

West Virginia Professional Educators

A Student's Mind Is Too Precious To Be Bargained For

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NEWS

WVPE Goals Achieved During Recent Legislative Session

By Elizabeth "Bunny" Mow

Editor's Note: Once again thanks go to Bunny Mow, WVPE Legislative Chair, for her diligent work on the legislative reports and this article. In addition, thanks go to WVPE Legislative Liason Ben Beakes of Three Point Strategies for his representation and work for us. The state legislature has now passed a state budget.

Of the six WVPE legislative goals at least three were achieved or partially achieved, two others are on-going and one might have possibilities in the future.

One of the achievements is a change in the school calendar. HB 2711 provides more flexibility and allows for the use of banked hours to make up lost days. Another achievement is a revision of the A-F accountability system. The State Board of Education decided to end this practice so no legislation was needed. On January 11th the State Board of Education put out on comment their decision to shift Smarter Balanced testing to end-of-course exams. However public comment was opposed to end-of-course exams and the Department of Education is now looking at other

options for statewide assessment. The legislature had proposed in SB 18 to switch testing to ACT. However, since the State Board took at least partial action on this issue, SB 18 did not proceed.

The legislature is in special session at this article is written trying to work out a compromise on the state's budget.

Although a bill was introduced to allow accrued sick days toward retirement (HB 2370), it was not taken up by the House Education Committee. However, several legislators have expressed an interest in such legislation, so there is some hope for the future.

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President's Message

Alicia Mullins

Hello all! I hope you are enjoying your much earned summer break! Summer is a crucial time for teachers to decompress, reflect on successes and weaknesses of the year, and prepare for an even better year for you and your students. It is a time to let go of the stress and struggles of last year and prepare our hearts and minds for next year, s set of young minds.

Many of you will find yourselves attending professional developments throughout the summer. I encourage you to make the most of that time—find something worthwhile, take it

“Education is the Gateway to the American Dream”

Excerpts from Education Alliance ED-Talks—Libby Surface

I had the opportunity to attend the EDTalks event in Parkersburg on June 15. The Education Alliance is a nonprofit organization that advocates for quality public education for all West Virginia students and works to support public schools. The EDTalks speaker series brings to together stakeholders from business and education to promote innovative discussion about connection education, jobs and the future. I highly urge you to attend these inspiring events whenever possible and let your voice be heard.

The first speaker was Chad Crumbaker, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs at WVU Parkersburg. Mr. Crumbaker discussed the need for creative problem solving skills in today's world. Students need to exercise their “idea muscles” in today's classrooms in order to be prepared for the ever changing world of work. Likewise, the second speaker, Toni Poling, encouraged all to travel the journey to having a growth mindset. Mrs. Poling is the 2017 West Virginia Teacher of the Year, and gave an educator's perspective. She explained that the real power in education if teaching

home, and make it your own. One of the things I love about teaching is the fact that my classroom never looks the same from year to year. I am always in search of new ideas, new activities, and classroom management tools to make my classroom more interesting. When you teach high school math, sometimes you have to get creative to do just that!

Most of all, make time this summer for those you love most! Enjoy those few extra moments with family and friends! Take time to recharge your batteries and refresh your spirit!

students to believe in themselves – to be the best version of themselves possible.

Ralph Baxter is a lawyer, advisor, writer and speaker on the legal profession who also serves on the Education Alliance Board of Directors. He addressed the need for even greater support of public education in West Virginia in light of the current budget and financing issues. Mr. Baxter emphatically stated that “public education is the gateway to the American dream.” He gave several reasons for supporting public education:

- Public education enables students to have a rewarding job and allows us to have a self-sustaining population and work force.
 - Having a competitive, educated work force can be the most important question asked by prospective businesses looking for a location.
 - As research bears out, a healthy education system reduces crime.
- Public education gives us an informed electorate.

Mr. Baxter concluded by stating that by working together, West Virginia can preserve public education and move it forward.

Editor's Corner



Libby Surface

I hope this finds you enjoying your summer break with your loved ones. If you are like me, you most likely have a list of projects and plans for these summer days. At the top of my list is to “clean house and get organized” both at home and school.

As for WVPE, we need to clean up our email and mailing addresses. Attempts were made to reach many of you last summer, sometimes with no success. I urge you to contact us anytime you have a change of email, address, phone number, or work location. This is especially needed if you will be teaching in a different county. You need to contact your county payroll office as well as WVPE so that payroll deductions are handled efficiently.

Summer is also an excellent time to help WVPE build membership. Request brochures, new teacher booklets, and posters to distribute. Talk to your colleagues about our reasonable dues and benefits. Contact any WVPE staff or Executive Board members if you find opportunities for presentations and/or a table set up, such as new hire orientations.

Have new ideas for WVPE? Let us know your thoughts and concerns. Want to be more involved? Please feel free to make a call to me or any officer.

Have a great summer!

Libby Surface

Special Announcement: WVPE Now Hiring an Associate Director

WVPE is now searching for a part-time associate director who can assist the Executive Directors in various duties. This individual is needed to attend state meetings, help grow membership and to participate on the Executive Board and attend its meetings. This is an excellent part time opportunity for retired or current members and/or administrators.

Please contact Alma Page or any Executive Board member for more information by August 1, 2017.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Have you been hearing the terms STEM and STEAM, "maker spaces" and "genius hour" lately? Below are excerpts that may interest you for the coming school year. Have great ideas or resources to share? Please send WVPE any programs and ideas that can be shared.

Making the Grade: Cobb County students study science of baseball

Excerpt from H. M. Cauley for AJC.com

While most of Cobb County was driving along I-75 and watching the building progress of the Braves' new baseball stadium before it opened in April, students at area middle schools were studying the science of the sport, from how to calculate a strike zone to the composition of the soil on the pitcher's mound. Their projects were part of the "Science of Sport" program the Cobb district adapted from the University of Arizona, said Sally Creel, the district's STEM and innovation supervisor.

"The schools have gone crazy for it," said Creel. "The kids love it. And at the same time, the curriculum aligns with our state standards in science, math and physical education." For instance, Creel said, students used baseball as the basis for figuring batting averages, measuring batting stances and strikes zone, and calculating the angles of bases. "This program combined the science with the athleticism," said Creel, "so kids who may not have been the best math or science students but understood the mechanics of baseball could work with students who understood the math and science part."

The baseball theme permeated the schools, with some cafeterias serving Braves Burgers and Pop Fly chicken, and English classes writing a Braves song. "You name it, they were doing it," said Creel. "The program created new opportunities to integrate baseball as the main theme throughout." Information about the Science of Sport and other STEM initiatives in Cobb can be found at stemcobb.com.

The Most Practical Ways to Get Students to Lead Their Learning

Excerpt from Education Week, Classroom Q & A with Larry Ferlazzo

Rebecca Mielwocki is the 2012 California and National Teacher of the Year. After teaching middle and high school for 20 years, Rebecca is currently working as a teacher on special assignment for Burbank Unified School District. She is a huge believer that kids and their teachers can do better and be better every day:

"Before I offer an answer, I just have to share how transformative Genius Hour was for my teaching, my students and my classroom, and me. If you have any way at

all of trying this, even if it becomes a Genius Week or a daily Genius Minute, please DO it. You won't regret it. I promise.

Every Friday for an entire semester, I would turn over the reins of research, learning, and doing to my 7th grade students. We began by spending three class periods introducing the concept of Genius Hour and self-directed learning, having them select some of their personal passions, and then narrowing it down to a focus question about one of those areas that they'd like to spend 17 more hours exploring...Questions could not be Google-able, could not be yes or no questions, and finding the answer required about 15 hours of thinking, work, and research. In other words, focus questions were tricky and needed to be just right in order to propel this project.

Once their focus question was approved, students came to class each Friday, took out their Genius folders, grabbed an iPad from our cart, and began work. Each Friday would find my students engaged in different activities such as reading, researching, testing, drawing, building, or practice. About five minutes before the period ended, they had to log their activity for the day and list one next step they'd need to accomplish before the next work session. Three times per semester, I'd send out a blog question about their progress through our KidBlog site, and they'd have to formulate a 250 word written response. Parents, administrators, their classmates and I could all view and comment on student blog responses. These short and

medium-sized written bits received marks in the gradebook.

With three weeks left to go in the semester, students began learning about the various ways they could present their journey, with one mandatory component being the use of digital tools. I made it clear on day one that success was to be found in the journey. Whether they accomplished what they set out to or not, it was more important that they shared their process, their progress, and then whatever outcomes they feel they did achieve. What followed was two weeks of shared individual learning & discoveries that blew me away. My students learned to sew, to play guitar, to code video games, to speak a foreign language, to make a short film, and 31 other unique things. The student with the short film was invited to Comic Con in San Diego last year to present it at the Kids' Festival there. Wow! I couldn't believe how an idea so simple as letting kids loose to learn on their own could reap such invigorating, meaningful, and inspiring rewards. During the presentations, students wrote constructive feedback and asked probing questions of one another, and by the end of the term, kids implored me to promise we'd do it again in the spring. We sure did, and I can't imagine teaching without Genius Hour ever again.

From Larry Ferlazzo: *I've used versions of a Genius Hour in my own classroom. You can find lots of practical resources at The Best Resources For Applying "Fed Ex Days" (Also Known As "Genius Hours") To Schools.*

WVPE 2017-2018 Ballot and Survey Question

If you have not received the online ballot/survey or completed it, please complete this copy and send to the Ernest and Alma Page by July 15, 2017. All other members of the Executive Board are appointed.

Vote for one:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| President | _____ | Alicia Mullins, Logan County |
| | _____ | Write in: _____ |
| Vice-President | _____ | Beth Post, Upshur County |
| | _____ | Write in: _____ |
| Recording Secretary | _____ | Jackie McDaniels, Upshur County |
| | _____ | Write in: _____ |

Survey Questions:

WVPE traditionally sends calendars to members each year. We would like to know what you are interested in receiving. Please rank these items in order from the one you prefer most (1) to the one you prefer least (4):

- _____ Desk calendar _____ Pocket calendar _____ Planner _____ Post-It Notes

Members of the State Board of Education be elected rather an appointed.

- _____ Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Neutral _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree

WVPE is looking ahead to the coming year and future legislative sessions. Do you have other issues or concerns you'd like addressed? _____

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Congratulations to Mary Ann Testerman Arch Coal Teacher Award Winner

WVPE member Mary Ann Testerman has been named a 2017 Arch Coal Teacher Award Winner. Ten outstanding teachers in West Virginia were recognized as recipients of this prestigious award and honored at a special assembly at their respective schools.

This outstanding educator earned her bachelor's degree in home economics from West Virginia Wesleyan College and a master's degree from Marshall University. Mary Ann currently teaches Family and Consumer/Human Services classes at Mingo Central High School. She teaches parenting classes and classes for the Social Services Assistant program, a CTE program for students who want to pursue careers in social services/human services. She serves as the advisor for Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) and is a member of the WV/American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and of the Association of Career and Technical Educators. Mary



Arch Coal Vice President Russ Lorince, Mary Ann Testerman, Mingo County Superintendent Don Spence, and Mingo Central High School Principal Daniel Dean.

Ann also serves on the West Virginia Commission for Professional Teaching Standards. In her free time, she

enjoys co-teaching the middle school class at Word of Life church in Logan, reading, and caring for her cats.