



**VSBA President
Juandiego Wade**
Charlottesville City School Board

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DATES TO REMEMBER

FEBRUARY
School Board Appreciation Month

FEBRUARY 16-20
Clerk Appreciation Week

MARCH 21-23
NSBA Annual Conference

MARCH 27
Hot Topic Conference

APRIL 15
Hot Topic Conference

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank you! Thank you for dedicating your time, energy and talents to advance public education in Virginia. Your dedication is appreciated by parents, the community and most importantly the students in the Commonwealth. Governor Terry McAuliffe has officially recognized February as School Board Appreciation Month; the Governor's proclamation is available on the VSBA website, along with a School Board Appreciation Month resource guide ([click here](#)).

The General Assembly is currently in session as I write this article. Advocating for public education is a primary mission of the VSBA and I believe it is a vital role for each and every school board member. We know that many of you have been responding to our VSBA Action Alerts and monitoring our [blog](#), [Facebook](#) page, and [Twitter](#) feed. I salute you for a job well done and encourage you to keep it up throughout the year.

VSBA Board of Directors, staff and many of you have been very busy talking with your legislators at the state and federal levels this year. VSBA has offered several platforms for you to interact with your legislators, including the VSBA Task Force Day on the Hill, the Capital Conference, and the NSBA Advocacy Institute. Photos and information from each of these events is included in this issue of the newsletter.

The VSBA has a wonderful in-house resource in Emily Webb, our government relations coordinator. She is available to provide you with information on bills pending in Richmond and Washington, as well as guidance on how to approach your legislators or to advocate for public education in your locality.

We also have Bob Hundley working on our behalf. Bob is chair of Hanover County School Board and serves on the VSBA Board of Directors as the Legislative Positions and Federal Relations Chairman. Bob is doing a phenomenal job is promoting the VSBA agenda to both state and federal legislators. He has been spending many hours in Richmond and Washington scheduling meetings and talking

with staff and legislators, and I sincerely thank him for his efforts.

As former chair of the Federal Relations Network Committee, I can personally attest to the success of lobbying and advocating for public education. Personal contact makes a difference.

A few of the bills that Emily and Bob are following as I write this article include:

HB1672 – This legislation repeals the A-F school grading system and requires the Board of Education, in consultation with the SOL Innovation Committee, to redesign the School Performance Report Card.

SB866 – This bill allows local school boards and local governments to participate in the state employee health plan.

HB1873 and SB1320 – These bills direct the Board of Education to develop regulations establishing additional accreditation ratings that recognize the progress of schools that do not meet accreditation benchmarks.

This is just a sample of the numerous bills that have an impact on public education and are being tracked. For up-to-the-minute updates, be sure to monitor the VSBA Legislative Blog referenced earlier.

Advocating for public education is a year around job, and shouldn't just occur during the General Assembly. It can take place in the grocery store, at your churches or synagogues, or at the ball game. It is always a good time to talk about public education, and as school board members were are education's greatest advocates.

Again, congratulations on School Board Appreciation Month. Have a great spring and thank you for all that you do.



FEBRUARY is School Board Appreciation Month & **FEBRUARY 16-20** is School Board Clerk Appreciation Week

Thank you for all that you do as leaders, advocates, and supporters of public education. The work that you do is valued and vitally important for the future of our communities, state, and nation.



Gina G. Patterson
VSBA Executive Director

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Virginians to Speak at NSBA Conference

Virginians will have an active role in the upcoming National School Boards Association (NSBA) 75th Annual Conference & Exposition, which is being held March 21-23 in Nashville. The theme for this year's annual conference is "Their future starts with you."

VSBA and Virginia public schools have maintained a strong presence at the annual conference. This is a great opportunity for Virginians to learn from their peers around the nation, as well as share challenges and success stories from the Commonwealth. The conference is another outlet for Virginia to share its thoughts at the national level on public education. Divisions that will be presenting at the conference include:

- Albermarle County Public Schools - Make to Learn, Learn to Make: Getting Back to the Basics of Kids as Designers, Builders, Engineers, Creators
- Arlington Public Schools - The Board's Role in Continuous Improvement from the Classroom to the Boardroom
- Fairfax County Public Schools - Engaging Your Community in 21st Century Education
- Fairfax County Public Schools - OECD Test for Schools: Raising the Bar Through International Benchmarking
- Isle of Wight County Schools - Freedom to Focus on Your Core Education Mission
- Prince William County Public Schools - Enhancing 21st Century Technology Skills with a 1:1 Tablet Initiative and Microsoft Office 365
- Roanoke City Public Schools - Equity: The First Consideration in Closing the Achievement Gap
- Virginia Beach City Public Schools - Parent Power: Making Connections That Work
- Williamsburg/James City County Schools - That's The Way We've Always Done It...Not Any-more! Process and Performance Management that Supports Continuous Improvement

NSBA Delegate Assembly Business Meeting

The assembly – NSBA's governing body – is composed of 150 representatives from state school board associations around the nation. VSBA delegates to the assembly are President Juandiego Wade, Charlottesville City; President-Elect Bill Kidd, Wythe County; and Past President Kerri Wilson, Harrisonburg City.

If you plan on attending the NSBA Annual Conference, don't forget to register for the "Virginia Breakfast" taking place on Saturday, March 21 from 7:00 – 8:30 a.m. in the convention headquarters hotel, the Omni Nashville. Our guest speaker will be NSBA President Anne Byrne. There is no charge for breakfast thanks to the generous sponsorship of VMDO Architects. Often, the "Virginia" breakfast it is the only opportunity for Virginia's attendees to see each other during the national conference. The breakfast provides an informal atmosphere for education leaders to discuss current issues and share their thoughts with peers. Reservations can be made online [HERE](#).

The NSBA Annual Conference offers Virginia school division leaders outstanding opportunities to share their expertise and gather information, ideas and contacts that enable them to better serve Virginia schools and their students.

For the latest NSBA conference information, visit the NSBA website [HERE](#).

See you in Nashville!

YOU'RE INVITED

VSBA Breakfast at the NSBA Convention

Where: Omni Nashville

When: Saturday, March 21, 2015 at 7:00 a.m.

Cost: FREE - thanks to a generous donation by VMDO Architects

Speaker: Anne Byrne, NSBA president

You must preregister to attend. Call VSBA for information at 800-446-8722 or e-mail Kim Hodges at khodges@vsba.org

REGISTER ONLINE



Thank you to VMDO for sponsoring the Virginia Breakfast at the NSBA Annual Convention.



Virginia Middle School Research Alliance



Aimee Evan
Virginia Middle School
Research Alliance Lead

The Virginia Middle School Research Alliance (VMSRA) is filling a need among divisions and middle schools in our state: helping educators understand how to effectively use data for short- and long-term planning so they can best help students succeed. In this era of accountability, divisions, schools, and even classrooms are flooded with data, from SOL assessments to interim and formative assessments, classroom assignments, attendance and discipline records, to name a few. But educators need tools to effectively use this wealth of information to identify key areas of concern or success among students, determine the causes or sources for student challenges, develop potential solutions, and monitor students' progress. The mission of the VMSRA is to develop these skills among its partner divisions and middle school administrators and teachers.

“Our goal is to build the capacity of middle school leaders and teachers to use data to inform decision-making and improve student performance,” said Aimee Evan, VMSRA’s lead coordinator, “Everything the VMSRA does grows out of what our Alliance members tell us they need—we take our cues from our partner divisions and middle schools. This is a highly collaborative effort. Alliance members bring their expertise and needs to the table, we at REL Appalachia bring what we know, and we find expertise within and outside of the state so we can learn from each other and help students.”



Margaret Gheen
Virginia Middle School
Research Alliance Researcher

The VMSRA is one of several alliances supported by the Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia (REL Appalachia), which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences (IES). IES funds ten RELs across the nation, each focusing on supporting the research- and data-use needs of geographic clusters of states. REL Appalachia has alliances serving Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. REL Appalachia’s VMSRA works specifically with representatives from Virginia’s divisions, middle schools, and the Virginia Department of Education.

The VMSRA hosted two all-day workshops and monthly call-in meetings to build capacity to use data effectively to identify and meet students’ needs. Participants in the workshops and call-in meetings learned from experts in data use and heard from colleagues in Virginia divisions and middle schools who are transforming how they “do business” by (1) organizing their divisions and schools to support effective data use, (2) developing the skills and knowledge they need to use data, and (3) improving data, data systems, and educators’ access to data.

This year, the VMSRA is planning more workshops, call-in meetings, and webinars for its members. The first workshop, anticipated to be held in April in Roanoke, VA, will focus on helping school teams analyze student work samples to pin-point specific challenges in students’ learning, identify the sources of those challenges, and begin to develop potential instructional solutions to these challenges. “We heard from our members they’re cautious about jumping right to solutions, and that makes sense,” explained Ms. Evan, “Educators don’t want to waste their time on things that won’t work for their kids, they want to target their efforts by making informed decisions about what students need and why. So at this workshop we will start at the beginning: we’ll start with the student.” A second workshop, designed for superintendents and their staff, will walk participants through analyzing their data to begin to identify systemic issues that might be plaguing divisions.

The VMSRA welcomes new members. Interested members are encouraged to join as a team of division and middle school leadership and instructional staff. “We encourage joining as a team, because we know from research and experience that effective data use happens when there is collaboration among staff within and across school organizations,” explained Ms. Evan.

**For more information about the REL or
the Virginia Middle School Alliance, please contact Aimee Evan at
aevan@qra-llc.net or 703-655-3695.**





Social Media and Records Retention Rules

Elizabeth Ewing, director, legal and policy services

Many Virginians think of the Library of Virginia (LVA), if they think of it at all, as the repository of priceless historical documents. For example, the Library's collection includes one of only 12 surviving original signed copies of the Bill of Rights and one-of-a-kind sources for genealogical research. Preservation of those irreplaceable documents is vitally important to all Virginians, but the Library is also intimately involved with much more modern documents. The Public Records Act charges the Library with the responsibility for issuing rules regarding the preservation and destruction of public records. Those records include documents written on parchment and paper as well as electronic documents.

One type of electronic document that has only been created in the past few years is documents such as tweets and posts to social media accounts. Although many school board members may not have considered the records retention implications of using social media, it is clear that the electronic records associated with social media are covered by the LVA's records retention rules. Thus, each division needs to have a plan for retaining social media posts and for producing those posts when required by the Freedom of Information Act, during litigation or otherwise. The length of time that each post must be retained is determined based on the content of the message, not its format. In other words, the retention period for each post is the same period that would apply if the post had been distributed via a traditional letter or email.

Each school board determines how it retains posts that are under its control. When the school board does not have control of the post, the board needs to determine what records it can retain, such as confirmations of each posting or screenshots. Each school board, or its records officer, should consider these issues when it reviews contracts with social networking sites and the settings configuration for each social networking account. In addition, individuals who want to communicate via social media should learn their division's practices and be sure to follow them. Recognizing that social media posts are public records is the first step to following the records retention rules. The next step is know how your division complies with those rules.

2015 VSBA Showcases for Success

WHAT IS THE VSBA SHOWCASES FOR SUCCESS?

As a means of encouraging community awareness and positive press coverage of public education, the Virginia School Boards Association is inviting school divisions to recommend programs and initiatives that would serve as appropriate "Showcases for Success" in public education. Last year, more than 100 programs were profiled and the list was shared with journalists, school board members, superintendents, legislators, and top state officials. Press coverage was generated statewide, and this project served to be an effective tool for disarming the critics of public education. We are compiling a new list for 2015, and these successful programs will be showcased on the VSBA web site for the entire year.

WHAT ARE THIS YEAR'S CATEGORIES?

The submission categories are Virtual/Blended Learning and Career & Technical Education.

HOW MANY PROGRAMS/INITIATIVES CAN A DIVISION SUBMIT?

Each division can submit up to 3 programs/initiatives. The submissions do not all have to be in the same category, which enables

divisions to highlight both Virtual/Blended Learning and Career & Technical Education programs.

HOW CAN I SUBMIT?

Submit online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2015VSBAshowcases>

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION?

Friday, February 20, 2015

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE A QUESTION?

Peter Sengenberger, assistant executive director, at peter@vsba.org or 434-295-8722

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Superintendent Evaluation: Developing a Model to Meet VDOE Guidelines

- What are the new requirements?
- What is the difference between standards and indicators, and how will they be measured?
- Who establishes the cut scores for performance ratings?
- What types of student achievement goals can be used and how will they be rated?
- What level of goal achievement is required for a proficient rating?

The Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Superintendents developed by the Virginia Department of Education provide a wealth of information regarding the new requirements. Filtering through this document to determine what is required and what is optional requires focused attention. For some, the changes to their current evaluation model may be minor, while others face major revisions in order to be in compliance with the regulations.

This workshop is designed to provide small group support to superintendents and board members responsible for updating their evaluation model. Participants will have the opportunity to review the guidelines in detail and then use them as they draft their own models. Individual consultation and support will be provided throughout the session as participants work on their revisions.

DATE:

April 24, 2015

TIME:

9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. with additional time available until 3:00 p.m. for individual consultation.

LOCATION:

VSBA Offices, 200 Hansen Road, Charlottesville, VA

COST:

\$150 per person; \$200 after April 17, 2015

REGISTER TODAY!

Ask the Legal Expert

Q. What happens if neither the chair nor the vice-chair can be present at a meeting?

A. The school board members who are present at the meeting select another board member to chair the meeting.

Facilitated Board Self-Evaluation

Board self-evaluation provides more than just accountability and communication. It provides an opportunity for building the best possible leadership for the division and community. Commitment to quality, excellence, continuous learning, and local control of the educational system is demonstrated when boards lead by example. The VSBA has developed a facilitated self-evaluation process that will assist your board in its continuing commitment to focus on and increase student achievement.

For more information on this and other board development opportunities, contact Brianna Stout, coordinator of board development, at brianna@vsba.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS, WORKSHOPS & TRAINING

March 27, 2015

VSBA/WVSBA Hot Topic Conference

LOCATION: Wytheville Meeting Center

DETAIL:

What NASCAR and School Boards Have in Common

C. ED MASSEY, *Past President, National School Boards Association*

NASCAR is one of America's most popular sports. Victory in a NASCAR race is often decided by thousandths of seconds. A commitment to excellence and teamwork is necessary to propel a team to victory lane. This session will evaluate the concepts and principles within NASCAR that are analogous to school district operations. Teamwork is only successful if each participant knows their role and executes that role to perfection. Each participant in NASCAR is comparable to participants in the educational process. From team owners to fans and vendors, all have a place just as in education.

Administrators, teachers, board members, students and parents all play specific roles. This session will break down these responsibilities with the ultimate goal of putting your district in "victory lane"!

Reshaping Content, Engaging Students: What Board Members Need to Know

APPLE INC.

For a generation of paper-centric school leaders, the rapid acceleration from print to digital content raises lots of questions. How do students take notes? Is the online textbook the same as the print? What is the advantage of using digital content? How do school systems manage the shift? In addition, take a hands-on tour with Apple to learn how the iPad is changing the learning experience, making it more engaging, interactive, and completely mobile.



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April 15, 2015

VSBA Hot Topic Conference

LOCATION: Charlottesville, VA

DETAIL:

Do you have students sitting on top of each other? Do you have more mobile units than the Red Cross? Are you thinking about building or renovating? Been there, done that, but wish you could have done it differently? Not sure how to get started or what questions to ask? This meeting is for you! It promises to be a very enlightening day. Before you dig or even think about digging, attend this hot topic!

10 Things to Know

BILL BRADLEY, *Principal, Stantec Architecture*

Look Before You Leap - The Legal and Practical Issues In New School Construction

TERENCE MURPHY, *Chair of Government Contracts and Construction, Kaufman & Canoles, P.C.*

To Kick the Can or Not

CHUCK SAYLORS, *Vice President, M.B. Kahn Construction Co. Inc.*

Who's With Me? -

How to Get Community Buy-In

ED WISE, *Board Chair, Buckingham County Public Schools*

DR. CECIL SNEAD, *Superintendent, Buckingham County Public Schools*

DR. DAVID SOVINE, *Superintendent, Frederick County Public Schools*

BENJAMIN WATERMAN, *Board Chair, Frederick County Public Schools*

ROGER RICHARDSON, *Architect, BCWH Architects*

Ways the School Environment Affects Student Health/Safety

BOB MOJE, *Architect, VMDO Architects. P.C.*

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L-R: Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, Virginia Chamber of Commerce President Barry DuVal, Virginia Secretary of Education Anne Holton, and Virginia State Superintendent of Public Instruction Steve Staples

2015 Capital Conference Recap

This year's Capital Conference included greetings and commentary from Governor Terry McAuliffe, Secretary of Education Anne Holton, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Steve Staples, and Virginia Chamber of Commerce President Barry DuVal. The two-day conference provided an opportunity for public education stakeholders to be seen and heard by their legislators and other government officials. Day one included speakers on a variety of education "hot topics", such as budget, upcoming legislation, and changes in the political climate, followed by a reception with delegates and senators. Day two included personal visits by attendees with their legislators.



Who Are My Legislators ?

VSBA Task Force Day on the Hill

On January 20, members of the VSBA Task Force on Schools in Challenging Environments and the VSBA Task Force on Virtual Learning hosted the "VSBA Task Force Day on the Hill" to provide legislators the opportunity to learn about the important work that has been conducted by these two task forces. A dozen legislators or their staff members met with the task force representatives.



VSBA Legislative Blog
REGULAR UPDATES FROM THE CAPITAL!





COMMUNICATIONS TIP: Think Outside-In, not Inside-Out

When developing your division’s communications program, how often have you considered the perspective by which you are creating the program?

It may be helpful to consider things from the “Outside-In” perspective. Rather than the school division being the “client” for your communications program, what if your community of stakeholders was the client? How would thinking of your stakeholders as your focus and priority, rather than the division, change your approach? This change in perspective can have a significant impact on your communications program.

Interested in communications-related training and board development? Contact Peter J. Sengenberger, assistant executive director, at peter@vsba.org.

2015 VSBA Regional Spring Network Forum Schedule

EASTERN
Monday, March 9

SOUTHSIDE
Tuesday, March 10

TIDEWATER
Wednesday, March 11

VALLEY
Monday, March 30

CENTRAL
Tuesday, April 7

SOUTHERN
Thursday, April 9

SOUTHWEST
Monday, April 13

NORTHEASTERN
Monday, April 20

BLUE RIDGE
Tuesday, May 12



VSBA members meet with Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine



VSBA members meet with Representative Bobby Scott (VA-03) who serves as the Ranking Member on the House Education and Workforce Committee.



Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine show their support for NSBA’s “Stand Up 4 Public Education” campaign.

NSBA Advocacy Institute and Day on the Hill

Washington, D.C.

In early February, twenty-five of your school board colleagues participated in NSBA’s 2015 Advocacy Institute. While at the Advocacy Institute they gained knowledge on how to be an effective advocate from legal, legislative, and public advocacy experts, and received an update on federal legislation moving through Congress. Armed with expert information, your school board colleagues met with members of the Virginia Congressional delegation including Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, and Representatives Bobby Scott, Rob Wittman, Bob Goodlatte, Robert Hurt, and Dave Brat. These successful meetings allowed VSBA to share our thoughts and stories on ESEA reauthorization, IDEA funding, sequestration, and reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act. All of the members of our Congressional delegation were receptive to VSBA’s message of increased local control and flexibility.

Thank you to all of those board members who participated in the 2015 Advocacy Institute and Day on the Hill. VSBA looks forward to continuing to work with all of our board members and members of Congress to ensure a robust public education system for the Commonwealth.



VSBA members meet with Representative Rob Wittman (VA-01).

Student Art Contest

The VSBA student art contest is held in conjunction with the VSBA Regional Spring Network Forums. For detailed information, download the art contest guide here:

ART



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Valley

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Peter J. Sengenberger,
assistant executive director



VSBA

Virginia School Boards Association

MISSION STATEMENT

Virginia School Boards Association, a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of Virginia school boards, promotes excellence in public education through advocacy, training and services.

VISION STATEMENT

VSBA is recognized and respected as an innovative leader in public education.