



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

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DATES TO REMEMBER

APRIL 15
School Construction
Hot Topic Conference

May 6
Social Media Webinar

JUNE 5
School Law Conference

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring has arrived—at last!! It has been a long and cold winter. Many school divisions experienced missed or delayed school days and had to develop various plans to make them up. Spring is the time of year we think of growing and renewing. Spring is also the time of year to renew friendships and make new friends at your Regional Network Forums held around the Commonwealth.

The Regional Spring Network Forums are an excellent opportunity to meet and break bread together with school board members in your region and hear information on relevant topics. A partial list of topics this year includes Career and Technical Education, state education policies, laws that impact education, and various partnerships and collaborations. The regional forums are also an opportunity to see beautiful artwork from students in your region. I am looking forward to visiting as many forums as possible and meeting you, my fellow school board members. These meetings are vital to developing mentorships for new school board members and finding a receptive ear on challenges in K-12 education.

I recall the first Regional Spring Network Forum that I attended was in Louisa County at Moss-

Nuckols Elementary School, which was new at the time. I did not know what to expect, but I was able to talk with principals, students and seasoned school board members. The speaker that night was doing cutting-edge research on high school sports and concussions, and the Charlottesville City School Board was able to incorporate some of the information into our policies.

As I write this article, I have already attended the Eastern, Southside, and Valley Regional Network Forums. The dedication and commitment of the individuals attending those forums was inspiring, and I would like to thank those school divisions that hosted these events.

The forums are yours. You plan the speakers, the location and the entertainment, so plan on attending your regional forum.

On a personal note, I would like to thank each and every one of you for the energy and talents you bring to the table as a school board member. You are delivering an invaluable service that often goes unrecognized.

Thank you all for making a difference! Happy SPRING!



NSBA Annual Conference Delegate Assembly - Seated: President-Elect Bill Kidd (Wythe County) and Past President Kerri Wilson (Harrisonburg City); Standing: President Juandiego Wade (Charlottesville City), NSBA President John Tuttle (Oklahoma), and VSBA Executive Director Gina Patterson.



VSBA President Juandiego Wade recognized at NSBA Annual Conference general session.



Gina G. Patterson
VSBA Executive Director

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NSBA Annual Conference

I hope everyone who attended the NSBA Annual Conference & Exposition in Nashville came away with new ideas to take back to your local divisions. It was great to see so many of you in attendance at the annual VSBA Virginia Breakfast bright and early on Saturday morning. A special thanks goes to VMDO Architects for sponsoring this annual event.

Congratulations to the three Virginia school divisions recognized by the American School Board Journal's 2015 Magna Awards program. Albemarle County Public Schools, Roanoke County Public Schools and Arlington County Public Schools were among the national winners selected in the annual program, sponsored by the magazine and Sodexo. The Magna Awards were initiated to recognize local school boards for taking bold and innovative steps to improve their educational programs.

- Albemarle County was the Grand Prize winner in the 5,000 to 20,000 category for "Monticello Learning Commons." Albemarle County was also the grand prize winner in 2013. This is the first time in the Magna Awards history that a division has won the grand prize twice.
- Arlington County was the first place winner in the over 20,000 enrollment category for "Traveling Trolley."
- The honorable mention award in the 5,000 to 20,000 category was given to Roanoke County for its "Special Education Makerspaces."

See page 6 for a description of each program.

All three winners were formally recognized March 20 at a School Leader Luncheon in Nashville, TN at the NSBA Annual Conference. The winners will be highlighted in a special supplement to the April issue of the American School Board Journal and will also be invited to present at the 2015 VSBA Annual Convention in Williamsburg.

Spring Network Forums

Now that spring has arrived, our annual spring networking forums are in full swing. The VSBA Regional Spring Network Forums feature dinner, student entertainment, awards and updates on key education issues and association events. These events are designed to gather board members to discuss issues facing your region, share ideas, and provide you an opportunity to feel supported. Your regional chairman is your representative on the VSBA Board of Directors and is your direct link to the activities on the board; your input is invaluable to them.

2015 VSBA Regional Spring Network Forum Schedule

- EASTERN** Monday, March 9
- SOUTHSIDE** Tuesday, March 10
- TIDEWATER** Wed., March 11
- VALLEY** Monday, March 30
- CENTRAL** Tuesday, April 7
- SOUTHERN** Thursday, April 9
- SOUTHWEST** Monday, April 13
- NORTHEASTERN** Mon., April 20
- BLUE RIDGE** Tuesday, May 12



At the Valley Region Spring Network Forum, VSBA President Juandiego Wade presented VSBA Past President Roy Boyles with a VSBA resolution recognizing his dedicated service to K-12 education."



UPCOMING EVENTS, WORKSHOPS & TRAINING

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*

DERK JEFFREY, *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.*

June 5, 2015

School Law Conference

LOCATION: Richmond, VA

DETAIL:

Your school division needs you, your superintendent, and your attorney to be at the 2015 VSBA School Law Conference. Why? Because many of the decisions you make have legal implications that will impact your school division for years to come. Be informed and be prepared!

- Learn why the Federal Office of Civil Rights investigates public school divisions, how to prepare for these visits, and the latest trends in OCR compliance reviews.
- School board members are required by law to “ready and familiarize” themselves with the Freedom of Information Act. Hear the VSBA staff attorneys review portions of the Act that board members encounter most frequently.
- Hear an update on General Assembly bills and how they impact your local division.

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



Jennifer Bond
Director of Business
Development
Milestone Communications

Wireless Tower at Lynchburg Elementary School Provides Benefits to the City

Demand for wireless coverage continues to grow, as cell phones and other wireless devices become a part of everyday life, not only as our own personal communications and entertainment hubs, but as critical access points with regard to education, healthcare and commerce. To meet local consumer demand for greater access to wireless and cellular broadband networks, wireless providers increasingly look for non-intrusive ways to extend greater network access to residential areas.

AT&T identified a gap in wireless coverage in Lynchburg, VA, and sought out the assistance of Milestone Communications, a Reston, VA-based wireless tower developer who has an agreement with Lynchburg City to market school property for wireless infrastructure improvements. Milestone has many such master lease agreements with school and government sites in the Mid-Atlantic region, with more than 1,800 properties under management. These sites are often preferred because they are centrally located and have the potential to reduce the visual impact of the towers on surrounding neighborhoods.

In Lynchburg, AT&T selected a location at Perrymont Elementary School. The site was selected for its large property size, distance from neighborhood homes and an installment location that would not interfere with the school's use of the land. It also provided a perfect spot for its tree pole concealment to blend in with existing tree cover.

As with every wireless tower it constructs, Milestone then initiated its extensive community outreach program, to include a dedicated website, close work with community leaders and residents, and an array of communication efforts designed to ensure neighbors stayed informed. At Perrymont, Milestone made sure the community was updated on all aspects of the tower project, including information on wireless safety and RF Energy. Milestone also maintains a Public Safety Portal on its website.

"Milestone did a great job of introducing these types of tower installments to communities around Perrymont Elementary," said Ben Copeland, Assistant Superintendent of Operations & Administration for Lynchburg City Schools. "They were forthcoming with everything from scientific information related to public safety to providing photo simulations that helped residents visualize the final project before it had even begun."

The 135' tree pole was successfully installed after a smooth construction process. "The tower couldn't be in a better spot," added Mr. Copeland. "Access roads ensured minimal disruption during construction, and the result is great. The community is very happy with the tree pole concealment and how it fits into the wooded surroundings."

Communities and school districts benefit by sharing in the revenues generated by such tower installments. This can be a substantial revenue source outside the local tax base. With the Perrymont pole, AT&T is the lead carrier, with Verizon scheduled to install in the 2nd quarter of 2015. Lynchburg City will receive annual recurring revenue from the AT&T and Verizon leases for 30 or more years.

Milestone also has marketing agreements in place with ten other school districts in the Commonwealth. One of its longest standing partnerships is with Fairfax County Public Schools, where it has built 30 towers and generates over \$1.5 million for the school system annually. Amherst County Schools is in the process of having its first tower zoned and approved at Elon Elementary School, with a summer construction planned.

"These projects are a win-win," said Milestone CEO Len Forkas. "Wireless providers provide better coverage, the community gains improved access, and school systems receive much-needed revenue. It's a public/private partnership that brings benefits to all parties."

Lynchburg is located approximately 180 miles southwest of Washington, DC and has a population of almost 80,000 people. Lynchburg City Schools offer educational services to more than 8,000 students enrolled in preschool through adult classes in two high schools, three middle schools, and eleven elementary schools.

To learn more about how your school district can benefit from a similar revenue generating partnership, contact the author, Jennifer Bond, Director of Business Development at Milestone, at 703-364-5603 or via email at jen@milestonecorp.com.



Two Virginia School Divisions Honored for Using Cutting-Edge Technology

School divisions' use of innovative technologies such as 1:1 laptop initiatives, STEM curriculum and flipped classroom instruction earned top spots in the Center for Digital Education's and National School Boards Association's 10th anniversary Digital School Districts Survey. The survey recognizes exemplary school boards' and districts' use of technology to govern their district, communicate with students, parents and community and improve the learning environment and operations.



Roanoke County Public Schools recognized as the 1st place award winner in the 12,000+ student category.



Hampton City Public Schools recognized as the 2nd place award winner in the 12,000+ student category.

TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES

Apple Inc. Site Visit - Free Tour (Henry County)

May 12, 2015

Want to see effective classroom technology use in action? Henry County Public Schools is proud to be a nationally recognized Apple Distinguished Program, regularly hosting visitors from around the country and advising districts on implementing technology in the classroom. Prior to the Blue Ridge Region Spring Networking Forum, visit Rich Acres Elementary to observe and talk with student and teachers who have seamlessly integrated technology into the daily operation of the classroom. Learn more about how these powerful tools are assimilated into the curriculum and effectively engage learners. This tour will take place on the same day as the Blue Ridge regional spring network forum, but is open to all who wish to attend and is free of charge. **CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO**

NSBA Education Technology Site Visit (Prince William County)

April 22-24, 2015

Join NSBA to see innovative strategies in action, as school divisions highlight effective technology solutions. You'll have a chance to tour schools, ask questions, and see first-hand the energy and enthusiasm these new practices bring to the classroom. Return with new ideas and fresh perspectives on how technology can help transform your division Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) is the second largest school division in the state of Virginia with 86,000 students and 94 schools. PWCS' goal is to integrate technology into all curricular areas, including art, music, business, health, physical education, special education, family and consumer science, media, as well as all the core areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO



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Ask the Legal Expert

Q. How does a school board get a tie breaker?

A. The 2014 General Assembly amended the law with regard to tie breakers. Any elected school board may have a tie breaker. The position of tie breaker may be held by a qualified voter who is a resident of the county, city or town served by the school board. The tie breaker is elected in the same manner and for the same term as members of the school board. A vacancy in the position of tie breaker is filled in the same way that vacancies on the school board are filled. The 2014 statutory amendments specify that the terms of tie breakers who took office prior to July 1, 2014 continue until they are completed.

Albemarle County, Roanoke County, and Arlington Public Schools Earn National Recognition

The Magna Awards recognize school divisions and their leaders for taking bold and innovative steps to improve the lives of their students and their communities. An independent panel of school board members, administrators, and other educators selected the winners from nearly 250 submissions.

Albemarle County Public Schools is being honored as the grand prize winner in the 5,000 to 20,000 student enrollment category for *Monticello High School Learning Commons*, an underused traditional library now transformed into a vibrant makerspace, with a soundproof digital recording studio, a writer’s café and poetry corner, and a hacker space where students incorporate Minecraft and other computer games into their projects.

Arlington Public Schools is the first place winner in the over 20,000 enrollment category for their *Traveling Trolleys* initiative. Summer vacation increases the achievement gap in reading between low-income children and their middle-class peers. This “summer slide”

has been explained, to a large extent, by the discrepancy in access to printed materials during the summer months. Division staff created the Traveling Trolley, which brings parents and students from their local school bus stops to the nearest public library.

Roanoke County Public Schools earned an honorable mention in the 5,000 to 20,000 enrollment category for its *Special Education Makerspaces*. Makerspaces are lab-like areas where students are given a set of materials and a challenge to solve. The approach is designed to encourage students to solve problems by creating, and helps to develop problem-solving and multitasking skills.

“The Magna Awards showcase great programs that are taking place throughout the country under the strong leadership of school board members,” said Gina G. Patterson, executive director of the Virginia School Boards Association, “These programs are great examples of the types of innovative initiatives taking place in Virginia schools.”

CLICK HERE for the National School Boards Association Press Release



Albemarle County Public Schools being recognized as a Magna Award grand prize winner at the NSBA Annual Conference.



Arlington Public Schools being recognized as a Magna Award first place winner at the NSBA Annual Conference.

114 Education Programs From Across Virginia Featured in the 19th Annual VSBA “Showcases for Success” Directory

The VSBA’s 19th annual **VSBA Showcases for Success** directory, highlighting successful K-12 programs in Virginia’s public schools, is now available at www.vsba.org/showcases. Be sure to take a look at these terrific programs, which fit within one of two “hot topic” categories – *Virtual/Blended Learning* and *Career & Technical Education*.



School Board Members and Social Media

By Gina G. Patterson, executive director

The use of social media can be a great tool for board members, giving them an unfiltered stage to communicate directly with their citizens. Social media can serve the board's mission for outreach and public affairs, it allows the public to participate in a conversation about relevant issues, it is a cost effective way to communicate, and is a great way for the board to be collaborative, transparent and participatory. But before using social media as a way of communicating, board members should first seek training on their responsibility in using social media properly, along with the legal and ethical considerations to avoid pitfalls. Training can range from a board member getting tips from your communications staff to attending a class or webinar.

Some quick tips on social media usage:

- Treat each post and account: blog, Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook, email, etc. just like a real world letter or photograph (would you send THAT out on your stationery?)
- Review your school division's social media policies.
- Board ethics and conflict of interest policies apply to social media outlets.
- Keep the tone conversational and informal, but use proper grammar and show the same sensitivity regarding word choice you would in other venues.
- Keep your communication professional, albeit more informal in tone and manner.
- Be transparent – let people know who you are and what you stand for.
- Take the high road. You'll take some unfair hits – that comes with the territory.



Using Social Media to Develop your Board's Brand

Wednesday, May 6, 2015

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

This webinar will cover the benefits of using social media to connect with your community, the top social media platforms available to school boards, strategies for effectively crafting messages for your audiences based on the social media platform you are using, and more.



Presenters: Dr. James Lane, superintendent, Goochland County Public Schools; Dr. Mark Lineburg, superintendent, Winchester City Public Schools; Dr. Katrise Perera, superintendent, Isle of Wight County Public Schools

Cost: \$135 per connection

For more info: Brianna Stout, coordinator of board development, at brianna@vsba.org.

COMMUNICATIONS TIP: Tabletop Crisis Management

All school divisions in Virginia have a crisis management plan, and the hope is that it will never have to be used in an official capacity. However, the first time we use the plan shouldn't be when a crisis is underway. Training and practice is important, because in times of crisis/stress we will instinctively revert to our training...whether it was good, bad, or nonexistent.

The best place to practice crisis management is at the safety of a table. Involve the key players, not only your school board members and administrators, but external groups such as police and fire departments, as well. Choose a crisis, whether it be a natural disaster or man-made disaster, and take the team through the crisis, step-by-step. Evaluate your plan along the way and make updates and revisions as needed.

Remember...crisis management plans don't manage crisis situations... people do, and in order to do that well, people need practice.

Final Tip: Where is your crisis management plan? Where are your emergency contacts listed? Keep that information in multiple locations, because when a crisis does happen you never know where you could be.

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

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Highlights of the March VSBA/WVSBA Hot Topic Conference in Wytheville

Call for Presenters!

Do you or division staff have a powerful "best practice" that can be shared in 30 minutes? If so, the VSBA is looking for presenters for the 2015 VSBA Conference on Education, which is being held on July 21, 2015 in Richmond, VA.

CLICK HERE for more information



There was a lot of presidential experience at the Wytheville Hot Topic Conference! From l to r: VSBA President Juandiego Wade (Charlottesville City), VSBA Past President and NSBA Past President Jim Ruhland (Botetourt County); VSBA Past President Earl Hunter (Hanover County); NSBA Past President Ed Massey (Boone County, KY); VSBA Past President and former NSBA Board of Directors Member Barbara Haywood (York County); VSBA Past President Eddie Ryder (Bath County); and VSBA Past President Jeff Bain (Pulaski County).

Governor McAuliffe Announces New Board of Education Member

Please welcome Elizabeth Vickrey Lodal of McLean, former principal of the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, as the newest member of the Virginia Board of Education.



The first joint Hot Topic conference with the VSBA and West Virginia School Boards Association (WVSBA) was a great success.



Discussion: Describe the learning environment in your schools today.



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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.