



**VSBA President
Kerri Wilson
(Harrisonburg City School Board)**

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Advocacy in Action
Page 3

Media Honor Roll
Page 4

Upcoming Events
Page 6

Annual Convention
Page 7-8

DATES TO REMEMBER

OCTOBER 3
Hot Topic Conference

NOVEMBER 18
VSBA/AFSA Education
Foundation Workshop

NOVEMBER 19-21
VSBA Annual Convention

DECEMBER 16-18
Webinar – Budget & Finance

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The 2014-2015 school year is well under way; routines have been established, expectations have been set, learning is happening every day, and progress is already being made. I say that with the utmost confidence because I know we have compassionate, dedicated, and talented educators throughout every nook and cranny of Virginia's public schools who truly believe every child has the capacity to learn, grow, and achieve success. I believe in the power of an education and I believe that every educator has the ability to make a difference in a child's life. Every one of us, every single educator, teacher, assistant, administrator, and school board member, we are who and what we are today, at least in part, because of a positive experience we had with at least one teacher along the way. As individuals, we are the sum total of all our experiences and our educational journey is an integral piece permanently woven into the fabric of our existence.

That being said, it is a crying shame that public education is often under attack—criticized and scrutinized to the Nth degree on a daily basis. While Virginia is by no means perfect, we are striving every single day to do what is best for all children and to ensure that every child has the opportunity to get a quality education. How do we, as educators, combat the attack on public education?

Attempts by legislators to create equality and standards statewide and nationwide have diminished the focus on the individual child and his or her personal educational needs



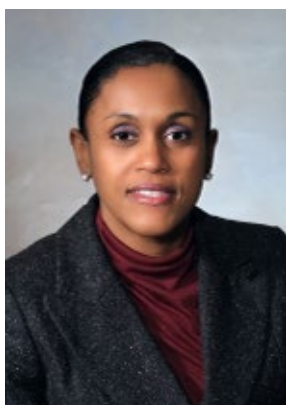
Children's Cabinet and Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success Reception. From left to right: VSBA President Kerri Wilson, Governor Terry McAuliffe, VASS Executive Director Ben Kiser, VSBA Executive Director Gina Patterson

and learning experiences. Every child is now expected to be at the same place at the same time, regardless of age, ability, or personal circumstances. Not every child learns in the same manner or at the same pace, and not every child comes to us with the same set of skills that ensures success in the "cookie cutter" world of education legislation; legislation that has and will continue to dictate our "winner or loser" status as school divisions, schools, educators, communities, and as individuals. I know that there are herculean efforts happening every day all across the commonwealth focusing on individual children, meeting them where they are in order to get them where they need to be. I applaud the efforts of every individual for those efforts.

The query we have, as educators, is how do we advocate on behalf of ALL children without losing the focus on the importance of the individual child? Each child's journey is their very own, as was yours. Personal stories are powerful and they need to be told to remind all those that make the "big picture" decisions that, although we are all part of the big picture, we are also individuals. Will drawing down the conversation to a more personal level expose the needs of the individual people we advocate for?

November is "VSBA Take Your Legislator to School Month"; be sure to promote your division successes and clarify your challenges with your legislators. Show them how existing and future legislation has the potential to impact both the successes and challenges of individual children. Make it personal. Personal stories are real, impactful, and they humanize what has become a generic conversation. There are hundreds of thousands of individual educational success stories that occur in our classrooms with our children every single day and those stories deserve to be told.

In August, I was invited to speak to teachers at several school divisions as a part of their opening day/back to school convocation ceremonies. I chose to tell my story about my educational experience and the teachers that made a profound difference in my life. What's your story?



Gina G. Patterson
VSBA Executive Director

VSBA Executive Director Gina Patterson was recently selected as a member of the Governing Board of REL Appalachia. The Governing Board includes education leaders from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Members meet to discuss the ways in which REL Appalachia can serve educators in the region. For more information, visit relappalachia.org.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Why perform a yearly board self-evaluation?

Successful boards are the result of effective leadership and governance. Effective governing boards are committed to assessing how well they perform their governance responsibilities and to using the results of a board self-assessment to enhance board effectiveness.

Local school boards are under more scrutiny than ever before by the public, media, and their local governing body. These entities expect and deserve a high degree of professionalism and performance from their local boards, and an effective board self-evaluation process responds to these expectations.

Assessing board performance involves looking at the board as a unit. While individual board behavior contributes to effective board governance, the focus of a board self-evaluation is not on individuals but on how they work together to govern the division. Additionally, the board and superintendent evaluations are intertwined. When the board evaluates itself, it is evaluating in part how well the superintendent supports the board. The superintendent contributes to the board self-evaluation and evaluates his or her support and leadership to the board. When the board evaluates the superintendent, it is evaluating the direction and support the board provides that position. The board must look at its own behavior in fostering the superintendent's effectiveness.

The purpose of the board self-evaluation is to identify areas of board functioning that are working well and those that may need improvement. It is an opportunity for an open and candid discussion about board and superintendent responsibilities, and the board's interests and desires for the division. Exploring these areas fosters communication among the members and leads to more cohesive board governance teams.

Board self-evaluations are a governance tool, and the ultimate goal is continuous improvement. To achieve it, board self-evaluation should be an ongoing, systematic process with the ultimate beneficiary being the organization as a whole.

As the result of numerous inquiries asking for guidance and direction on implementing a board self-evaluation, the VSBA has responded to your needs and is in the process of developing a standardized evaluation process and board self-evaluation session. Information will be distributed soon, but if you would like to be notified as soon as the VSBA self-evaluation training session is available, please e-mail Bridget Merker, coordinator of board development, at bridget@vsba.org.



Members of the VSBA Legislative Positions Committee review proposals submitted by local school divisions, which were then recommended to the VSBA Board of Directors. These recommendations will be voted on by the Delegate Assembly at the Annual Convention and, if approved, become part of the VSBA Legislative Positions Handbook.



Connect With VSBA

E-mail khodges@vsba.org to receive the Virginia Daily Education News, a daily update (Monday through Friday) of education news throughout Virginia.



Advocacy “In Action”

BY: JOHN D. WRIGHT, GOOCHLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

We’ve all received (and hopefully acted upon) emails from the VSBA urging us to contact our federal or state legislators about an emerging issue. When we think of advocacy, it is this type of action that first pops into our heads. Perhaps just as important to us as school board members is establishing and maintaining an open line of communication with our local community stakeholders.

In Goochland County, the board of supervisors and school board members hold town hall meetings each spring and fall in order to communicate directly with the citizens who put us into office about the issues that affect everyone in the county. For an hour and a half, twice a year, citizens are invited to meet their elected officials, the county administrator, school superintendent and various department heads to review what has happened in the last six months and to discuss what the next six months will likely bring to the community. Separate meetings are held for each voting district in order to bring the discussion to the citizens in a less formal setting than the boardrooms we frequent while making decisions. The point of the exercise is to be accessible, informative and to give full attention to our constituents’ thoughts on the issues affecting us. Most importantly, we take notes to guide our actions and allow us to follow up on important matters at the next town hall meeting.

Each of the two sets of meetings has a distinct tone. The fall meeting gives us an opportunity to review the fiscal year that just ended as well as set our sights on the General Assembly’s upcoming session. We provide information on

how the division’s budget and actual results compare, we review the division’s state report card, talk about changes for the new school year, and bring up specific legislative topics that we see as important components of the upcoming General Assembly session. This set of meetings is all review and planning.

The spring set of meetings is scheduled just prior to our board of supervisor’s vote to approve our local budgets. We discuss how the federal and state budgets effect what we can provide, review local revenues, and explain the thought processes behind the decisions we’ve made within the budget. The General Assembly is either winding down or has just ended their session, providing an opportunity to review how decisions made at the state level will shape our actions going forward. The county uses notes from this set of sessions to make final decisions on the budget for the upcoming year and to guide last minute lobbying efforts. These spring sessions have proven effective at reducing the public outcries that so frequently accompany the official public hearing on the county budget.

Town hall meetings provide a means of accountability and increased transparency in what we do as school board members. Most citizens don’t understand the inner workings of public education. By spending time with our constituents educating them about the factors involved in our decision-making, we create positive word of mouth within the community and an environment of collaboration with our counterparts on the board of supervisors. Advocacy is all about education, after all.

November is “VSBA Take Your Legislator to School” Month

In an effort to promote a closer relationship between public education and the Virginia State Legislature, the Virginia School Boards Association urges each school division in the state to invite at least one of their state legislators to visit their schools during the month of November. There are many benefits from participating in VSBA Take Your Legislator to School Month, including developing closer relationships between school divisions, local communities and our elected officials, and creating opportunities for productive dialogue so that educational and political leaders can work together to ensure that we provide the best possible education for our students. In addition, when legislators visit your schools as part of VSBA Take Your Legislator to School Month, local students will have the opportunity to interact with elected officials and learn about the important roles and responsibilities of Virginia General Assembly members. Almost like a field trip that is coming to your school, a visit by your local legislator creates many different “teachable moments.”

This year, the VSBA encourages school divisions to choose an area of focus for your legislative visits. For example, you may decide to have “VSBA Take Your Legislator to CTE School Month” or “VSBA Take Your Legislator to STEM School Month”. This will allow you to emphasize particular aspects of the division that you are most proud of or wish to highlight.



DOWNLOAD TODAY!





2014 Media Honor Roll

Reporters and local media outlets play an important role in public education. School division leaders rely on responsible reporting by local media representatives so that our community members receive timely information about division initiatives and programs. Considering the impact that media coverage can have on community attitudes and beliefs, the *Media Honor Roll* was created to recognize fair and balanced reporting about our schools and Virginia's public education system.

This year, the following school divisions nominated media outlets in their community in recognition of: (1) Making the effort to get to know the superintendent and board chairman; (2) Understanding the division's mission and goals; (3) Reporting school news in a manner that is fair, accurate, and balanced; (4) Giving a high-profile position to good news about schools; (5) Regularly visiting the schools, attending board meetings, etc.; (6) Maintaining a policy of "no surprises" by sharing information with school representatives.

VSBA Task Forces Continue

At the August 20, 2014 meeting of the VSBA Board of Directors, the board approved the continuation of the VSBA Task Force on Schools in Challenging Environments and the VSBA Task Force on Virtual Learning. Board members expressed their satisfaction with the progress of both task forces, which have garnered recognition by education leaders at all levels of government. Reports from the task forces are due to the board in March and August 2015.



VSBA Welcomes (Back) Staff Attorney Kate Kaminski

Kaminski, who formerly worked for the VSBA as a staff attorney, special counsel, and director of legal and policy services, has rejoined the association as a part-time staff attorney. Kaminski is an adjunct professor and subject matter expert at the University of Virginia, was the assistant executive director of the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute, and served as a consultant with the Virginia Center for School Safety.

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Alleghany County

Darrell Gleason, The Virginian Review

Bath County

Larry O'Rourke, The Virginian Review

Mike Bollinger, The Recorder
Bonnie Ralston, Alleghany Mountain Radio

Buckingham County

Jordan Miles, The Farmville Herald

Charlottesville City

Tim Shea, Charlottesville Tomorrow

Covington County

Josh Hagy, Virginian Review

Cumberland County

Ilsa Loeser, The Farmville Herald
James Kendrick Woodley, III, The Farmville Herald

Gloucester County

Kim Robins, Gazette Journal
WXGM Radio

Goochland County

John Ogle, WCVE c/o The Community Idea Stations

Greene County

Pat Fitzgerald, Greene County Record

Essex County

WRAR Radio Station
Rappahannock Times Newspaper

Falls Church City

Nicholas Benton, Falls Church News Press
Stephen Siegel, Falls Church Times

Fairfax City

Bonnie Hobbs, Fairfax Connection

Floyd County

Wanda Combs, Floyd Press

Fluvanna County

Molly Balkenbush, NBC 29
Chris Stover, NBC 29
Trish Johnson, Fluvanna Review

Franklin County

Katie Love, WSLs Television
Stacey Hairston, The Franklin News Post
Zach Critzer, Roanoke Times

Hanover County

James Ridolphi, The Mechanicsville Local

Isle of Wight County

Stephen Cowles, The Tidewater News
Abby Proch, The Smithfield Times
Ryan Murphy, The Daily Press

Lexington City

Jim Bresnahan, WREL Radio
Kit Huffman, News-Gazette

Manassas City

Randi Reid, Manassas Observer

Martinsville City

Paul Collins, Martinsville Bulletin

Middlesex County

Larry Chowning, Southside Sentinel
Tom Chillemi, Southside Sentinel
John Thomas Hardin, Southside Sentinel

New Kent County

Alan Chamberlin, New Kent/Charles City Chronicle
Andre Jones, New Kent/Charles City Chronicle
Amy Jo Martin, Tidewater Review

Orange County

Gracie Hart Brooks, Orange County Review
Dan McFarland, The Free Lance-Star

Pittsylvania County

Susan Worley, Star-Tribune

Prince William County

Bonny Fahy, Old Bridge Observer

Radford City

Radford News Journal

Rockbridge County

Jim Bresnahan, Classic 96.7
3WZ / 1450 WREL

Spotsylvania County

Lindley Estes, The Free Lance-Star
Ted Schubel, Town Talk Radio/WFVA/WBQB



Legal

Ask the Expert

Q. How does an elected school board fill a vacancy on the board?

A. The procedure for filling vacancies on an elected school board is specified in the Code of Virginia. Filling a vacancy is a two-step process. The first step is to fill the vacancy on an interim basis. The second step is for the vacancy to be filled for the remainder of the term by a special election. The procedure for filling the vacancy on an interim basis is stated in Va. Code § 24.2-228. The remaining members of the board are permitted (but not required) to appoint someone to fill the vacancy. The person they appoint must be a qualified voter of the election district (if any) in which the vacancy exists. The person so appointed will serve until the seat is filled by a special election. If the school board is going to make an interim appointment, it must do so within 45 days of the vacancy. The special election is ordered by the local circuit court pursuant to Va. Code § 24.2-226. The school board's only responsibility with regard to the special election is to give the court notice of the vacancy. The school board must give notice of the vacancy to the circuit court within 15 days of the vacancy.

BCHW 5K Training Tips

In preparation for the 11th annual VSBA 5k walk/run in November, we thought we'd share 5 training tips from interior designer and our resident runner, Liz Reineberg, who is currently training for the Philadelphia Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon and the Anthem Richmond Marathon. Liz is an avid runner and has raced in numerous 5k, 10k, half marathons and even a triathlon in the last 8 years.

- 1.** Proper shoes are essential. Go to your local running specialty store for a gait analysis and recommendations for the right shoe for you.
- 2.** Say no to cotton! While cotton apparel and socks may feel comfortable when dry, cotton holds moisture, aka sweat, and chafing can result from the friction combining with the wet material.
- 3.** Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate! Make sure you are drinking plenty of water throughout the day during your training and not just before or after you run.
- 4.** Check yourself before you wreck yourself! Visibility is important to your safety, so if you're training outside and it is getting dark, be sure you are visible to traffic by wearing light and bright colors that are reflective.
- 5.** Find a training buddy. Running with a friend will push you further and can help each other stay motivated and accountable.

For more information on the race, visit our website <http://bcwh.com/event/vsba-5k-2014/> and be sure to stop by our table at the upcoming VSBA Hot Topic Conference and sign up for the 5k!



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promoting physical activity in schools

virginia school boards association
annual convention,
Williamsburg, VA

November 20, 2014
7:00am

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UPCOMING **VSBA** EVENTS, WORKSHOPS & TRAINING

October 3, 2014

Hot Topic Conference — 2 HOT TOPICS!

LOCATION: *Charlottesville Doubletree*

DETAIL: “The Data Made Me Do It! Using Data for Continuous School Improvement.” Data is fundamental to effective school board governance. Yet many school board members aren’t experts in education data. Explore how school boards can use data to set goals, align resources, and monitor actions to improve outcomes for their students. Learn how boards are increasingly using data to inform their decisions about student achievement. This workshop was developed by NSBA’s Center for Public Education in partnership with state school boards associations in California, Illinois and Michigan.

“Does School Board Leadership Matter?” What role do school boards play in student achievement? Does it matter when and how board elections are held? Is a board member’s political ideology and background linked to his or her knowledge of the district? Join Amber Northern, vice president for research at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, as she discusses the findings in a study on the capacity of local school board members to lead their districts effectively. Culling results from a national survey data of school board members, Northern concludes that school board members and their attitudes do matter—and therefore it’s important to take seriously who gets elected and how that is done.

November 18, 2014

VSBA/ASFA Education Foundation Workshop

LOCATION: *Doubletree by Hilton Williamsburg*

DETAIL: The VSBA and the American Schools Foundation Alliance (ASFA) would like to invite you to a workshop for education foundation professionals, volunteers and those interested in starting an education foundation in your school division. The workshop, held in conjunction with the VSBA Annual Convention, will feature education foundation representatives from The Virginia Society of CPAs discussing tax, auditing and budgeting; a branding and marketing presentation; and fundraising ideas from foundations throughout the U.S. There will also be a chance to share best practices and pick up some great tools that you can use as soon as you return to your foundation.

November 19 – 21, 2014

2014 VSBA Workshop for School Board Clerks

LOCATION: *Kingsmill Resort, Williamsburg*

The School Board Clerks Planning Committee has been working hard to develop an interesting and exciting workshop! This year, clerks will have the opportunity to attend the VSBA Annual Convention general sessions; participate in roundtable discussions to develop the clerks code of conduct; hear a presentation on working with new board members and superintendents; learn about legal hot topics from VSBA Director of Legal and Policy Services Elizabeth Ewing; review important information on records retention; and more!

For information on any of these opportunities, visit the **“Meetings & Conferences”** tab on the VSBA web site: www.vsba.org



The 2014 VSBA Green Schools Challenge is now available. Please complete the challenge by September 30, 2014. For more information, please

CLICK HERE

<http://gogreenva.org/?/challenge/participate/id/2>



IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

VSBA ANNUAL CONVENTION 2014

General Session Speakers:



Coach Bill Curry
**Coach, Communicator,
Educator, Motivator, Author**

Bill Curry has had a very distinguished career having played pro football and then serving as a college coach. He will share stories of teamwork and diversity that will motivate you to begin looking at situations in your own schools very differently. For more information about Coach Curry, [click here](#).



Melissa A. Porfirio, M.Ed.
Virginia Teacher of the Year

Melissa A. Porfirio, a first grade teacher at Crestwood Elementary School in Fairfax County, is the 2014 Virginia Teacher of the Year and Region 4 Teacher of the Year. A teacher for eight years, Porfirio earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Catholic University and a master's degree in education, curriculum and instruction from George Mason University.



Dianne Durkin
**President and Founder
of Loyalty Factor**

The topic of this session will be The Power of Magnetic Leadership. If you have weak or non-existent leadership in your organization, it is like spraying a big can of people repellent into the air that your employees breathe. You kill creativity, productivity, and the spark that motivates your team. The good news is you can become a magnetic leader—that force that attracts others.



ANNUAL
CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 19-21, 2014
WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

VSBA ANNUAL CONVENTION 2014

VSBA Early Bird Sessions

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

9:30 a.m.—Noon

Anatomy of a School Board Disciplinary Hearing

Members of the VSBA Council of School Attorneys will present a comprehensive training designed to help school board members understand the substantive and procedural law governing student disciplinary hearings, implement appropriate procedural guidelines, document board action for potential legal challenges, and develop strategies to conduct fair hearings within practical limitations. Attendees will be entertained with a “live disciplinary hearing”, during which the participants will confront many of the challenges which arise in such hearings. This training will also provide many practical tips and “no-no’s” gleaned from the collective experience of the panel members. Moderated by Mary McGowan, a partner with the law firm of Blankingship and Keith.

Parliamentary Procedures

Can one ever have too much training on parliamentary procedure? Never, you say? Here is a three-hour hands-on session that will help you become more efficient and your board more efficient. Presented by Carlos Clanton, executive director for the Office of Community Engagement & Strategic Partnerships for Norfolk Public Schools and the Norfolk Education Foundation, and policies & procedures chair for the National Urban League Young Professionals.

Don't Miss Out!

- Student Achievement Fair
- Exhibitors Scholarship
- Daily General Sessions
- High School Video Contest
- Exhibition of School Architecture
- Breakout Session Tracks
- Daily Door Prizes
- Regional Meetings
- Networking Stations

Signs of Success Poster Contest

Create and submit a poster illustrating your division's favorite success story! The success can be large or small—no achievement is insignificant—as long as your division wants to share it and celebrate it with others. The posters will be displayed in a designated “Signs of Success” location, showcasing the outstanding ideas, achievements and programs taking place in our public schools. The poster session will last the duration of the Annual Convention. For more information, visit the **Annual Convention page** of the VSBA web site.

Check us out on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cl4WgKObuo





2014 VSBA Legislative Advocacy Conference

Nearly 200 Virginia school board members, educators, and legislators attended the VSBA Legislative Advocacy Conference, which offered participants the opportunity to learn about upcoming issues for the 2015 legislative session, best practices in state-level advocacy, and hot topics in education policy.



“Conversations with the Virginia Board of Education: Guidelines for Local Alternative Assessments for 2014-2015” with Virginia Board of Education members Dr. Billy Cannaday, Jim Dillard, Diane Atkinson, and Chris Braunlich (president).



“Successes in Grassroots Advocacy” Panel Discussion with Dan Edwards, school board member, Virginia Beach City Schools; Jannan Holmes, school board member, Fredericksburg City Schools; and Dr. Jim Meyer, school board member, Spotsylvania County Schools.



“State Education Issues: Legislators’ View” Panel Discussion with Delegate Steve Landes, Senator Kenny Alexander, Senator Barbara Favola, and Delegate Tag Greason.

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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.