



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

President's Message

School board members, along with their superintendents, are now deeply involved in shaping their school division budgets for the 2013-14 year. Public education is facing the strong possibility of cuts from Federal, State, and Local Governments. The tough decisions of program offerings, class size, and compensation of employees once again have to be taken into consideration while we try to ensure that all students are achieving success at their highest potential.

These events provide an opportunity for the regional officers to plan a special, relevant program of interest. The forums showcase a school and school division within the region and allow school board members, superintendents, and administrative staff to network with their colleagues from across the region for an evening of fellowship and discussion. The regional forums also serve as a host for the student art show.

I urge school divisions to continue to search for partnerships with local businesses and community leaders to help support public education. There are many ways that community leaders can help your school division. School divisions need to recognize those partnerships that are already in place throughout the Commonwealth and honor those that are showing their support by submitting their names to be added to the VSBA Business Honor Roll.

For those and many other reasons, you owe it to yourself to attend the 2013 VSBA Spring Regional Forums. They are scheduled for the months of March, April, and May (full calendar is available on page 5 of this newsletter). Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend. This is an important time to share experiences with your fellow board members in a setting that invites learning and teaching among education leaders.

The Business Honor Roll packet was sent out on March 1, 2013 to all school divisions. It is also available at http://www.vaschoolboards.org/index.php./resources/vsba_business_honor_roll/

The Spring Regional Forums are a component of the VSBA School Board Academy, and participants receive three (3) VSBA Academy credits.

Please remember to join us for the VSBA Spring Regional Forums and join the discussion of issues that are shaping education in your region and state.

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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

National School Breakfast Week

March 4 – 8, 2013

<http://docs.schoolnutrition.org/meetingsandevents/nsbw2013/index.htm>



VSBA 2013 BUSINESS HONOR ROLL



Local businesses have the power to shape community attitudes about public schools, and the VSBA Business Honor Roll is a way for local school divisions to recognize local businesses for their support, especially as schools face increasing budget uncertainty. The Business Honor Roll helps divisions say “thank you” for their vital contributions. Businesses large and small, corporate-owned or family-run, play a key role in supporting the community and local schools by helping schools with in-kind or financial contributions, donating to scholarship programs, supporting extracurriculars, offering internship opportunities, volunteering in the schools and sponsoring field trips.

If you are working with a local business that deserves recognition, your division can add a name (s) to the VSBA Business Honor Roll by passing a resolution (sample below) and submitting the nomination form to us at: gina@vsba.org or (434) 295-8785 fax. Deadline for receipt of the form is **April 1, 2013**.

Later this year, VSBA will publish the Business Honor Roll in the *VSBA Newsletter* and issue a news release about those honored through this program. We also will mail personalized recognition certificates and letters of congratulations for each business to division superintendents in time for boards to present to them at the boards’ May meetings. We appreciate your participation in this effort. Please contact Gina Patterson at 800-446-8722 if you have any questions about this process.

[Letter and nomination form](#)

[Tips for honoring business recipients](#)

[Sample news release](#)

Profile in Leadership...

VSBA Insurance Supervisory Board

Julie Bennington
Bedford County



What is your hometown? Born and raised in Traverse City, Michigan.

How long have you been a board member? Appointed in May 2007 to fill a vacant seat, won elections in November 2007 and 2011.

What books do you have at your bedside? *Defending Jacob* by William Landay, *Mercy* by Jodi Picoult, *Ghost Towns of Michigan*, The Bible, and all the books on my iPad.

What/Who inspires you? I get inspired when I walk through our schools and see all the kids learning different things, and when I sit in on a class and hear a teacher teach. I am also inspired my beautiful daughter, Abby, who is kind and generous and is the light of my life.

Motto as a board member? Whatever it takes.

What is your pie-in-the-sky vision for education? Unlimited funding and less governmental involvement in education decisions.

What is your advice to new board members? Have a thick skin and always make your own decisions.

What do you consider your greatest accomplishment as a board member? Every year when I attend our graduations, I look at each of those kids as they walk to receive their diploma and I know I've made the best decisions to help them reach that place.

What is the primary reason you like being a VSBA member? VSBA is a great resource for me, from classes and online resources to increase my knowledge, to daily education articles.



Important Questions to Ask Your School Division's Insurance Provider... Before Signing on the Dotted Line

When examining insurance options for your school division, it is important to ask questions that address the quality of coverage and allow you to compare providers on factors other than price. Here are a few to get you started.

- What is the history of your insurance program? Is it growing and expanding?
- Who manages and directs your program?
- How is your program unique, as compared to other self-insurance providers in Virginia?
- How will you facilitate a risk management program to help us prevent losses, claims, and accidents?
- Do you provide free on-site and online training for teaching, transportation, custodial, and food services staff?
- How many of your claims staff are Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters (the highest designation in the field)?
- Annually, how many claims (workers' compensation, property, and casualty) does each of your claims staff members handle?
- What is the average level of experience of your claims adjustors?
- What are your policies and procedures in the event of a claim? What is your typical response time?

Should you have any questions regarding your school division insurance needs, contact David Smith, director of insurance services, at 434-295-8722.

Ask the Legal Experts

Q. Can there be a student member of our school board?

A. School boards may have student representatives. Student representatives are not members of the school board. They cannot vote; they serve in an advisory capacity. Whether or not to have student representatives is a local decision. Each school board may decide whether or not to have student representatives. If a board does decide to have student representatives, the board decides how the student representatives are chosen and how long each representative serves. Va. Code § 22.1-86.1. VSBA Policy BBBB. For more information on student representatives contact Samantha Staebell at samantha@vsba.org.



VSBA
Executive Director
Barbara J. Coyle

Post General Assembly: What's Next?

Well, another General Assembly session has ended. How did K-12 education fair? Some will say OK, given the circumstances, others will say badly. Our hard-working team in Richmond was ever-present, voicing the VSBA positions in committees, in the hallways, on the phone, and in legislators' offices. The General Assembly process is not a smooth one. You know the saying about watching sausages and laws being made. Neither one is a pretty sight. It is rare that an original bill submitted by a legislator contains that same language if it becomes law. Our lobbyists' job each year is to follow the progress of 150-200 bills. During the GA session they testify, and try to kill or offer language to amend bills. It's a fact of politics that sometimes, when we know the votes are there, VSBA lobbyists have to help "language" a bad, unwanted bill so that in the end, if it passes, the final bill will be the most beneficial we can make it for the education of children in the Commonwealth. Advocacy takes all of us. For example, a bill changing how three boards would be selected passed from one chamber to the other because the entire VSBA team missed it. Thank heavens it was "caught" by a friend of public education, and after we all went on high alert and into action, the bill was killed. Again, advocacy takes all of us.

Does the VSBA legislative agenda get put on a shelf until the 2014 General Assembly? Do we just wait until next fall and develop an updated list of critical issues? No. We will begin our transition to the 2014 General Assembly with a wrap-up of the 2013 General Assembly via a free webinar today. This gives us a road map for 2014. (There is still time to sign up if you are reading this in the morning! <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/794299374>)

Advocacy for critical issues has become a year round necessity. Thank your legislators when given the opportunity in a public meeting for doing the right thing such as killing attempts to send local money to others who providing online learning. Remember, there is less competition and more opportunities for a legislator's time when they are on their home turf. Also, don't let your unhappiness with a bill that passed just fade away. A-F school grading and the Opportunity School Division are a reality and will now become law. Hold your legislators accountable and express your disappointment if they voted for these bills. Let legislators know you are not going to forget they voted for bad bills and that you are going to let others know as well. There will be elections this fall so look up the voting record for candidates and express your disappointment at candidate forums where others can hear your views.

How do you continue advocacy efforts year-round? First and foremost, become informed on the issues. Go on legislative websites to learn about hot issues. Know all viewpoints. Prioritize your message. Use personal stories and examples. Use social media and join with other advocacy groups to increase the power of your voice. Grassroots advocacy is more effective than ever, so use it!

VSBA will help you to be better advocates by hosting a conference next September 30th to prep school board members for the upcoming 2014 General Assembly. VSBA will continue to issue federal and state position papers and legislative information. VSBA will continue to strengthen its advocacy efforts. Your VSBA Board of Directors and staff have made that commitment in the Strategic Plan. Join us in these efforts and K-12 education will be stronger for it.

BC



VSBA Master Board Program

The Virginia School Boards Association is making in-depth training available 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 *Building Our Team*, *Improving Communication Part I* and *Improving Communication Part II*. 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.

Core Courses

Building Our Team—This course serves as the foundational course for the VSBA’s Master Board program. Board members will identify characteristics of effective teams and examine the board’s style as individual team members. The importance of trust will be explored as well as factors that influence trust. Participants will examine means of increasing board/team effectiveness.

Improving Communication Part I: Listening and Understanding—A key component of teamwork is communication. This course will provide board members with the opportunity to explore difficulties in and barriers to effective communication, as well as essential conditions for effective communication. Values and ideas will also be discussed.

Improving Communication Part II: Responding and Behaving—A follow-up to Part I, Part II will focus on the proper ways to provide feedback and respond to questions and comments. This course will also cover board behaviors and how to build a strong board through communication.

This new training format offers more personalized attention for your division. For more questions regarding the VSBA Master Board Training, please contact Samantha Staebell.

VSBA Hot Topic Conferences

Understanding Outcomes of Virginia’s College and Career Readiness Initiative

March 20, 2013
Wytheville Meeting Center
Wytheville, Virginia

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.

Virginia’s New Superintendent Evaluation

April 29, 2013
Charlottesville Omni

Topics Include:

- The Nuts and Bolts of the New Superintendent Evaluation
- Why the Changes?
- Making Plans for the Future

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

VSBA SPRING REGIONAL FORUM SCHEDULE

<u>EASTERN</u>	Tuesday, March 5
<u>SOUTHERN</u>	Wednesday, March 13
<u>CENTRAL</u>	Monday, March 18
<u>SOUTHSIDE</u>	Wednesday, March 27
<u>VALLEY</u>	Thursday, April 18
<u>NORTHEASTERN</u>	Monday, April 22
<u>BLUE RIDGE</u>	Wednesday, April 24
<u>TIDEWATER</u>	Wednesday, May 1
<u>SOUTHWEST</u>	Thursday, May 9

VSBA Board of Directors

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Nelson County
Lancaster County
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Lexington City
York County
Bedford County

Barbara Coyle, executive director
Gina Patterson, deputy executive director



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 Insurance Services | **CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

Does your current insurance provider include PR counsel in the event of a major claim?

VSBA Insurance Services does.
We now include 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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