OSBA’s FRN delegation heading to Washington amid new political climate

A team of board members and OSBA staff will participate in the National School Boards Association’s annual Federal Relations Network (FRN) Legislative Conference, Feb. 6-8 in Washington, D.C. The November elections brought a major shift in the political alignment in Congress, and the conference gives OSBA the opportunity to develop new relationships and solidify established ones. Key educational policy decisions lie ahead in 2011, including the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Ohio’s FRN members will meet with their representatives and senators to discuss the act and other critical issues. FRN is a grassroots advocacy network of school board members from around the U.S. who are appointed by their state associations.

PISA results show U.S. firmly mid-pack in reading, math, science

The latest PISA survey shows American 15-year-olds are still recording average scores in reading and science, while scoring slightly below average in math. U.S. students scored 500 in reading, 502 in science and 487 in math on a 1,000-point scale. These scores lag behind results from several countries in Europe and Asia, despite efforts to raise performance through the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act. Designed to compare standards between different education systems around the world, the PISA survey is held every three years. PISA scores are on a scale, with 500 as the average. Two-thirds of the students in participating countries scored between 400 and 600.

Bedford City’s Barbara A. Patterson to lead OSBA Black Caucus in 2011

The OSBA Black Caucus re-elected Barbara A. Patterson, the Bedford City board president, as the caucus’ 2011-12 president. Patterson, who has served eight years as a school board member, will begin her third consecutive two-year term as president on Jan. 1. The OSBA Black Caucus, which educates its members and others on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by African-American board members throughout the state, met during the OSBA Capital Conference.

OSBA offering new endorsed program to streamline district purchasing

OSBA, the Ohio Association of School Business Officials and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators has joined forces with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association to offer a new endorsed program called P-Card. This program offers a procurement card, similar to a credit card, but with internal controls to help districts streamline purchasing and reduce paperwork and administrative costs. For more information, contact Amanda Finney, OSBA marketing coordinator, at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA.
Reminder: Get the Briefcase electronically and get it free

To add value to OSBA membership, the association is once again offering the Briefcase newsletter free if all subscribers in a district sign up to receive it electronically. If anyone in the district does not choose the electronic option, the district subscription rate of $125 will still apply. Please indicate your district’s preference on the OSBA membership invoice, which was mailed earlier this month.

‘Dropout factories’ decline in Ohio and across the U.S.

A report by Civic Enterprises, a Washington-based policy firm, shows that U.S. graduation rates rose to 75% in 2008, up from 72% in 2001. Also, the number of high schools that graduate 60% or fewer of their incoming freshmen four years later — so-called “dropout factories” — fell from 2,007 in 2001 to 1,746 in 2008. In Ohio, graduation rates rose from 77.5% to 79% and dropout factories fell from 75 to 63.

Parents get demerits for education woes

An Associated Press-Stanford University Poll found that 68% of adults believe parents deserve heavy blame for what’s wrong with the U.S. education system. Those who blame parents cite a lack of student discipline, low expectations for students, fighting and low test scores as serious problems in schools.

IRS increases mileage reimbursement rate for 2011

The Internal Revenue Service’s 2011 optional standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business reflects an increase of a penny from 2010. Beginning on Jan. 1, the standard mileage rate will be 51 cents per mile for business miles driven.
**OSBA executive searches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superintendent</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bath Local (Allen)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dec. 27</td>
<td>OSBA Search Services, (614) 540-4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuyahoga Heights Local (Cuyahoga)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan. 14</td>
<td>OSBA Search Services, (614) 540-4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belpre City</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feb. 4</td>
<td>OSBA Search Services, (614) 540-4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streetsboro City</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>OSBA Search Services, (614) 540-4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuyahoga Valley Career Center</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb. 18</td>
<td>OSBA Search Services, (614) 540-4000</td>
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**National searches**

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<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Waltham, Mass.</td>
<td>Jan. 7</td>
<td>Glenn Koocher, executive director, Massachusetts Association of School Committees, (617) 523-8454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Falls Church, Va.</td>
<td>Jan. 7</td>
<td>Gina Patterson, assistant executive director, Virginia School Boards Association, (434) 295-8722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Board changes**

River Valley Local (Marion) Board of Education member Kenny Stiverson announced his resignation effective Dec. 31.

**Administrative changes**

Superintendents

Cleveland Municipal: Chief Executive Officer Dr. Eugene T.W. Sanders announced his retirement effective Feb. 1.

Fort Frye Local (Washington): hired Dr. Dora Jean Bumgarner as interim superintendent effective Dec. 13. She replaced Dr. Matthew J. Dill, who took the superintendent position at Clear Fork Valley Local (Richland).

Lakota Local (Butler): hired Ron Spurlock as interim superintendent effective Feb. 1. He will replace Michael Taylor, who is retiring effective Jan. 31. Spurlock is currently the district’s assistant superintendent of secondary education.

**Editor’s note**

Job postings must be received six weeks before the application deadline to ensure timely publication. Thank you for your cooperation.
**Treasurers**

Claymont City hired Lori Statler as treasurer effective Jan. 1. She will replace Susan Raymond, who is retiring. Statler is currently the treasurer at Ridgewood Local (Coshocton). Gibsonburg EV hired Dr. Paul Lockwood II as treasurer effective immediately. He replaced Paul Ryan Lockwood III, who took the treasurer position at Springfield Local (Lucas). Lakota Local (Butler) hired Jenni Logan as treasurer effective Jan. 1. She replaces Craig Jones, who resigned earlier this year. Zanesville City Treasurer Cindy Nye announced her retirement effective March 31.

**Sympathies**

Former Cleveland Municipal Board of Education member George Dobra died Dec. 4. He was 84. Former Dayton City Board of Education member Virginia N. McNeal died Nov. 25. She was 82. Former Fairfield Local (Highland) Board of Education member Delma Desire Dwyer Fairley died Dec. 4. She was 95. Former Grandview Heights City and Marysville EV Board of Education member Bernard Edward “Bernie” Diehl died Dec. 2. He was 87. Wilson Edward Weis, a member of the former Harris-Elmore school board in Ottawa County, died Dec. 2. He was 93. Duane Debolt, a member of the former Hartford school board and Licking County Board of Education (now ESC), died Dec. 11. He was 93. Former Kent City Board of Education member Loris Troyer died Dec. 9. He was 96. Former Norwalk City Board of Education member Janet Norma Conway died Nov. 28. She was 76. Former Olentangy Local (Delaware) Superintendent Scott Davis died Dec. 10. He was 38. Riverdale Local (Hardin) Board of Education member James “Gabby” Thames died Nov. 28. He was 55. Former Twinsburg City Board of Education member Norman Lee Mathews died Nov. 15. He was 73. Former West Branch Local (Mahoning) Board of Education member Richard L. “Dick” Burton died Dec. 10. He was 86. Wolf Creek Local (Washington) Board of Education member C. Lynn Sandford died Nov. 29. He was 73.

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**COMMUNICATIONS**

by Margaret Peterson, APR, communications consultant

**Handling a PR/news media crisis**

There’s a saying: If it can go wrong, sooner or later, it will go wrong. But school districts can do a lot to minimize the effects of a crisis situation. Planning is your best defense.

When a public relations disaster happens, there’s an immediate need to redefine your school’s image by reaching out to the community. You need to take control of the crisis and deal with the issue head-on. Don’t let the news media, bloggers or “twitterers” be first to inform parents, key communicators and the general public.

A crisis or a negative news report affects more people than you think, lasts longer than you expect and becomes a permanent part of the school’s reputation. (Remember the Exxon oil spill in Alaska?)

In a public relations crisis you need to:

- respond quickly,
- communicate broadly,
- assume responsibility.

A general guide to planning for a crisis situation:

- Assess your school district’s current reputation: does it need work?
- Imagine all possible crisis situations.
- Assemble a core crisis communication team.
- Develop and practice crisis response and communications.

Guidelines for execution include:

- Respond immediately and get information out ahead of the rumors.

Continued on page 5
New board members:  
Trying to maneuver the maze of boardmanship?  

Find your way at the New Board Member Academy

- Designed for new board members  
- Plenty of networking opportunities  
- Intensive, one day academy  
- Saturday, Jan. 15, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
- OSBA office, Columbus

School boardmanship is more complex and demanding than ever. To carry out their leadership duties effectively, it is necessary for new school board members to begin moving from the role of an involved citizen to that of a responsible elected official as soon as possible. High-quality board member education, designed specifically for newly elected board members, can help you become a more effective educational leader in your community.

This intensive academy will focus on:
- the world of boardmanship  
- communicating effectively  
- board policy 101  
- how Ohio schools are funded  
- collective bargaining and employee relations issues  
- the Sunshine Law and executive sessions

Cost for the academy is $155 per board member. Four books are included with workshop tuition: Boardmanship, Board-Treasurer Partnership, Board-Superintendent Partnership and Board-Legislature Partnership.

To register, call (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA or register online at www.ohioschoolboards.org/event_listing.
School board presidents serve critical leadership roles in their school districts. The president is the visible leader of the board and responsible for the efficient and legal operation of board business.

Unfortunately, too many board presidents attempt to accomplish the duties of president by going it alone, feeling that on-the-job training is all that is needed to fulfill this leadership responsibility. It is to your advantage and a benefit to your school district to be well-informed and skillful enough to perform your leadership duties effectively. Bring your questions about your leadership role to this workshop.

The workshop will be presented by OSBA staff. Tuition is $150 and covers registration; materials, including the Board Presidents’ Handbook; lunch; and refreshments.

To register, call (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA or register online at www.ohioschoolboards.org/event_listing.
Ohio school districts are experiencing bedbugs problems, with many seeing an increase in the number of bugs infesting classrooms. Many experts predict the problem will only continue to increase. Join OSBA’s legal services division for a webinar on bedbugs and the unique challenges they bring to Ohio’s schools. Topics will include: identifying bedbugs, appropriate school responses to bedbug sightings, foreseeable legal issues and best practices. The webinar will be held from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 13. Register today by contacting Laurie Miller at Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org. The registration fee is $35.

OSBA is dedicated to providing school districts with quality arbitration and SERB representation at a reasonable cost.

Our professional labor team is highly trained in the law and labor relations. We have represented a large number of school districts.

Our emphasis is on quality service and assistance at a reasonable price. We offer a flat rate for all arbitration and SERB representation matters — just $2,000 per case, plus mileage. No law firm can beat that price!

For more information, contact Van D. Keating, director of management services, at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA.
OSBA Workshop Registration Form

Workshop name ____________________________ Workshop date ____________________________
Attendee name ____________________________ Title ____________________________
Daytime phone ____________________________ E-mail ____________________________
District/firm ____________________________ County ____________________________

Enclosed is a check for $ ________ or P.O.# ___________________ to cover _______ registration(s). Make checks payable to OSBA and mail to 8050 N. High St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43235-6481; fax to (614) 540-4100; or e-mail Laurie Miller at Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org. Include a purchase order number with fax or e-mail.

Please check here if you require special accommodations. Contact us or attach a written description of needs.
Please photocopy this form for each person

OSBA sends e-mail confirmation of registration if an e-mail address is provided. Registration is open to all boards and staff of OSBA members. “Walk-in” registrations are welcome on a space-available basis only. Please call OSBA to check the status of registration before you arrive at the workshop. To register, you must have a purchase order number or a check payable to OSBA and a completed registration form. You may register with a purchase order number by phone, fax, e-mail or Web page 24 hours a day.

Award of Achievement/LPDC
Most workshops entitle members to Award of Achievement credits. Local Professional Development Committee certificates of attendance will be issued to all workshop attendees.

OSBA Workshop Registration procedures

OSBA Workshop Registration

Don’t Let the Bedbugs Bite! webinar
☐ Jan. 13, $35

New Board Member Academy
☐ Jan. 15, Columbus, $155

Board Presidents’ Workshop
☐ Jan. 29, Columbus, $150
☐ Jan. 29, Findlay, $150
☐ Feb. 5, Rootstown, $150
☐ Feb. 5, Wilmington, $150

OSBA
8050 N. High St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43235-6481

OSBA Registration Hotline, (614) 540-4000, ext. 300; toll free (800) 589-OSBA, ext. 300; or fax us at (614) 540-4100.

E-mail registrations can be sent to Laurie Miller at Lmiller@ohioschoolboards.org. Please include a purchase order number.

You may register on our Web page at www.ohioschoolboards.org. Events are listed at the bottom of the page.

Cancellation and refund policy
• Cancellations received by OSBA at least four workdays before the date of the workshop will receive a full refund or no charge to the district.
• Cancellations received less than four workdays before the date of the workshop will have one-third of the fee charged to the district.
• No-shows and cancellations the day of the workshop will be charged the full registration amount.
Customize communications to audiences.

A few dos and don’ts when a PR crisis hits:

- **Be out front.** When the crisis happens, have the highest-ranking district spokesperson available go on the record and deal with the issue head-on. Don’t offer the “no comment” response. Attorneys don’t like it, but the best thing to do if you’ve done something wrong is to say so. The public appreciates an individual or organization going forward and saying, “We didn’t do it right, but we’ll do it better.”

- **Be honest.** Going on record does little good if what you’re telling the public isn’t true. For this kind of communication to work, you have to be in the right. The worst thing you can ever do is get caught in a lie. But your legal people most likely are not going to let you be as honest as you want to be because they’re concerned about liability. You often run into situations where you have to weigh the consequences of saying too much or too little.

- **Be prepared.** Get a crisis plan in place before the crisis occurs. This means establishing a plan as to who is permitted to speak to the public — including media, parents and key communicators — during a crisis situation and what that person is allowed to say. You can’t cobble something together after a crisis happens. Doing that will result in dumb mistakes. The worst thing you can do is have someone start talking about topics on which they are not fully informed.

- **Stay in touch with the news media, social media and the public.** People want to know how you’ve handled the problem. Make sure it is obvious via press releases, newsletters, media briefings and on-site tours. Get out in front of whatever happened. Work with the local media, engage in local networking opportunities and be very clear about what your problems have been in the past and what you’ve done to fix them.

- **Remember, today’s media landscape has changed.** Newspapers all have websites that don’t wait for tomorrow’s paper. Citizen journalists — bloggers — are constantly reporting. There’s also YouTube, Facebook and individual parent websites.

- **Monitor the social media space.** It’s critical that you know if your school is mentioned, and there is no excuse for not having this information delivered to you. Something as simple as Google Alerts allows you to monitor websites for mentions in blogs, tweets and forums and can be delivered to your Feed Reader or e-mail.

- **Respond quickly.** These days, quick is necessary, although you don’t want to rush in and say something foolish. If you are doing a good job of monitoring, you should be aware of most instances your school district is mentioned, and it takes 15 seconds to craft a response on Twitter … so do it!

- **Add value.** Don’t just reply to inquiries or complaints with “I hear you”; add some value. Direct people to a resource that will be helpful to them, or, if it’s within your power, tell them that you will check into a specific situation personally and then be sure to follow up.

- **Be sincere.** Social media is — for better and worse — a place of great transparency, and, as such, users can smell insincerity a mile away. Don’t just give lip service to parents and community members; treat them like you would like to be treated.

### The first 30 minutes

What is done in the first 30 minutes of a crisis is crucial in controlling rumors and determining people’s perceptions of the crisis and how it was handled. Here is a short outline of what should happen in that time frame. The crisis team leader should take charge and:

- **Gather facts.** Your plan should include a “Crisis Assessment and Information Sheet” which can be used to gather needed information.

- **Define the problems.**

- **Consider options.**

- **Act to ensure safety of students and staff.**

- **Communicate with staff, students and parents as quickly as possible.**

- **Demonstrate competence.**

- **Make sure information provided is accurate and reliable.**

Source: Oregon School Boards Association
HB 330 allows school districts to take part in ODOT contracts

Even though the legislative lame-duck session has been relatively quiet, the General Assembly sent one piece of legislation to Gov. Ted Strickland that impacts public education. House Bill (HB) 330, sponsored by Rep. Matt Patten (D-Strongsville), permits school districts to participate in Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) contracts to purchase machinery, materials, supplies and other items.

Under current law, ODOT’s director may permit the Ohio Turnpike Commission, any political subdivision and any state university or college to participate in contracts into which the director has entered for the purchase of a number of products.

To participate in the purchase contracts, the Turnpike Commission must file a certified copy of the bylaws or rules with the ODOT director. Political subdivisions and state universities and colleges requesting authorization to participate in the purchase contracts must file with the director the ordinance or resolution of the legislative authority, board of trustees or other governing board and agree to be bound by the terms and conditions prescribed by the director.

Purchases made by the commission, political subdivisions or state universities or colleges under this provision are exempt from any competitive bidding required by law for the purchase of machinery, materials, supplies or other items. For purposes of this section, “political subdivision” means any county, township, municipal corporation, conservancy district, park district, township park district, port authority, regional transit authority, regional airport authority, regional water and sewer district, or county transit board.

HB 330 simply adds school districts to the definition of “political subdivision” under this section. The bill defines “school district” as “any city school district, local school district, exempted village school district, cooperative education school district and joint vocational school district.”

The bill becomes effective 90 days after the governor’s signature.

Continued on page 7

You really can make a difference!

Children are our future and there is no greater investment than a child’s education. By joining OSBA’s political action committee, Kids PAC, you are helping to ensure all children in Ohio receive the quality education they deserve!

To learn more about Kids PAC, contact Marcella Gonzalez at (614) 540-4000, (800) 589-OSBA or mgonzalez@ohioschoolboards.org.

… Because kids count!
**PUBLIC SCHOOLS WORK!**

compiled by Angela Penquite, communication design manager

**Meigs Local students participate in astronomy program**

Budding astronomers at Meigs Local’s (Meigs) High School are searching the sky for new pulsars and sharing their results with participants in nine states.

Last summer, students Shauna Bare, Vanessa Crane, Keana Robinson and Madelyn Thomas visited the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) in Green Bank, W.Va., where they analyzed data collected from the world’s largest telescope. They also learned how to determine if a radio signal was a pulsar or random noise.

During the school year, the students are analyzing data, posting their results and sharing information through an online collaboration. Nearly 60 teachers and 600 students participate in the program sponsored by the Pulsar Search Collaboratory.

Meigs High School science teacher Kathy Hudson said the goal of the project was to give the students real-world experience, but it went far beyond her expectations. “The fact that the astronomers at Green Bank are sharing and trusting their data with us is amazing,” she said.

The students described their time at NRAO as a “once-in-a-lifetime experience.” Hudson acknowledges the impact of the program. “Projects like this have the potential to inspire students to become scientists.”

Source: *The Daily Sentinel*

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**Leadership chosen for next session**

Though the 129th session of the General Assembly is yet to begin, all four caucuses have chosen their leadership for the next two-year session beginning in January. They are as follows:

**House Republicans**
- Speaker: Rep. Bill Batchelder (R-Medina)
- Speaker pro tempore: Rep. Lou Blessing (R-Cincinnati)
- Majority floor leader: Rep. Matt Huffman (R-Lima)
- Assistant majority floor leader: Rep. Barbara Sears (R-Sylvania)
- Majority whip: Rep. John Adams (R-Sidney)
- Assistant majority whip: Rep. Cheryl Grossman (R-Grove City)

**House Democrats**
- Minority leader: Rep. Armond Budish (D-Beachwood)
- Assistant minority leader: Rep. Matt Szollosi (D-Oregon)
- Minority whip: Rep. Tracy Heard (D-Columbus)
- Assistant minority whip: Rep. Debbie Phillips (D-Athens)

**Senate Republicans**
- President: Sen. Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond)
- President pro tempore: Sen. Keith Faber (R-Celina)
- Majority floor leader: Sen. Jimmy Stewart (R-Athens)
- Majority whip: Sen. Shannon Jones (R-Springboro)

**Senate Democrats**
- Minority leader: Sen. Capri Cafaro (D-Hubbard)
- Assistant minority leader: Sen. Shirley Smith (D-Cleveland)
- Minority whip: Sen.-elect Edna Brown (D-Toledo)
- Assistant minority whip: Sen. Jason Wilson (D-Columbiana)

For the latest legislative updates, please contact the OSBA legislative services division at (614) 540-4000 or (800) 589-OSBA.

*Editor's Note: All information in this article was current as of Dec. 17.*
### December 2010

31  Last day for treasurer to canvass the board to establish a date for the organizational meeting — RC 3313.14.

### January 2011

10  Last day for voter registration for February election — RC 3503.01, 3503.19(A) (30 days prior to the election).
15  OSBA New Board Member Academy ..............................Columbus
15  Deadline for boards of education of city, exempted village, vocational and local school districts to meet and organize — RC 3313.14; last day for boards of education of city, exempted village, vocational and local school districts to adopt tax budgets for the coming school fiscal year — RC 5705.28(A) (1).
18  Last day to submit certification for May conversion levy to tax commissioner — RC 5705.219(B) (105 days before election).
20  Last day for boards of education to submit fiscal tax-year budget to county auditor — RC 5705.30.
21  OSBA Executive Committee Meeting .....................................Columbus
22  OSBA Board of Trustees Meeting .........................................Columbus
24  Last day to submit certification for May income tax levy to Ohio Department of Taxation — RC 5748.02(A) (100 days prior to the election).
28  Last day to submit May emergency levy, current operating expenses levy or conversion levy to county auditor for May election — RC 5705.194, 5705.195, 5705.213, 5705.219 (95 days prior to the election).
29  OSBA Board Presidents’ Workshop ......................................Columbus
29  OSBA Board Presidents’ Workshop ......................................Findlay
31  Annual campaign finance reports due (by 4 p.m.) detailing contributions and expenditures through Dec. 31, 2010 — RC 3517.10(A)(3) (last business day of January; deadline for educational service center (ESC) governing boards to meet and organize — RC 3313.14.

### February 2011

Feb. 2  Last day for school district to file resolution of necessity, resolution to proceed and auditor’s certification for bond levy with board of elections for May election — RC 133.18(D); last day for county auditor to certify school district bond levy terms for May election — RC 133.18(C); last day to submit continuing replacement, permanent improvement or operating levy for May election to board of elections — RC 5705.192, 5705.21, 5705.25; last day to certify resolution for school district income tax levy, conversion levy or renewal of conversion levy for May election to board of elections — RC 5705.195, 5705.219(G), 5748.02(C); last day to submit emergency levy for May election to board of elections — RC 5705.195; last day to submit phased-in levy or current operating expenses levy for May election to board of elections — RC 5705.251(A) (90 days prior to the election).
5  OSBA Board Presidents’ Workshop ...........................................Wilmington
5  OSBA Board Presidents’ Workshop ...........................................Rootstown
5-6  NSBA Leadership Conference ......................................................Washington, D.C.
6-8  NSBA Federal Relations Network (FRN) Conference .................Washington, D.C.
8  Special Election Day — RC 3501.01 (first Tuesday after the first Monday).
13  OSBA SE Region Executive Committee Meeting ........................Logan
17-19  AASA Conference .......................................................Denver