

The WFIS State of the State of Washington

The Legislature, OSPI and the State Board of Education (SBE) Advocacy:

While not as hectic legislatively this year, WFIS has continued to work closely with our stakeholders and public officials during the '08 session to help implement the recommendations of the “Washington Learns” study and its implications for private schools in our state.

We were legislatively able to place a WFIS appointee on the Early Learning Commission so we could have input into the new pre-school/daycare laws as they are written. To date, the ELC has met monthly to initiate the rule making process.

With the mandate from the legislature to re-write more rigorous state math and science standards, OSPI and the SBE have sought our input into the process through the Private School Advisory Committee (PSAC).

OSPI has issued an opinion through the Attorney General’s Office that no materials, equipment or personnel can serve our special education students in private SECTARIAN schools. We are working with the Institute for Justice to bring about a change in this unfair interpretation of the law.

The Department of Health is in the process of re-writing the K-12 environmental requirements for a healthy learning environment. WFIS has been working with the DOH to develop clear language and cost analyses for implementation of the requirements. This is a big issue with both public and private schools. The requirements for air and water quality, pesticide use, playground safety and remodel costs could be difficult for all Washington schools to afford.

A bill has been introduced by the Senate to strike all of the provisions in the Basic Education Code and begin a re-write to change and to simplify the 4-inch thick manual that governs public and private education in our state. The SBE and OSPI are asking why they are responsible for approving private schools. We are asking the same thing. Although the funding to implement a task force was not approved for this session, this bill will come back again next year. This may be a time when we choose our own destiny. We will discuss this at our Board Retreat in May.

A bill was introduced to give a B& O tax credit to businesses that give donations to public and private schools. Although it disappeared quickly from the radar, we remain hopeful it will resurface next session. WFIS will work with whomever we need to bring this back. (Another topic for our Board Retreat.)

We continue to work to develop relationships with the new staff at OSPI, DEL and the SBE to educate them regarding private education. There have been many changes in all of these offices this past year.

Professional Development and Education:

Fall 2007- Annual Fall One Day Workshop: US Department of Ed. Guests educating on Federal Programs. (We have seen a 40% increase in participation within the last three years) DOH- Air Quality, Professional Educator's Standards Board – Acquiring Master Teacher credentials, Changes in the Charitable Solicitations Laws, and the governor's office representative on the new Department of Early Learning.

WFIS Days at the Western Washington Fair (sixth largest fair in the country) – Each school can have a booth to showcase their program and we have scheduled entertainment from a variety of private schools from around the state. It is great exposure for our schools.

Winter Dinner and Best of Washington Awards. This is our annual event that highlights all aspects of private education in Washington. This year's keynote was Patrice Maynard from the National Waldorf Society. Our Columbia Award (the big one) was given to Ken Smitherman for his contributions to private education in Washington as well as his international impact on private education as Executive Director of ACSI and chair of the CAPE national board.

Last fall, I traveled around the state and held seven meetings with our member schools to determine their concerns and needs from WFIS as well as educating them about current legislative and educational issues.

Board Retreat: May 1-2. We will be addressing the issues from above. To help us focus our discussion, Robert Teegarden from the Alliance for School Choice and Michael Bindas, Esq. from the Institute for Justice will join us.

Stay tuned. It could become very interesting!

Judy Jennings
Executive Director, WFIS

WFIS Fall Workshop

Mark your calendar now for the WFIS Fall Workshop on November 13, 2008 – a variety of sessions will be offered for different aspects of your school operation!

Colonial Dames Scholarships

The application deadline (March 13, 2008) for the Colonial Dames of Washington sponsored scholarships is fast approaching. Don't waste a minute longer submitting your application for any of the four \$1000 scholarships available to enhance your **history/social studies programs** or educational development. Access the applications as well as lessons prepared by past recipients of our scholarships. Visit our website www.coldameswa.net for more information or contact Dorothy Kehres at dpkehres@comcast.net.

WFIS Honors Best of Washington



Back Row: Ken Smitherman, Ray Dally, Simon Stobart, Sherry Locke, Aaron Locke, Victor Benedetti, Juliana Benedetti, Duane Schafer, Dennis DeKok; Front Row: Gaynor Edwards, Deanna Dally, Paula Stobart, Colette Bailey, Courtney Nester, Joyce Garrett, Kari Overson, Barbara Quick.

Seventeen individuals from private schools were honored recently at the annual Winter Dinner of the Washington Federation of Independent Schools at the Museum of Flight in Seattle. On Tuesday evening, February 12th, the following leaders, teachers and parents were presented with WFIS 2008 Best of Washington Awards:

Dr. Duane Schafer, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Spokane was the recipient of the award for Outstanding Administrator. Schafer was nominated by the principals of the schools in his Diocese for his outstanding leadership, vision and desire for collaboration.

The award for Outstanding Program Leader was presented to Dennis DeKok, Athletic Director and Science/PE teacher at Mount Vernon Christian School. DeKok has built a successful athletic program at Mount Vernon Christian with no home gymnasium, while maintaining a high standard of excellence and great compassion for his students.

The Parent Association of Spring Valley Montessori School in Federal Way was honored for its support of Spring Valley teachers. By providing monthly gifts of kindness to the teachers, these parents have built lasting bridges in the Spring Valley community: Juliana and Victor Benedetti, Colette Bailey, Joyce and Scott Garrett, Sherry and Aaron Locke, Courtney Nester, Kari Overson, and Paula and Simon Stobart.

Ray and Deanna Dally, recipients of the Outstanding Patrons award, were honored for their passion and commitment to many philanthropic efforts, especially Mount Rainier Lutheran High

School, Concordia Lutheran School, Good Samaritan Hospital and the YMCA. The Dallys were also praised for their remarkable example of stewardship.

The recipient of the award for Outstanding State Official was presented to Barbara Quick, Title V Program Supervisor in the Consolidated Federal Programs office within the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Quick is committed to ensuring that federal programs are available to private schools. She strives to develop and maintain partnerships between public and private schools.

Ken Smitherman, President of the Association of Christian Schools International, was presented with the 2008 WFIS Columbia Award. The Columbia Award is presented as warranted to a person whose work has been instrumental in furthering collaboration and opportunity between public and private K-12 interests. It is conferred through a consensus vote of the Board of Directors. Prior to his tenure with ACSI, Smitherman was an esteemed member of the WFIS Board of Directors for several years.

The 2008 Teacher of the Year award was presented to Gaynor Edwards of Marlin Hutterite School in Marlin, Washington. Edwards was honored for her accomplishments in this unique environment after having overcome her own learning differences. According to Susan Gear of Moses Lake, Washington, "She embraces the gravity of education and the understanding of diversity while empowering her students and parents."

An additional highlight of the evening was the keynote message from Patrice Maynard, Leader for Outreach and Development of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. Maynard was previously a class teacher and a music teacher at the Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, New York. She is a published poet and an advocate for school choice.

Presenters of the awards were members of the WFIS Board of Directors: Liz Swift, Head of School, Holy Names Academy, Seattle; Ron Taylor, Superintendent of Bellevue Christian School; Eric Rasmussen, Superintendent of King's Schools, Seattle and Bremerton; Gulsevin Kayihan, Academic Director of Spring Valley Montessori School, Federal Way; Paul Bethke, Principal, Concordia Lutheran School, Tacoma; Chris Gavin, Principal of Bellarmine Preparatory School, Tacoma; Briel Schmitz, Head of the Spruce Street School, Seattle; and Judy Jennings, Executive Director, Washington Federation of Independent Schools.

Greeters for the evening were members of the Holy Names Academy Student Ambassadors: Megan Casey, Donna Hahn, Addie Riley, Cara Williams and Sarah Youssefi.

COLLEGE BOUND SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

College Bound Scholarship, www.hecb.wa.gov/collegebound, is designed to raise the aspirations of low-income 7th and 8th graders. Eligible students sign a pledge to graduate high school, maintain a 2.0 GPA, practice good citizenship, and stay crime-free. In return, Washington state will cover tuition and fees at a four year university, community college, or vocational/technical college.

In January, more than 1,000 College Bound Scholarship (CBS) packets were sent to middle school and junior high school principals promoting the program. To date there are more than 850 completed applications and we urge you to continue promoting CBS – particularly among your eligible 8th graders who *must sign up by June 1, 2008*.

College Bound Contact in the School

In order to communicate more effectively with schools, College Bound requests that principals designate a person (teacher, staff member, or counselor) from each school to serve as the program contact. This will allow the HECB to provide periodic updates to the appropriate person. Please forward the name of your school's contact to collegebound@hecb.wa.gov.

Ways to Promote College Bound

Some schools are aggressively and creatively promoting College Bound. Ideas have ranged from including CBS literature in regularly scheduled mailings (report cards, school announcements, information on the free and reduced-price lunch program, etc.), to phone-a-thons and home visits.

The Tacoma School District includes CBS information in the new student entry process, plans to include CBS materials with the free and reduced-price lunch mailer, and has requested names of applicants to provide follow-up services.

The Yakima region in south central Washington has been particularly successful in registering students. By partnering with GEAR UP, community organizations, and outreach counselors from Washington State University Tri-Cities, the middle schools from Yakima Valley have the greatest number of College Bound applicants. For ideas on how your school might publicize and promote the program visit, www.hecb.wa.gov/collegebound.

FERPA/Confidentiality, College Bound, and Free and Reduced Price Lunch List

OSPI, working with Tacoma Public Schools, has developed a *Disclosure of Free and Reduced Price Information Agreement* that safeguards the privacy of the students, yet allows designated school officials access to the names of the students in order to promote College Bound. This form is on the College Bound Web site, www.hecb.wa.gov/collegebound, *Tools for Schools*.

SAFE SCHOOLS/HEALTHY STUDENTS

Applications are now available for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant competition. Safe Schools/ Healthy Students is a collaborative program supported by three federal agencies: Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice. Under the program, school districts partner with local law enforcement, juvenile justice, and mental health agencies to implement a comprehensive plan focused on five elements, including safe school environments, mental health treatment services, and early childhood emotional development programs. Successful applicants propose plans that take up these issues with a thoughtful, well-coordinated strategy that links all

services in a more systematic and effective manner. The deadline for applications is March 14. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE GO TO <http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov/>.

Also: The Department's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) has released the latest issue of "The Challenge" newsletter (<http://www.thechallenge.org/>), featuring articles on preventing school violence. And, the OSDFS-administered Emergency Response and Crisis Management Technical Center (<http://rems.ed.gov/>) continues to unveil new publications on school emergency management efforts.

The WFIS eMemo is a publication of the Washington Federation of Independent Schools.

The Washington Federation of Independent Schools (WFIS) is the umbrella organization for private education in Washington State. With seventy percent of the independent student population enrolled in member schools, WFIS is the only statewide vehicle for regular communication and strategic development between the many different constituencies. WFIS schools are affiliates of the Catholic dioceses in the state; the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI); the Christian Schools International (CSI); Lutheran Schools; Montessori schools; the Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools (PNAIS); the Seventh-day Adventist Schools (SDA); and numerous other religious and independent institutions, including the Waldorf Schools, Hutterian Brethren, and those institutions with sponsorship within the Jewish and Islamic communities. The WFIS Board of Directors consists of eighteen school heads representing the major constituencies chosen regionally by their respective bodies. WFIS is networked with similar organizations in other states through the Council for American Private Education (CAPE).



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