions, Spotlight Sessions and the Early Bird Workshop at the 2013 OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show are now available online. The materials are an excellent resource for conference attendees to take home lessons from presentations they heard and learn about sessions they were unable to attend. To download handouts, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/2013-conference-handouts.

still the most prosperous country in the world.

“We need to capitalize on our traditional strengths and create a new paradigm to promote creativity. The reason we don’t test as well is that we just kill creativity less successfully than Asian countries.”

The backbone of America

The average age of a manufacturing worker in the U.S. is 58. And that worries John Ratzenberger.

Best known as the know-it-all mailman on the sitcom “Cheers,” Ratzenberger has had voice roles in all the Pixar animated movies. He’s also dedicated to making sure the nation knows how important skilled workers are to its survival.

Ratzenberger, a former carpenter, supports that cause by speaking around the country. He is a spokesman for MOST (Mobile Outreach Skills Training), a program that prepares unemployed and underemployed individuals for factory jobs. He also produced and hosted “Made in America” for the Travel Channel, a show that celebrates the work ethic that built America. He co-founded the Nuts, Bolts and Thingamajigs Foundation and represents the Center for America, organizations that work to encourage young people to pursue careers in the skilled trades and engineering, and increase awareness about the skilled worker shortage facing the U.S.

“I grew up in Bridgeport Conn., an industrial town that made a lot of *stuff*,” Ratzenberger said. “When I was a kid, I thought everyone knew how to build and fix things. ... We’ve lost that ability.”

To illustrate that loss, he told a story about his sister’s neighbor who spent an entire day attaching blocks to his daughter’s tricycle so she could reach the pedals. After the man was done, another neighbor, a factory worker, walked up and said, “Why didn’t you just lower the seat?”

“Common sense, right?” Ratzenberger laughed. “That’s another thing we’ve lost, common sense.”

He laid some of the blame on “helicopter parents,” those who are afraid to let their kids try — and maybe fail — but try and learn.

“You don’t see kids outside playing anymore; now they have *play dates*,” he said. “Whatever happened to just playing, like we did as kids. We weren’t only playing, we were problem-solving and learning. You don’t have to step on a dead branch more than once to know what a dead branch looks like.”

Ratzenberger worries that if moves aren’t made to start increasing the ranks of skilled workers, the U.S. soon will face a severe shortage of those workers — a problem that will

not be fixed quickly or easily. He blames an overemphasis on college education that began with the baby boomers, as well as funding cuts that have led schools to scale back classes focusing on skilled labor. Another problem is the negative image often attached to blue collar workers.

“We sort of disregard people who work with their hands,” Ratzenberger said. “The media depicts people who know how to make or fix things as idiots — think Gomer Pyle. The people we put on pedestals are the wrong people: actors, rock stars, sports stars. It used to be that carpenters and glaziers were the rock stars of the day, the people who built civilization.

“There are 600,000 unfilled manufacturing jobs in this country. Someone has to learn this stuff, someone has to step up and build and fix things or we’re going to become a Third World country. If you, as school leaders, want your kids to grow up and have good jobs, go out in your communities and visit the shops and factories. Find out what they need and teach those skills in your schools.” ■

Editor’s note: The General Session sponsors were: Wil Haygood — Pepple & Waggoner Ltd. and Ross Sinclair & Associates LLC; Dr. Yong Zhao — Peck Shaffer & Williams LLP, Scott, Scriven & Wahoff LLP and Squire, Sanders (US) LLP; John Ratzenberger — CompManagement Inc.

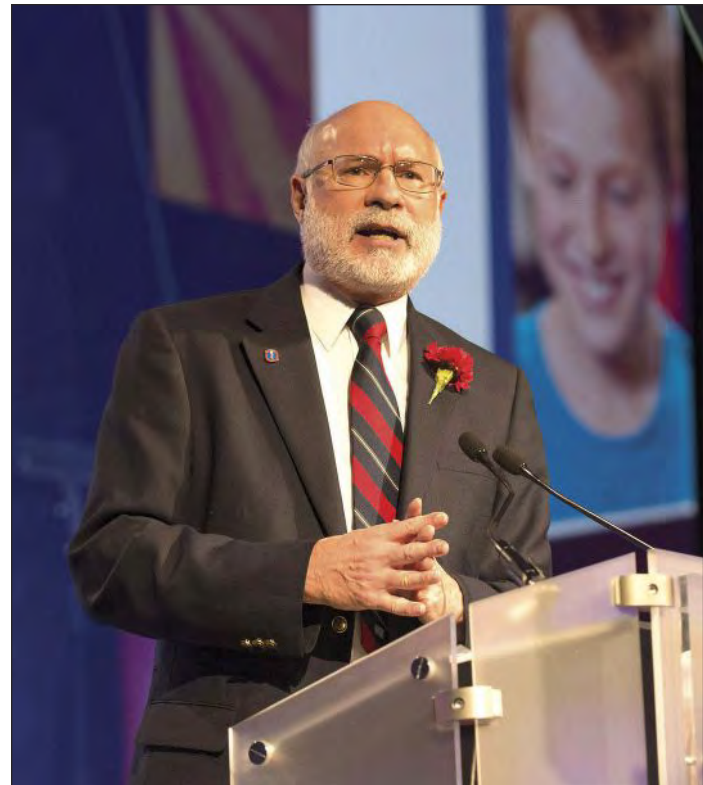


Third General Session speaker John Ratzenberger talks with Delaware Area Career Center students following his speech.

Highlights from the conference

► OSBA President Charlie Wilson, Worthington City, addresses the First General Session.

▼ Members of the Columbus Division of Police demonstrate a tactical response to a bus hostage situation during a Spotlight Session.



▲ 2005 OSBA President Catherine D. Ingram, Cincinnati City, participates in the OSBA Black Caucus meeting at the Capital Conference.

► Attendees browse the selection of books at the OSBA Bookstore. Titles ranged from those written by General Session and Conference Luncheon speakers to OSBA publications and books on boardmanship and student achievement.





◀ Attendees enter the Main Concourse at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, the site of the OSBA Capital Conference.

◀▼ Members of the Southwest Region Executive Committee pose at the region's booth in the Region Resource Center.

▼ An attendee browses school communication materials at the OHSPRA Idea Center.

▼▼ Rep. Gerald L. Stebelton (R-Lancaster) and Sen. Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering), chairs of their respective education committees, present a legislative update at the conference.



◀ National School Boards Association President David A. Pickler greets attendees during the First General Session. Pickler is a member of the Shelby County Board of Education in Collierville, Tenn.



Delegates select OSBA president-elect

Bryan Bullock, assistant editor

The OSBA Delegate Assembly selected the association's new president-elect; heard the executive director's annual report; honored 14 past OSBA presidents; and approved four amendments to the association's legislative platform on Nov. 11 in Columbus.

Delegates also heard from Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. **Richard A. Ross**; Ohio Auditor of State **Dave Yost**; 2014 Ohio Teacher of the Year **Debra J. McDonald** from **Wayne County Schools Career Center**; and 2014 OSBA President-elect **Susie Lawson**, **Tri-County ESC** and **Wayne County Schools Career Center**.

The Annual Business Meeting of the OSBA Delegate Assembly was held at the association's 58th 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 Lawson the OSBA 2014 president-elect. However, rather than serve a year as president-elect, Lawson will assume the presidency on Jan. 1, 2014, because 2013 President-elect **Jo Ann W. Feltner, Franklin City**, narrowly lost her November bid for re-election to her local board. Since OSBA officers must be current school board members, Feltner's loss prevents her from serving as president. The OSBA Nominating Committee will meet in January to review 2014 president-elect applicants.

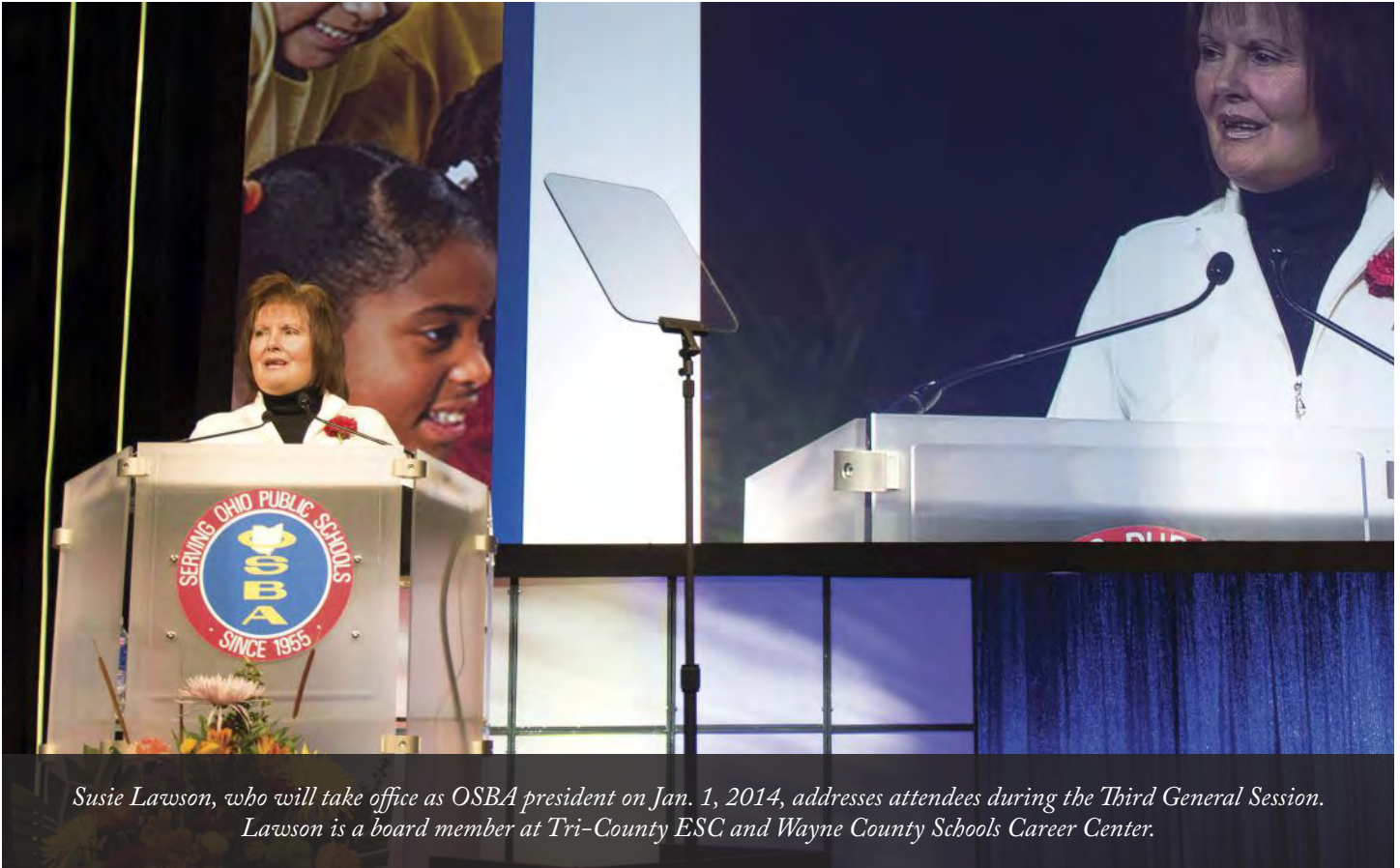
Lawson is a 26-year school board veteran with a wealth of OSBA leadership experience. She serves on the OSBA Northeast Region Executive Committee and was the region's president in 2007 and 2011. She serves on the Credentials and Audit committees, and has been an active member of the Federal Relations Network for nine years. Lawson also is a member of the Student Achievement Leadership Team and a Board Member Mentor and OSBA Ambassador for Education. She previously served on the OSBA Board of Trustees, Executive Committee and Capital Conference Planning Task Force. She was named to OSBA's All-Ohio School Board in 2002, earned Master Board Member status — a lifetime distinction — in 2006 and earned eight OSBA Awards of Achievement over the years.

OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis** updated delegates on the state of the association and its 2013 achievements. He cited successes on the legislative, fiscal, legal and community relations fronts, including removing ESC governance changes from the state budget, advocating for the Common Core State Standards, working with the Ohio attorney general on school safety initiatives and helping win favorable legal interpretations for Ohio public schools.

"In 2013, OSBA stepped up as the voice of public school board members and the diverse districts they represent," Lewis said. "Our outreach efforts ensured collaboration with individuals and organizations shaping public education's future."



2014 Ohio Teacher of the Year Debra J. McDonald from Wayne County Schools Career Center thanks school board members at the OSBA Delegate Assembly.



Susie Lawson, who will take office as OSBA president on Jan. 1, 2014, addresses attendees during the Third General Session. Lawson is a board member at Tri-County ESC and Wayne County Schools Career Center.

Lewis said the association is serving its members’ needs by fulfilling its mission to provide superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions. He highlighted successful new OSBA initiatives to offer expert member assistance on transportation, staff handbooks, financial and levy issues, and school safety and security.

“To keep pace with an ever-changing world, OSBA is always innovating,” Lewis said. “We embrace forward thinking and the dynamic transformation it brings.”

The executive director reminded attendees that the true strength of the association is its members and their collective voice. While each school district faces unique challenges, he urged them to rally together for the benefit of all Ohio children.

“We must acknowledge that while Ohio’s school districts have a vast range of interests, and our schools and the boards that govern them are each unique, we are all in this together,” Lewis said. “We *all* share a common goal of preserving and strengthening public education. We *all* strive to deliver a world-class education to every student. And we *all* seek to improve the lives of Ohioans.

“In the coming year, we will face issues that may create discord — we cannot allow this to happen. ... We must

face the future knowing that by working together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.”

Before adjourning, delegates approved amendments supporting legislation that:

- provides for the graduation rate, as computed by the Ohio Department of Education, to allow students with disabilities additional time to complete graduation requirements without penalty as stated in federal requirements;
- increases property tax relief while ensuring that all taxpayers pay a fair share of the cost of public education.

Delegates approved amendments *opposing* legislation that:

- subjects school districts to strict use of technology in testing requirements;
- requires school districts to join other joint vocational entities.

Booklets containing the OSBA 2014 Legislative Platform will be mailed to all member districts in January. The Legislative Platform also will be available on the OSBA website at www.ohioschoolboards.org/legislative-platform. For more information on the platform and this year’s amendments, contact the OSBA legislative services division. ■



Luncheon speakers provide fresh perspectives

Margo Bartlett, freelance correspondent

More than 500 education leaders enjoyed two outstanding speakers at the OSBA Capital Conference Luncheons. The luncheons are among the conference's most popular special events each year. In addition to featuring renowned presenters, they also provide a relaxed atmosphere in which attendees can interact with the speakers and their peers.

The Nov. 11 luncheon featured **Emily Bazelon**, an author whose most recent book represents a major new contribution to the national discussion on bullying. The luncheon was sponsored by All Disaster Services; CompManagement Inc.; FirstEnergy Solutions Corp.; Peck, Shaffer & Williams LLP; and PNC Financial Services Group.

The Nov. 12 event featured **Roger Crawford**, an inspiring speaker recognized by *Sports Illustrated* as "one of the most accomplished physically challenged athletes in the world." The luncheon was sponsored by Bricker & Eckler LLP; CompManagement Health Systems Inc.; NaviGate Prepared; and the OSBA Insurance Agency in partnership with Assurant Employee Benefits.

Turning the bullying conversation on its head

Editor and journalist Emily Bazelon spoke to her Conference Luncheon audience about what some might call a "trendy" topic: bullying. Bazelon's recent book, *Sticks and Stones: Defeating the Culture of Bullying and Rediscovering the Power of Character and Empathy*, also addresses that popular topic. Some might say she turns it on its head.

"'Bullying' has really become this word that we're hearing in the news all the time," Bazelon said. The widespread attention the topic has received in recent years has led some schools and other supervisory entities to attempt to "manage 'kid conflict' in an unrealistic way," she said, including creating overbroad definitions of bullying, then requiring such behavior to result in suspension. Eight states have criminalized bullying.

"We need to figure out how to use the label sparingly," Bazelon said. Narrowing the definition of bullying is useful for "kids who are tired of the word" and also for adults who say bullying and being bullied is a normal part of growing up.

Bazelon, the Truman Capote Fellow for Creative Writing and Law at Yale Law School whose stories have appeared in *Slate*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Mother Jones* and other publications, suggests this: "Bullying is about verbal, physical and social harassment, a concerted campaign to make a child miserable."

Focus on that, she said, and "you get your hands around the really harmful behavior," the behavior that can lead to



Emily Bazelon, an editor, journalist and cyberbullying expert, describes bullying as "a concerted campaign to make a child miserable."

poor school attendance, substance abuse, legal trouble and lingering problems.

As for the daily back-and-forth playground conflict that many people, including the kids themselves, call “drama,” Bazelon suggests that adults back off.

“We need to give kids space to work this stuff out,” she said.

Bazelon amused her audience by playing a clip from an appearance on Comedy Central’s “The Colbert Report” as well as illustrations of stereotypical bullies: the bigger, stronger kid stealing the smaller, weaker kid’s lunch money; the bully-who-was-bullied (represented by **Alan Rickman** as Harry Potter’s nemesis Severus Snape); and “mean girls,” a group that can include boys, who are motivated by a need for social dominance.

“Mean girls” are hard to spot, Bazelon said. They gossip without fighting, they’re “masters of the eye roll” and they do a lot of work anonymously online.

“Facebook thugs,” she said, are “meaner, brasher, harsher online” than they tend to be when face-to-face with their victims.

In fact, Bazelon said, “The Internet is a perfect storm for bullying. ... It’s an empathy challenge,” since it’s easy to attack when distanced from the target.

What to do when bullying is deemed to be “a concerted campaign to make a child miserable?”

Bazelon suggested several effective approaches already adopted by some states: Require counseling/support services; invest in character education and other evidence-based practices; balance discipline and teaching appropriate behavior; and encourage adults to pursue professional development in bullying prevention and education.

Some positive steps don’t go far enough, Bazelon said, citing schools that stage sit-with-different-people-in-the-lunchroom days once a year. Empathy can be encouraged, she said, but it must be woven into the fabric of every school day, not introduced once and then forgotten.

Bazelon also touts the powers of stories and bystanders. Many books and movies tell stories of kids who have problems, kids who are trying to sort something out, who may tap the flow of empathy in those who read or watch them.

The influence of bystanders also should not be overlooked. Bullying often has an audience, Bazelon said. Studies have shown that bystanders intervene 20% of the time. When they do — Bazelon calls these spunky souls “upstanders” —



Tennis champion Roger Crawford shares his challenges and successes during his Nov. 12 luncheon presentation.

they stop the bullying more than half the time.

In spite of laws against it, drunk driving used to be a little bit cool, Bazelon pointed out. Now the overwhelming societal belief is that it’s stupid, dangerous and morally wrong as well as illegal. She sees a similar shift afoot in attitudes about bullying. When the social norm is not to bully, kids won’t do it.

“Bully/loser categories aren’t forever,” she told her audience, and many former bullies and victims grow up to be strong, empathetic adults. Bazelon sees “something inspiring about how kids turn a bad experience into something that makes them stronger.”

The power of ‘possibility thinking’

Roger Crawford may be the epitome of inspirational speakers. Introduced to the luncheon crowd by OSBA President **Charlie Wilson, Worthington City**, Crawford sprinted to the platform, smiling broadly and holding out his right stump for Wilson to shake.

Wilson, no doubt, was prepared for the stump. Anyone familiar with Crawford’s remarkable career as the only severely disabled person ever to play in the U.S. Tennis Association knows about the stump. Knows, in fact, that Crawford’s physical challenges affect all four limbs. Thanks



to a condition called ectrodactylism, the congenital absence of fingers and toes, he wears a prosthesis on his left leg. Beyond that, he makes no concessions to his so-called disabilities.

Crawford credits his parents and strong family support with helping him see beyond his physical limitations. When he was a child who didn't learn to walk until he was 5 years old, he asked his mother why he was different from everyone else. She told him, "Because you're not a carbon copy. You're an original."

Crawford calls that attitude "possibility thinking." Choosing to focus on what he can do has taught him that there is little out of his reach. He even threw the javelin.

"I didn't set any records, but I kept the crowd alert," he said.

Acknowledging his audience of educators, Crawford thanked his listeners for what they do.

"I've seen firsthand the incredible difference you make in the lives of students," he said, and teachers can and do help others reach a little higher than they think they can.

He recalled the day in grade school when his teacher announced the class would make handprints to give to their parents.

"Everyone turned and looked at me," Crawford said. His response was to put on the brakes.

"I said 'I cannot do it. I am handicapped,'" Crawford said. His teacher wouldn't have it.

"He said, 'You are not handicapped. You are my student,'" Crawford said. He put his prints on the paper and wrote his name underneath.

"My teacher said, 'I'm glad you put your name on that paper,'" Crawford told his audience, clearly expecting the laughter that came.

But he didn't fail to make his point.

"All we need to inspire us every day is to look at our past and celebrate all we do that makes a difference in the lives of others," he said. "... Not everyone can *be* the best, but everyone can do their best."

Crawford cited his mother-in-law, **Judy Allen Young**, a champion skeet shooter, as an example of someone who understood how to prepare for the future. When Crawford asked her how she became a champion, Young said, "Practice when you want to. Practice when you don't

want to. Then you'll always be ready when you call for your target."

What erodes motivation, Crawford said, is seeing failure ahead.

"How we choose to answer what we see in the future" makes a difference, he said. "... Failure's only possible when you say, 'I quit.'"

Crawford also played football, and told a hilarious story about a player who tried to tackle him as he was going for a touchdown.

The player grabbed his left leg, Crawford said, and paused. His listeners laughed.

"You're a sharp group," Crawford said. "It came right off. I hopped into the end zone." That story is on page 152 of the original *Chicken Soup for the Soul* book, he added.

Playing sports with his challenges wasn't that difficult, Crawford said.

"I can get around the tennis court amazingly well on my artificial leg."

To illustrate that point, he showed clips of himself darting around the court to return the ball with all the speed and ability of his fully abled opponent.

"I wasn't the most powerful and I wasn't the fastest. ... If you can hit the ball over the net one more time than the other person, you win the point," he said.

What does hold him back? Self-imposed limitations such as anxiety, Crawford said. Not fear, which is tied to something real, but anxiety, "the anticipation of a negative event, whether it occurs or not."

Crawford said he once avoided shaking hands. "It was my greatest fear," he said. "It used to be an anxiety."

On the screen to Crawford's right appeared Crawford himself, carrying the Olympic torch, which bears the words, "Higher, Faster, Stronger."

We are able to choose our attitude, how we see what is possible, he said. "I really believe that our mindset is what will determine our level of success. ... Everyone can accomplish great possibilities." ■

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.

Lessons learned on Hill 512



Early Bird Workshop speaker shares insights on leadership, motivation and adversity

Gary Motz, managing editor

Jim Bearden kicked off the OSBA Capital Conference with a harrowing story about his first taste of combat leadership during the Vietnam War. He went on to share how the crucible of war taught him lessons that would forever shape his views about organizational cultures and the impact leaders have on them.

Bearden — a decorated war veteran, corporate executive, business founder, keynote speaker and author — led the Nov. 10 Early Bird Workshop, which opens the conference each year. He captivated the audience with his keen insights into leadership, motivation and adversity. Mixing humor, pathos and hard-nosed practicality, his message clearly resonated with the more than 100 attendees.

On July 12, 1968, a helicopter ferried 22-year-old 2nd Lt. Bearden from a ship in the South China Sea to Hill 512 near the Vietnamese demilitarized zone. He joined a platoon that would have had 50 Marines at full strength; it now had 15. Units on adjoining hills were similarly depleted.

As night fell that first day, the enemy launched an intense attack on the vastly outnumbered Marines with mortars, grenades, machine guns and small arms.

“I ran forward to where a corporal was firing a grenade launcher he had picked up from a Marine who had been wounded,” Bearden said. “I stood beside him, pulled my .45 (-caliber) pistol out and promptly squeezed off seven



Leadership expert Jim Bearden describes the six steps for creating and supporting a culture to sustain district success under any circumstance.



rounds at people I couldn't see in a tree line 300 meters away. ... The likelihood of me hitting anything smaller than Mount Everest at 300 meters was slim and none."

Bearden said the corporal looked up at him in amazement and told him they needed to direct some fire at the tree line — with something *besides* a pistol.

"I had committed a classic mistake and forgotten my role," Bearden said. "My role as an officer was not to fire at the enemy with my pistol; my role was to ensure we filled any breaches in our defenses. My job was to make sure we had Marines and weapons deployed in such a way as to prevent the enemy from overrunning us."

"I made a mistake, and luckily the corporal brought me back to my senses. I had the opportunity to acknowledge the truth about my role — if I didn't do it, nobody else would. And that's the position you are in as school board members."

Bearden said he was "dealt a bad hand" on Hill 512 and made mistakes in handling it. But thanks to his training and the enlisted men under him, he was able to recognize his mistakes, learn from them and move on. He said the willingness to acknowledge mistakes demonstrates a commitment to winning — despite the hand you're dealt.

Bearden told the school leaders that public education has been dealt more than its share of bad hands, with funding cuts, threats to local governance, increasing privatization and more. Bad hands make accomplishing your mission more difficult, he said, but they don't change the mission.

"Marines do not get to choose the wars they're called on to fight and public school districts do not get to choose the children they're called on to educate," Bearden said.

He described two variables that affect school district success: the hands districts are dealt and the choices they make about those hands. District responses vary, but fall into two broad categories: some "hunker and hope" and wait to get bailed out, while others look for ways to win, regardless of the hands they're dealt.

"District responses to bad hands are driven by the *behavior* of people in leadership positions," Bearden said. "Leadership behavior becomes the model that often translates into the culture and the culture is nothing but behavior."

He made an important distinction between two types of district culture. "Professed culture" is found in mission statements and expressions of core values and beliefs. These words and phrases have two things in common: they all sound good and they may have little or no impact on employees' behavior.

"Actual culture" is a composite of employees' behavior, and is what gets noticed, honored and confronted. Many times, actual culture differs from what is described in mission statements and other organizational documents.

"Effective leaders close the gap between what sounds good and what gets done," Bearden said. "They close the gap between the professed culture and the actual culture, which is exhibited by the behavior of a district's people."



Attendees listen intently during the Capital Conference Early Bird Workshop, featuring leadership expert Jim Bearden.

Bearden listed six specific steps for creating and supporting a culture to sustain district success despite the hand dealt:

- Ensure that others understand what you expect from them by making clear what is expected. There are three reasons people fail to meet leaders' expectations: they know what's expected but are unable to meet expectations; they know what's expected but are unwilling to meet expectations; or they don't know or understand the behavior expected. "The last one is most often the case," Bearden said. "You must tell them specifically what you expect; if you can't define it to yourself, you can't be specific with them."
- Identify and eliminate barriers to the expected behaviors by talking to employees. Ask them questions, listen and convince them you want to eliminate the barriers.
- Measure performance using the expectations as the standards, because what gets measured gets done.
- Acknowledge employee effort, progress, successes, mistakes and lessons. "Mistakes can be signs of progress if you focus more on lessons learned than the mistakes," Bearden said. "I want you to catch people making mistakes and taking risks. Rely on people's courage to try."
- Confront those unwilling to meet expectations. This is absolutely essential, because you do a disservice to those who do try by tolerating or ignoring those who won't.
- Confront problem employees as a means of restoring them to a place of good faith, not as a way to punish them. "People make different mental choices about the hand they're dealt," Bearden said. "But remember, you're not a leader only when things are perfect, you are a leader all the time."

Things were far from perfect on Hill 512 the morning after the North Vietnamese attack on Bearden's unit. When the sun rose, the death and destruction of the night's battle became all too visible. As the troops prepared to go out on patrol, the lieutenant was beside himself.

"The look on my face must have showed the feelings I was having, the feelings of remorse, the feelings of what if I'd done something differently," Bearden said. "One of the young marines noticed and came over and asked me for a light. As I was lighting his cigarette, he looked me in the eye and said something I'll never forget: 'Lieutenant, it don't mean nothin', you got to let it go.'

"He wasn't telling me those dead Marines didn't matter. ... He was telling me to put my grief aside for now because we had a job to do."

Bearden said that moment was an epiphany for him, because it made him realize that when called on, he could make the choices essential to achieve what needed to be done. It also taught him that emotional accountability — choosing to "get over it and get on with it" — is always an option.

"Don't you dare come off thinking, I can't stand this set of circumstances; yes, you can," Bearden told the school district leaders. "Not only can you, you're the one who stepped up. ... You stepped up and said, 'Choose me, I'll lead, and I'll lead in an arena that has no equal in terms of its impact on our country.' *You've* done that." ■

Editor's note: Britton, Smith, Peters & Kalail Co. LLP sponsored the Early Bird Workshop.

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Saluting board service



2013 All-Ohio School Board members recognized during the Third General Session are, from left, Joy Weaver, Larry E. Holdren, Dr. Marguerite M. Bennett, Barbara Dysinger and Heidi Dolezal.

Five board members earn OSBA's highest honor

Bryan Bullock, assistant editor

Five Ohioans have been recognized by OSBA for above-and-beyond school board service in their communities. The outstanding school district leaders were named to the 2013 All-Ohio School Board on Nov. 13 during the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show in Columbus. The recognition is OSBA's most prestigious honor.

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

The 2013 honorees are:

- **Dr. Marguerite M. Bennett, Mount Vernon City** and

Knox County Career Center;

- **Heidi Dolezal, North Royalton City and Cuyahoga Valley Career Center;**
- **Barbara Dysinger, Findlay City;**
- **Larry E. Holdren, Ohio Valley ESC and Washington County Career Center;**
- **Joy Weaver, Montgomery County ESC and Miami Valley Career Technology Center.**

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 2013 All-Ohio School Board.”

Central Region

Dr. Marguerite M. Bennett

Bennett is a longtime educator, board member and believer in public education.

A board member for more than 25 years, she serves on the Mount Vernon City and Knox County Career Center boards of education. Between the two boards, Bennett has served as board president or vice president for 18 of those years.

She inherited her love of learning from her parents and her grandmother, who was a schoolteacher. Bennett is a professor emeritus at Mount Vernon Nazarene University and a veteran instructor.

She has a long history of service with OSBA, where she belongs to the Board of Trustees, Board Member Cabinet, Central Region Executive Committee, Federal Relations Network, Legislative Platform Committee, Delegate Assembly and Student Achievement Leadership Team. Bennett also is a student achievement liaison for both her districts. She earned the OSBA Award of Achievement in 2011.

Her affiliations with professional organizations include the Knox County-Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce, Delta Kappa Gamma, Knox County-Mount Vernon Distinguished Young Women, Our Schools-Our Community Steering Committee and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

She lists celebrating student achievements as the source of her greatest pride and joy as a board member. Bennett said she continues to believe in the value of public schools, and the importance of providing a quality education to all children.

In nominating Bennett, her board colleagues wrote: “Dr. Bennett is the epitome of grace under pressure. ... School boards face many challenges; I can think of no one better suited to guide a board than Dr. Bennett. My fellow board members and I have learned much by her fine example.”

Bennett and her husband, **Fordyce**, live in Mount Vernon. She has two daughters and five grandchildren.

Northeast Region

Heidi Dolezal

Dolezal is a tireless advocate for schools in her community.

She has been a board member for more than 15 years, and serves on the North Royalton City and Cuyahoga Valley Career Center school boards. Between the two boards, she has served as board president or vice president for 10 of those years.

Dolezal became a board member after many years of active involvement in PTA, school committees and district campaigns. She sought the position to help her school district provide a high-quality education in a cost-effective manner.

The veteran board member shows her support for students by consistently attending school activities and programs. Dolezal is involved in the district’s band and athletic boosters, education foundation and was a manager and umpire for the baseball boosters. She also is a lifetime member of the national and Ohio PTAs.

Dolezal has served OSBA in a variety of capacities, including as a district representative at the Delegate Assembly and as a moderator and presenter at the Capital Conference. She is a Master Board Member and eight-time Award of Achievement recipient. Among her proudest accomplishments, she lists the trust she has been given as a board member from the citizens of North Royalton and school district administrators, teachers, staff and parents.

In nominating Dolezal, her board colleagues wrote: “The greatest attribute she brings to our board is her understanding and practice of boardmanship. She is the epitome of good boardmanship and it is that example that has helped keep our board on track for more than 15 years.”

Dolezal lives in North Royalton with her husband, **Warren**. She has three children, and is a dental hygienist for Schmidt Family Dentistry in North Royalton.

Northwest Region

Barbara Dysinger

Dysinger is a second-generation board member who is actively engaged in her schools and community.

She has been a board member with Findlay City for seven years, and has served as board president for two of those years.

She is a licensed professional counselor, and has co-led bullying prevention training for staff in Hancock County middle schools and helped the Findlay High School Student Council initiate an anti-bullying program. The former teacher and guidance counselor’s commitment to public education was passed down to her by her father, who was a longtime school board member in Bloomdale, Ohio.

She is actively involved with OSBA, and has served as a student achievement liaison. Among her proudest accomplishments, Dysinger lists her school board service, work in the Hancock County mental health system, efforts to help children build

self-esteem and her 27-year commitment as a children's choir director at her church. Her affiliations with professional organizations include membership in the Findlay Rotary Club, Northwest Ohio Counseling Association, American Counseling Association and Phi Beta Kappa Society.

In nominating Dysinger, her board colleagues wrote: "Barbara is an outstanding board member who constantly exemplifies her desire to contribute to the achievement and success of all children. Her positive energy and attitude are infectious. Barbara gives every talent and ability she has to reach out to every child and adult she comes in contact with to give them the opportunity to utilize their full potential and reach for their dreams."

Dysinger and her husband, **James**, live in Findlay. She has two children.

Southeast Region

Larry. E. Holdren

Holdren is a veteran school board member with a passion for helping students succeed.

A 40-year board veteran, he serves on the Ohio Valley ESC and Washington County Career Center boards of education. Between the two boards, he has served as board president or vice president for 34 of those years.

Holdren got involved with education because he believes it is the backbone of communities. He says he is proud of the services his ESC offers and the all-time high enrollment at his career center, which prepares students for the workforce.

Holdren works closely with OSBA, where he is the chair of the Audit Committee, serves on Southeast Region Executive Committee and has served as a district representative at the Delegate Assembly. Holdren was OSBA president in 2003 and is a former Southeast Region president. He is a Master Board Member and three-time Award of Achievement recipient.

His past and current affiliations with professional organizations include serving on the board of the Ohio Bankers League, as well as membership in the Mid Ohio Valley Society of Human Resources and the Wood County Area Roundtable.

Among his proudest accomplishments, he lists his efforts over the years with OSBA to advocate for all students in Ohio.

In nominating Holdren, his board colleagues wrote: "Mr. Holdren's commitment to service is matched only by his dedication to leadership on the board. He is a model and mentor for the other board members. He never compromises his integrity and always acts in the best interest of the board and the schools he represents."

Holdren and his wife, **Sheryl**, live in Little Hocking, where he is the senior vice president of business development for Peoples Bank.

Southwest Region

Joy Weaver

Weaver is a dedicated supporter of her schools and community.

She has been a board member for 32 years, and serves on the Montgomery County ESC and Miami Valley Career Technology Center (MVCTC) boards of education. She has been as board president or vice president for six of those years. She previously served on the **Jefferson Township Local (Montgomery)** school board — the district from which she graduated — for six years.

Weaver is actively involved in her schools and church, where she has served as treasurer for 48 years. She shows her passion for students by regularly attending school activities and programs, including annual club banquets and senior and staff recognition events.

Weaver serves on her career center's finance audit committee. She continues her education through professional development, regularly attending the National School Boards Association's Annual Conference and OSBA Capital Conference.

In nominating Weaver, her board colleagues wrote: "She is always supportive of the MVCTC district, whether it be as a board member or working hard to pass a levy. Her dedication to serving 32 years is amazing."

Weaver and her husband, **Glen**, have been married for 65 years and live in Dayton. She has three children, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. ■

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Recognizing a major milestone

Bryan Bullock, assistant editor

A quarter century is a long time to do anything — let alone something as demanding as school board service. The hours are long, the challenges are never-ending and the “thanks” are often few and far between. On top of that, school board members often serve their school districts while juggling full-time careers and other professional, personal and family obligations.

Each year, OSBA is proud to recognize board members who reach the extraordinary milestone of 25 years of service.

Six veteran board members from across Ohio were recognized for the achievement on Nov. 13 during the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show.

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

- 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.

“There are more than 3,400 school board members in Ohio, but these individuals stand out because of their above-and-beyond commitment to 25 years of service,” said OSBA Executive Director **Richard Lewis**. “Serving as a school board member requires a tremendous amount of time, energy and dedication — so these veteran board members deserve to be honored for their commitment to their communities.

“Boards of education help set the

vision for a school district and, in turn, put students on a path toward college, careers and lifelong learning. Veteran school board members have served their communities by steering generations of students to succeed.”

Veteran school board members recognized at the Capital Conference include:

- **Virginia Blaney, LaBrae Local (Trumbull);**
- **Robert Carpenter, Ripley-Union-Lewis-Huntington Local (Brown);**
- **J. Jay Fabian, Madison Local (Lake);**
- **Russell G. Fortlage, Independence Local (Cuyahoga);**
- **Anne Marie Reames, Bellefontaine City and Ohio Hi-Point Career Center.**

Veteran board member **Joyce Galbraith, ESC of Central Ohio and Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical Schools**, was unable to attend the event. ■



Veteran board members recognized during the OSBA Capital Conference include, from left, Anne Marie Reames, Russell G. Fortlage, J. Jay Fabian, Robert Carpenter and Virginia Blaney.

A record-setting Student Achievement Fair



Students from the Greene County Career Center's Health Science Academy explain how they learn about infection control, blood pressure and vital signs.

Crystal Davis, editor

The 15th annual Student Achievement Fair at OSBA's Capital Conference and Trade Show reached a major milestone by filling up the most booths ever — 101.

“It also seemed to be the largest number of visitors that I have experienced in many years,” said OSBA Director of School Board Services **Kathy LaSota**.

Districts from around the state set up booths at the Greater Columbus Convention Center on Nov. 12. They were selected

to share their innovative programs designed to boost student achievement and leadership.

“We always have a maximum of 100 booths that participate in the Student Achievement Fair,” said **Cheryl W. Ryan**, OSBA deputy director of school board services and fair coordinator. “But this year, we were able to squeeze in an additional one. As usual, the variety of projects and performances was great and certainly lived up to the level of quality that we’ve come to expect from the fair.”

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

"The Student Achievement Fair has become a stage for showcasing the good work of students and staff from across the state," LaSota said. "Visitors take home many creative and proven strategies that they can implement in their districts. The networking that takes place at the fair also may have a long-lasting impact on participants and attendees."

The four-hour fair provides students and staff the opportunity to explain their programs to school board members, administrators and guests. Programs in this year's fair included: Gifted Learners Plugged In for Online Instruction; Freddie's Fuel Up and Go Cart; several robotic projects; Student Representatives on the Board of Education; a piano lab; culinary arts programs; School Court and Mock Trial; Math Mini-Mart; an outdoor classroom; Computer Tech Apprentices; Connecting Students with Careers; Expressions Art and Language Program; Senior Project Hummer; Using Gamification to Achieve Content Understanding; Business Employability Skills Training (BEST); Graphic Arts Technology; Learning Opportunities with Community-Based Agencies; Dynamic Dribblers; Academy for Leadership Abilities; and an aerospace academy, among others.

"We appreciate those districts that continue to make showcasing their programs a priority, especially in this day and age when resources and funds are tight," LaSota said.

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



Students from Meigs Local (Meigs) built a Lego ferris wheel as part of the district's After-School Kids program.

Part of the reason the fair has become a crowd favorite is the popularity of the student entertainment groups performing throughout the event. One group from each of OSBA's five

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The Wayne Local (Warren) Wayne Middle School Garage Band performs for attendees during the OSBA Student Achievement Fair.

- **Bath Local (Allen)** — Bath High School Chamber Chorale

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

Another popular part of the fair was the student art exhibition, featuring visual art projects from school districts across the state. Pepple & Waggoner Ltd. sponsored the student art show.

“This year, State Board of Education members again visited booths and personally presented participating programs and performers with certificates of appreciation,” LaSota said.

LaSota encourages districts to start planning for next year’s Student Achievement Fair.

“We would love to see new districts nominate programs for 2014 to keep fresh ideas coming in from all over the state,” she said. “But we ask that districts start nominating as soon as possible because returning districts want spots and there’s only room for around 100 booths.”

OSBA has already begun preparations for the 2014 Student Achievement Fair. The deadline for submitting nominations is Friday, June 27, 2014. Links to the nomination forms are available at www.ohioschoolboards.org/saf-nominations. A list of districts that participated in the 2013 Student Achievement Fair also are posted at that Web address.

For additional information, contact LaSota at (614) 540-4000; (800) 589-OSBA; or kLasota@ohioschoolboards.org. Districts interested in nominating a performing group should contact Ryan at the above phone numbers or cryan@ohioschoolboards.org. ■

regions was selected based on talent, grade level and variety. Conference attendees could eat lunch at tables next to the performance stage as the talented youngsters entertained. This year’s performers were:

- **Wayne Local (Warren)** — Wayne Middle School Garage Band
- **Jackson City** — Jackson High School Symphonic Choir
- **Buckeye Local (Medina)** — Buckeye Senior High School Upbeat a cappella group
- **Upper Arlington City** — Upper Arlington High School Symphony Strings

A health and beauty break at the OSBA Capital Conference

When you think about the OSBA Capital Conference and Trade Show, you may not think of health, beauty and relaxation. But, a group of career centers has been working for years to change that.

Between sessions that helped expand their minds, attendees could stop by any of eight career centers’ booths in the Trade Show to focus on the rest of their body. These generous career centers offered free services such as massages, blood pressure checks, makeovers and more. Another career center was chosen to produce a conference video documentary (see “High schoolers turn their lens on Capital Conference” on page 18), while the **Delaware Area Career Center** provided landscaping and benches outside the OSBA Bookstore.

Career centers prepare secondary students to succeed in the 21st century workforce and to value learning as a lifelong process. The

career-tech programs that demonstrated their skills during this year’s conference included:

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



Organizational leadership for tomorrow's schools

Learn what it takes to be an effective school board member during the 2014 Board Leadership Institute. This two-day workshop, planned for May 2–3, is designed specifically for board members and will focus on numerous topics. Participants will have the opportunity to attend the opening general session, multiple breakout sessions and closing lunch.

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

Registration and housing

The cost to attend is \$240. Register online at www.ohioschoolboards.org or contact **Laurie Miller** at (614) 540-4000.

Stay at the Hilton Columbus/Polaris for \$125 per night if booked by April 11. Call (614) 885-1600 and mention OSBA to reserve a room.



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Student talent on display at the Capital Conference

► Dayton City's Belmont High School JROTC Color Guard presents the colors during the First General Session.

▼ Students in Miami Valley Career Technology Center's robotics program describe how they design and program robots for competitions.



▲ Barnesville EV's Barnesville School Choir performs before the Second General Session.

► A Student Achievement Fair attendee learns more about Mahoning County Career and Technical Center's Trash Bash program.





◀ *A Franklin City student demonstrates Read Naturally, a reading intervention and enrichment program focusing on fluency, comprehension and keyboarding skills.*

◀◀ *Jackson City's Jackson High School Symphonic Choir entertains attendees during the Student Achievement Fair.*

▼ *Students in Independence Local's (Cuyahoga) iMovement: Pay it Forward program share how the service program helps community members.*



▲ *Upper Arlington City's Upper Arlington High School Vocal Ensemble performs at the Third General Session.*

◀ *East Cleveland City students pose at the district's School Court and Mock Trial booth in the Student Achievement Fair.*



Honor school board members in January

Crystal Davis, editor

During School Board Recognition Month each January, Ohio school districts are very creative in the ways they say “thanks” to their school board members. Two of the most unique recognition events last year included:

- A **Northmont City** science experiment that involved levitating board members with plastic bags, straws and air to coincide with the district’s recognition month theme, “You Raise Us Up.”

- **Mentor EV** handed out “emergency kits” with items such as rubber bands “to stretch the budget,” sticky notes to help board members remember everything, tissues for parents with issues and Band-Aids, Tums and aspirin “for the bad days.”

Across the state, recognition month activities typically run the gamut from elaborate events involving students, staff and parents, to simple programs held during a January board meeting. Chambers of commerce, city councils and other organizations often pass resolutions to honor school boards, and some newspaper editors write editorials praising the dedicated community servants.

Details from all school districts that submitted information to OSBA about their January celebrations in 2013 can be found at www.ohioschoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month. That site will be updated with school districts’ January 2014 celebrations in March.

No matter how you say “thanks,” rest assured the gesture is greatly appreciated. Outside of handing out diplomas and awards during graduation and other ceremonies, the visible rewards of being a school board member are minimal. Yet, many may not realize how hard board of education members work for their students, staff and community.

Keeping up with board business can be a difficult, time-consuming task, and school board members work for their districts year-round, while teachers and students get summers and holidays off. OSBA’s 2012 board member survey found that most board members spend an average of 16 hours or more a month on board business.

Board members also attend countless board, committee and community meetings, where they must make tough decisions on behalf of their district.

In addition to regular board duties, you might also run into board members at school events and extracurricular activities; acting as chaperones on student trips or at

Let us help you show off your board recognition events

Say “thank you” to your district’s school board members in a high-profile way by submitting articles and photos to OSBA that highlight your School Board Recognition Month activities during January. 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.

School boards
empower
student success



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

The submission deadline is Feb. 17.

dances; judging scholarship programs; representing the board on building projects; or chatting with kids or parents throughout the community. They also represent their districts at other community organizations' events.

No matter how you say "thanks," rest assured the gesture is greatly appreciated.

OSBA's theme for the 2014 School Board Recognition Month is "School boards empower student success." And, to empower your recognition efforts, we've again put together an extensive resource kit to help you pay tribute to those who serve so selflessly.

The kit contains hundreds of ideas and samples of what other Ohio districts have done to show their appreciation. Draft newsletter articles, editorials, letters, public service announcements and artwork are available at www.ohio-schoolboards.org/school-board-recognition-month. Each district will receive a large poster and personalized certificates for all its board members to use at recognition events. For more information, contact the author at (614) 540-4000, ext. 272, or cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org.



Northmont City board member Jane Woodie, left, participates in a student-led science experiment that incorporated the district's board recognition theme.

So, as School Board Recognition Month kicks off with the new year, why not take time to plan something extraordinary to honor all of the extraordinary things school board members do for your district? OSBA looks forward to seeing your pictures, videos and articles. ■

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350 students take stage for all-county holiday concert



Students from six Muskingum County school districts perform in the 25th Anniversary Muskingum Valley ESC Holiday Choir Concert in Zanesville on Dec. 7.

Kim Tatman, communications coordinator, Muskingum Valley ESC

Despite a massive winter storm, the show went on for the 25th Anniversary Muskingum Valley ESC Holiday Choir Concert. Nearly 350 students took the stage in Zanesville on Dec. 7 to kick off the holiday season with song.

The annual concert showcases the musical talents of Muskingum County students from John Glenn (**East Muskingum Local**); Maysville (**Maysville Local**); Philo (**Franklin Local**); Tri-Valley (**Tri-Valley Local**); West Muskingum (**West Muskingum Local**); and Zanesville (**Zanesville City**) high schools. Former **Muskingum Valley ESC** Superintendent **Larry Miller** created the event in 1988 to bring together students from each public school in Muskingum County in a collaborative fashion, rather than in competition.

Ann Lillie Briggs, Tri-Valley High School choir director, served as master of ceremonies for the evening and has led her choir in every concert since 1988. Briggs said the fact that the event Miller created is still showcasing the musical talents of students 25 years later is a boost for music programs in the county.

“It is rare to have an event among districts that is not a competition,” Briggs said. “When this concert first began 25 years ago, it played a major role in building the music programs in the local schools.”

“The students look forward to this every year and encourage their peers from other schools to give their best performances. Some students have joined choir throughout the years so they

could perform in this concert.”

Each choir performed three songs individually, complete with vocal and instrumental soloists. After the individual school performances were finished, all six choirs took the stage to finish the event with six songs.

The event was created to bring together students from each public school in Muskingum County in a collaborative fashion.

Dorothy Heckel, a longtime substitute teacher in the area and local resident, has attended the concert 24 of the 25 years.

“This concert gives the students a unique opportunity to kick off the holidays for our community,” Heckel said. “When all six choirs take the stage at the end, the students take your breath away. I have only missed one concert, and it’s only because I had to attend a wedding.”

The students perform in Secrest Auditorium, a 1,776-seat, 19th-century theater in historic downtown Zanesville. Secrest

has been host to fine entertainment of all genres, from local music and dance recitals to nationally renowned comedians and musical performers.

Secrest Auditorium Manager **Ann Combs** said the concert is a great way to introduce students to a venue that can provide entertainment for their families for many years to come.

“Secrest Auditorium has been the proud host of the holiday choir concert for all 25 years, and we’re hoping to do so for 25 more,” Combs said. “Art and culture are vital parts of a well-rounded education, and celebrating these talented individuals year after year is certainly a strong point in the education they receive in Muskingum County.”

The community takes pride in this event and helps make the concert possible for students. The Community Bank, Newhouse Printing and Zane State College paid for the printing of programs. The Community Bank also donated a portion of its holiday advertising time to promote the concert and air the event on a local television station several times during the holiday season. Other sponsors included Domino’s Pizza, Sam’s Club, Y-City Barbershoppers Chorus, Grace United Methodist Church, **James L. McLaughlin**, district superintendents and parent volunteers. ■

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Amanda Finney, senior marketing coordinator

The relationship between public education and public policy decisions made at the state level is complex and sometimes difficult to navigate. Fortunately, the Education Tax Policy Institute (ETPI) was created to serve public education leaders, helping them meet this challenge. ETPI provides research, analysis and expertise on school funding, education policy, tax policy issues and other factors that affect schools — all of which are valuable resources.

Since its inception, ETPI has been successful in providing credible and insightful information to help policymakers and educators make important decisions about public education policy. Formed for the purpose of supplying data on behalf of school districts on property tax issues, the organization has evolved to cover a variety of education funding and policy topics within its purview. Using the expertise of the consulting firm of Fleeter & Associates,

this nonprofit research arm for education has become known as the premier school-funding and education public policy resource in Ohio.

ETPI benefits members by publishing studies, articles and reports for school districts, the media and the public. Another major benefit of ETPI is that it provides the necessary expertise to respond quickly to legislative proposals and 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, and was instrumental in analyzing the impact of the most recent state budget.

ETPI recently held its annual meeting, where consultant Dr. **Howard Fleeter** provided a fiscal analysis on the new school foundation formula. OSBA, along with the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and the Ohio Association of School Business Officials, also commissioned a study through ETPI titled “Apples to Apples: Ohio School District Expenditures Per Equivalent Pupil.” The report, released on Nov. 19, compares districts’ spending statewide while adjusting for student needs, including students who are economically disadvantaged, have limited English proficiency and are in special education programs. A copy of the report is available at www.etpi-ohio.org.

ETPI currently has 95 members; membership is open to any district or organization. Members are provided quarterly newsletters, briefings and special case studies related to tax issues in Ohio. ETPI is funded by financial support from its member organizations, including school districts, which in turn allow for studies to be conducted and legislative proposals to be analyzed.

For more information about ETPI or becoming a member, visit ETPI’s website or contact **Marcella Gonzalez** at (614) 540-4000; (800) 589-OSBA; or mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org. ■



ETPI consultant Dr. Howard Fleeter shares current school-funding issues during the OSBA Capital Conference.



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