



VSBA President
Roy K. Boyles
(Warren County School Board)

President's Message

School Board members have one mission and that is to provide the best education possible for all children. We accomplish this goal by making decisions that affect every aspect of K-12 education in our school divisions.

For decades, board members have had to fight negative messages about school boards and public education from certain interest groups. We hear that public education should be restructured and that schools with struggling students should be converted to charters or close, or be given tax-supported vouchers. For a long time, educators have allowed others to set the public agenda for public schools. Many of you feel disheartened by the negative rhetoric being promulgated by various interest groups who advocate alternatives to public school education.

Educators and school officials need to unite around a shared concern about what is in the best interest of children, and in doing so, create a powerful force for change. We need to set the record straight by issuing corrections and clarifications to critics, and we need to post statements of fact online. We need to work with business and community partners, parent organizations, and other groups to help tell each school division's story. That process will provide our own stakeholders with the opportunity to show their support for public education. I encourage school divisions to recognize local businesses for their support and involvement in local schools, and for their community leadership, by submitting their names so that they may be added to the VSBA Business Honor Roll. The deadline

for the receipt of the form is April 1, 2013.

There are several priority issues that I feel must be addressed as we enter the 2013 General Assembly session, including continuing contracts for teachers, the Labor Day law, unfunded and underfunded mandates, vouchers and tuition tax credits, and virtual school funding. The subject of school safety is also being hotly debated because of the unspeakable tragedy that took place in Newton, Connecticut. This dialogue will continue for a long while because there are many opinions as to the best way to protect students. The Governor has established a Taskforce on School and Campus Safety to study and make recommendations regarding their findings. The VSBA stands ready to cooperate with the taskforce and to participate in the dialogue of improving school safety. There is no one way that is 100% guaranteed to keep students safe in our schools, so individual school boards will need to decide how best to protect students in their school divisions.

All of these issues have a direct impact on the future of public education in Virginia. School board members need to become knowledgeable about these topics and become vocal supporters for our schools. We can make a difference in the lives of children in our communities, but we all need to work together to be a force for positive change in our own divisions and to strengthen the image of public schools across this great Commonwealth.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

March 20
Hot Topic Conference,
Wytheville Conference Center

March 22
Board of Directors Meeting,
VSBA Office, Charlottesville

April 29
Hot Topic Conference
Charlottesville Omni

June 6
Board of Directors Meeting,
VSBA Office, Charlottesville



February is School Board Appreciation Month in Virginia



S P E A K O U T

**VIRGINIA SCHOOL BOARDS
ARE THE KEY TO
GOOD SCHOOLS**

VIRGINIA SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION MONTH

Governor McDonnell has proclaimed February 2013 as School Board Appreciation Month to help build awareness of the crucial role school board members plays in our communities and schools ([click here for the Governor's signed proclamation](#)). Board members are extraordinary people who voluntarily tackle the enormous job of governing school divisions. Their actions and decisions affect the present and future lives of our children. Recognizing board members for this commitment and sacrifice takes a combined effort on the part of all they serve: administrators, school staff, students, and the community. Even though showing appreciation should be a year-round process, taking advantage of the designated School Board Appreciation Month in February assures that these important people receive some of the thanks they deserve.

Such recognition can encourage veteran board members to continue to make the commitment board service requires; other citizens might be encouraged to get involved in the schools and make positive change. A full month of activities allows local districts, PTAs, booster clubs, community leaders, and individual campuses to organize activities convenient and appropriate for them. Take this opportunity to help acknowledge thousands of public servants who make the time to share their vision and voice about the future of Virginia children. Our best wishes for a productive month of building awareness and support in your community.

Profile in Leadership...

VSBA Federal Relations Chairman
Juandiego R. Wade
Charlottesville City



What is your hometown?
Richmond, VA

How long have you been a board member?
Seven Years

What books do you have at your bedside?
I don't have much time to read for leisure, but recently read *Blessed Are the Peacemakers* by S. Jonathan Bass.

What/Who inspires you? A member of my church has been ill for a while, but she is still positive and her faith is strong. My visits to her truly inspire me.

What is your motto as a board member?
Be your school systems' biggest cheerleader.

What is your pie-in-the-sky vision for education?
Every child will have everything they need to learn with cost not being an issue.

What is your advice to new board members?
Things will slow down.

What do you consider your greatest accomplishment as a board member?
The hundreds of new friends, students, parents and citizens that I have met along the way.

What is your primary pet peeve as a board member? Easy-long board meetings.

What is the primary reason you like being a VSBA member?
R&R: (Resources and Relationships)

What you like your epitaph to say?
"Juandiego Riccardo Wade- A great husband and father"



VSBA Insurance Services Enhances Program

As the largest insurer of school divisions in Virginia, VSBA Insurance Services continues to look for ways to enhance offerings to fulfill member needs. Two common requests brought up by members included public relations and communications support when dealing with major claims, and more training related to legal liability issues. As a result, VSBA Insurance Services now includes PR support for insurance pool members, and free legal liability training for all VSBA member divisions.

PR Support for Property & Casualty Pool Members

When major claims happen, issues management and crisis communications needs often come to the forefront. Depending on the situation, many divisions find that they require assistance with media relations, staff communications, parent relations, etc. VSBA Insurance Services is pleased to announce a partnership with Title 20 Consulting, LLC to provide VSBA Property and Casualty Pool members with PR and communications support when there is a severe loss. This enhancement to VSBA coverage went into effect January 1 and is included at no additional cost to VSBA Property and Casualty Pool members.

Legal Liability Training Available to VSBA Members

VSBA Insurance Services is enhancing school board legal liability training by offering free regional workshops. A one-day program, the workshop will be split into two parts: *“Legally Effective Communication and Documentation of the Employee Disciplinary Process”* and *“Protecting Students and Staff From Bullying, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Claims”*. Due to the critical nature of these issues, trainings have been opened to all VSBA members, even those that are not currently participating in VSBA Insurance Services. Scheduling of these trainings is flexible, based on member need.

For more information about scheduling legal liability training or if there are questions regarding your school division insurance needs, contact David Smith, director of insurance services, at 434-295-8722.

2013 VSBA Showcases for Success

As a means of encouraging positive press coverage of public schools, VSBA is inviting every school division to recommend a few (no more than *three*) programs or particular schools that would serve as appropriate “Showcases for Success” in public education. The theme of this year’s Showcases for Success is the VSBA’s tagline “Leadership – Advocacy – Support”. This project has served to be an effective tool for disarming the critics of public education and we are compiling a new list for 2013. This year VSBA will not publish a hard copy of the publication but will create a database of the successful programs and showcase them on our website for the entire year.

Provide the following information in **no more than two paragraphs or 150 words**:

- Program/school description
- Choose a category (leadership, advocacy, or support), and explain how the program specifically fits within that category, thus defining the VSBA mission on a local level
- Method used in bringing about demonstrated improvements in learning
- Person for reporters to contact, his/her title, and the telephone number
- Links for additional information

Send your recommendations via email to Gina Patterson at gina@vsba.org. Deadline for submissions is February 22, 2013. Only emailed submissions will be accepted.



VSBA
Executive Director
Barbara J. Coyle

Midway to What?

This article will hit your doorstep (ok, email in-box) the first of February. That means you will receive it with four more days until the General Assembly crossover on February 5th. Crossover is the deadline when each chamber of the Virginia General Assembly must complete work on its own bills and pass them across the hall (figuratively) for the other chamber to consider. The VSBA Legislative Conference will have come and gone. You were prepped with talking points by the VSBA lobbyists and sent out to meet with your legislators. Hopefully, you succeeded in educating them on the pros and cons of selected proposed legislation.

That was just the beginning. Nothing speaks louder to an elected official than a constituent who the legislator will see and hear from when they return to the home office once *sine die* (that means the end of General Assembly) occurs. There will still be 18 days in which you, as school board members, will need to contact your legislators regularly. So, like a serious dieter in January, I'm putting you on lobbying regime. Here it is:

February 7: Know what committees have been assigned key education-related bills. Call your local legislator in Richmond about the significant bills that remain. It is likely that you will speak with an aide, but that's ok. The aide is a gatekeeper to the legislator, and their "eyes and ears", so nurture that relationship as well. We will alert you as to the bill numbers and any updated information on the remaining bills in which we need your active voice.

February 9: The first weekend after crossover legislators usually go home; take advantage of this opportunity! Call the local office and see if you can reach the legislator and/or aide to remind them of your interest in select bills. Engage those in your circle of friends, educators, or other like-minded people to contact their legislators. Don't waste a perfectly good weekend of lobbying time!

February 12: Action is picking up in Richmond. Committees have been meeting and bills are being killed or reported to the House or Senate floor for action. VSBA will alert you as to critical remaining bills so you can take action by writing, calling, or meeting with your legislators, and by encouraging others in your community to get involved. This is especially important if your local legislator will be a key vote on a particular bill.

February 18: This is the deadline when committees must conclude their work in order for bills to be considered by the entire House or Senate, whichever is appropriate. You still have time to be effective because February 16-17 is probably the last weekend legislators can get back home before the end of the session. To be most effective, step up the local contact: visit their office with position papers. Also call, email, and use all the social media avenues available (especially if an aide is 25 or younger). Develop a plan with your fellow board members as to who will contact whom or if everyone needs to reach out. If you find out a legislator has remained in Richmond, contact him or her there!

February 22: It's almost over, but much can happen in the final 24 hours. This is when money issues are decided! Listen to the news. Don't just depend on the [General Assembly](#) website to find out the status of bills, because it might not be updated quickly. Monitor the [VSBA legislative blog](#). Carefully review the VSBA legislative update e-mails. Call those legislators' aides; by now they should know you and will update you on the status of bills. Make that final plea and get friends, relatives, community members, parents, and other constituents to join you in putting on the pressure to do the right thing. Let Virginia's legislators know that they will be held accountable!

February 23: Sine die (the end), hopefully. This is one of those cases when it's not over til the gavel hits the desk, so keep alert! Your voice is our most important tool. If you accept my challenge we will continue to be the most effective educational advocacy group in Richmond and we will be representing those three words that are our tagline: Leadership – Advocacy – Support.

BC



VSBA Members Lobby Washington Lawmakers



VSBA's members of the Federal Relations Committee lobbied in Washington on January 27—29 as part of the 2013 NSBA Federal Relations Network Conference. Committee members attended briefing sessions given by NSBA on major education issues, then meet with Senator Warner, Senator Kaine, and the House of Representatives members from their districts and staff to urge lawmakers to:

- Ensure that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA/ NCLB) is reauthorized during the 113th Congress.
- Protect the federal investment in education as sequestration negotiations continue, especially for federal mandates involving Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Reaffirm the role of local education agencies as the democratic governance body in determining how children in their local communities are educated.



2013 NSBA Convention

We hope that many of you are planning to attend the NSBA Annual Convention on April 13-15, in San Diego. While there is no designated "Virginia" hotel, we will still host the popular "Virginia" breakfast. Often it is the only opportunity for Virginia's attendees to see each other during the national convention.

The breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, April 13, from 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. in the convention headquarters hotel, the Hilton San Diego Bay, 1 Park Blvd, San Diego CA 92101. Our guest speaker will be NSBA President Ed Massey. There is no charge for breakfast. Contact VSBA no later than March 22, 2013 to attend.

Also, I encourage you to stop by the NSBA Delegate Assembly. A special section is available for spectators. VSBA Delegates are: President Roy Boyles (Warren County); Past-President Joan Wodiska (Falls Church City); and Federal Relations Committee Chair Juandiego Wade (Charlottesville City). The NSBA Delegate Assembly will meet at the Hilton San Diego Bay on Friday, April 12, from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



New Master Board Training

The Virginia School Boards Association is offering in-depth training to your school division focused on important issues concerning school board service. The VSBA Master



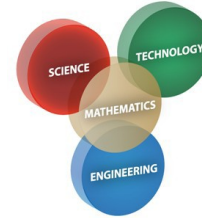
Board Program emphasizes team and trust building, communications, managing change, ethics, and working together as a team to benefit every child in your school division. The training will be held in your local division or a location of your choice. The sessions are four hours in length and will be facilitated by an experienced trainer. The core sessions include; Understanding School Boards in a Democracy, Building Our Team, and Improving Communication. These courses must be taken in order. Once all three courses are completed, the School Board will be designated a “VSBA Master Board” and recognized at the VSBA Annual Convention. Certificates after each completed course will also be provided.

For more information regarding the Master Board Training program, please contact Samantha Staebell, VSBA Coordinator of Board Development, at 800-446-8722 or Samantha@vsba.org.

Coming Soon!

The VSBA is excited to soon offer a new training option with busy schedules. “School Board U” will offer online, study-as-you-go training opportunities for school board members on hot topics and important core competencies of school board service. Be on the lookout for more information regarding “School Board U” as it becomes available.

VSBA Hot Topic Conference



March 20, 2013

Understanding Student Outcomes of Virginia’s College & Career Readiness Initiatives

Topics Include:

- Increasing Access to STEM Courses as a College Readiness Strategy
- College and Career Readiness Discussion Groups
- Understanding Student Outcomes of Virginia’s College and Career Readiness Initiative

[Click here](#) to download the brochure.

Register Online: www.vsba.org

Ask the Legal Experts

Q. Must a school board give individual notice of school board meetings to someone who requests such notice?

A. Yes. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) specifically recognizes that any person may file a written request for direct, individual notification of all school board meetings. Such a request must be renewed annually and should include the requester’s name, address, zip code, daytime phone number, email address (if available) and organization (if any). Va. Code § 2.2-3707.E.

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VSBA

Virginia School Boards Association
Leadership • Advocacy • Support

www.vsba.org | 434-295-8722 | 800-446-8722

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.

VSBA Outstanding Risk Management Award Winners

The following divisions were recognized at the VSBA Insurance Services Awards Banquet for providing exceptional risk management to their employees, students, and communities.

- Buckingham County Public Schools
- Buena Vista City Public Schools
- Cumberland County Public Schools
- Floyd County Public Schools
- Franklin City Public Schools
- Grayson County Public Schools
- Norton City Public Schools
- Washington County Public Schools
- Winchester City Public Schools

QUESTION:

What do these all have in common?

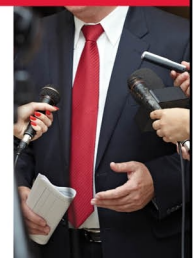
- School bus accident
- Staff member accused of sexual harassment or misconduct
- Catastrophic loss to facilities (fire, windstorm, flood or earthquake)

ANSWER:

Insurance Claim + PR Nightmare

This is why VSBA Insurance Services includes PR counsel with all of our insurance policies, at no additional charge.

VSBA Insurance Services is the premier provider of risk management services for school divisions in Virginia. In fact, we cover more school divisions than anyone else in the Commonwealth. We don't just offer insurance coverage; we provide a comprehensive solution to your risk management needs.



VSBA
Virginia School Boards Association
Insurance Services

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