

# WFIS eMemo

June 2011

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It is with deep gratitude and humility that I say thank you to the private school community of Washington for allowing me the privilege to serve as your Executive Director for the past seven years. It has been exciting to see and be a part of the many accomplishments of our organization. Together we have changed the role of private schools from a minority to be ignored to a valued colleague in developing and implementing educational policy within our state.

No positive and lasting work is done in isolation, however. We have built a strong and diverse team of partners across our state. WFIS has an outstanding Board of Directors representing all of our major private school associations. Each of those individuals is a leader in their constituency. We are also privileged to be represented by a strong State Board representative, Jack Schuster, and Chair of the Private Schools Advisory Committee, Don Johnson. As we, our private schools community, continue to work together, our future looks bright.

I am excited that our new Executive Director, Suzie Hanson, has agreed to serve you beginning July 1. She brings continuity and excitement to the position. We have been working together for several months to make the transition as seamless as possible. I know she will represent you well.

Thank you for the privilege of representing you!



Judy Jennings



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**WFIS 2011  
Calendar:**

**The 2011 Legislative Session** is finally in the history books. After almost five months of arguing, negotiating and hand-wringing, state lawmakers passed a very lean budget for the next biennium. With 62% of the state budget allotted to education and the need to address a five billion dollar short-fall, it was a difficult task to decide how and what should be cut, eliminated or streamlined. Since the focus of legislators was primarily on the public education sector, private schools remain relatively unaffected by direct legislative action this year.

Even though the 2011-13 budget is in print, the state has still not solved the need for underlying changes in order to keep our state economically sustainable. Many questions remain. Will current changes and plans to reduce spending last longer than the current recession, or will our legislators revert back to their old spending habits? Will our state finally become business-friendly rather than business phobic? Will we see a more balanced approach to state government where one party does not control all of its branches? And finally, how will the private school community fit into the future scheme of state government? These are all issues that need to be addressed as we move forward.

While at present private education is enjoying moderate pupil gains within a difficult economic environment, it is important to continue our vigilance for the future. This session, as well as the ones in the past couple of years, has seen some stunning attempts to make inroads into our educational independence. Although the Governor's plan to change educational governance in our state through SB 5639 failed, legislators and the Governor will continue to work on these changes for next year. The SEIU continues to try to expand its reach into private early learning programs through unionization. It is important to monitor this organization for the future. As Washington State approves the national Common Core Standards for learning, will it force our high schools to change and adapt curriculum to meet imposed learning standards? It is important to continue the dialogue with OSPI and our legislative leaders to make sure our autonomy remains intact.

At one hearing of the Senate Education Committee this year, I stated that "private schools are the poster-child for unintended legislative consequences." Lawmakers do not often consider the effect proposed rule changes will have on private schools. It is therefore the paramount duty of WFIS and its member schools to continue to protect, defend and promote private education in Washington.

Judy Jennings  
Executive Director

January 10, 2011

**Legislative Session  
Begins**

February 10, 2011

**Winter Dinner and  
Best of Washington  
Awards**

February 11, 2011

**Seattle Public  
Schools Federal  
Programs Workshop**

April 14, 2011

**WFIS Board Meeting**

June 2011

**Statewide Private  
Schools Conference**

October 28, 2011

**WFIS/PESD Private  
Schools Workshop**



## Message from the Chair

Please take a few moments to appreciate the independence your school has to make curricular and educational decisions based on your individual school's mission. Look around at your teaching staff and remind yourself that you are able to hire the teachers that best meet your school's needs and who reinforce your school's mission.

It is powerful to be independent.

Now is the time to join or renew your membership with WFIS. Together, all private schools create an influential voice at both state and national levels that protects the independence of each individual school.

There are a number of reasons your membership is important:

- WFIS is THE recognized voice for all private schools in Washington State
- WFIS is the ONLY watchdog and advocate for private schools in Washington State
- WFIS advocates for ALL private schools in the State Legislature, OSPI, WIAA, State Board of Education, and U.S. Department of Education

Through WFIS, private schools are given the capacity to influence, challenge, redirect, and support issues central to their uniqueness, and this type of support is critically needed in these uncertain times. WFIS exists to assure that private schools are given a voice in the Governor's Office and through multiple state committees. WFIS exists to serve your school in meaningful and practical ways.

As this school year is nearing its end, I encourage you to join me in renewing your membership with WFIS. Go to [www.wfis.org/member](http://www.wfis.org/member) and enter your school code and e-mail address of record to update your account and print out your statement.

If you have questions, or if you are not yet a member, please contact Jan Morrison at [jmorrison@wfis.org](mailto:jmorrison@wfis.org) or 253.912.9347 to help expedite the process and explore options for new members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Brile Schmitz', is written in a dark ink.

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Washington  
Federation of  
Independent  
Schools  
P. O. Box 449  
DuPont, WA 98327  
253.912.WFIS(9347)  
[www.WFIS.org](http://www.WFIS.org)

Judy Jennings  
Executive Director  
[jjennings@wfis.org](mailto:jjennings@wfis.org)

Jan L. Morrison  
Assistant to the  
Director  
[jmorrison@wfis.org](mailto:jmorrison@wfis.org)



Briel Schmitz, Chair, WFIS Board of Directors  
Director, Spruce Street School

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## Upcoming OSDFS National Conference

Private school educators are invited to attend the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) National Conference, Making the Connection: Creating and Maintaining Conditions for Learning. The conference will be held August 8-10, 2011, at the Gaylord National Hotel & Convention Center, just outside of Washington, DC.

Sessions at the conference will focus on youth alcohol and drug abuse prevention; bullying and cyber bullying; violence prevention in schools; emergency management; health, mental health, and physical education; data collection; special populations; and emerging issues. The conference targets potential OSDFS grantees, juvenile justice practitioners, policymakers, education and prevention leaders, and school administrators, among others.

ONPE encourages the non-public school community to attend this informative conference.

## Registration

There is no registration fee for this event. Registration is available online at the [conference website](#) and will close on July 22, 2011, or when space is no longer available.

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If you were one of the private schools that received **OSPI Bulletin No. 025-11 Assessment and Student Information**, we are advised this was inadvertently sent to some private schools and it can be disregarded.

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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ESEA reauthorization has commenced in the House. Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA), chairman of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, has introduced HR 1891, the Setting New Priorities in Education Spending Act. The first in a series of ESEA-related bills promised by Republican leaders, HR 1891 would eliminate over 40 education programs. Although the text of the legislation has not yet been posted, a summary is available [here](#).

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## State Department of Health Updated Guide Available

Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2011: National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc.

<http://www.nasphv.org/documentsCompendiaAnimals.html>

Health risks such as infectious diseases, exposure to rabies, and injuries are associated with contact with animals in public settings, including county or state fairs, petting zoos, animal swap meets, pet stores, zoologic institutions, circuses, carnivals, educational farms, livestock-birthing exhibits, educational exhibits at schools and child-care facilities, and wildlife photo opportunities. Washing hands is the most important prevention step to reduce the risk for disease transmission associated with animals in public settings. Other recommendations include prohibiting food in animal areas, including transition areas between animal areas and nonanimal areas, providing information about disease risk and prevention to visitors, and proper care of animals.

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## OSPI Private Schools Summer Conference

Focus: Differentiation and Assessment in Light of Brain Research

Presenter: Gayle Gregory

Register now:

<https://eds.ospi.k12.wa.us/EventsManager/Info/Default.aspx>

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## The Bulletin Board

### [Washington State Library Updates](#)

Volume 7, May 26, 2011 for the WSL Updates mailing list

Topics include:

- 1) RECORDED BOOKS ISSUES NETLIBRARY INVOICES
- 2) FREE WORKSHOP - PROTECTING CULTURAL COLLECTIONS
- 3) STARTING STRONG INSTITUTE
- 4) SIGN UP NOW FOR ONLINE LEARNING FROM ALSC
- 5) SHARPEN YOUR WEBSITE - CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
- 6) FREE CE OPPORTUNITIES NEXT WEEK

### **Puyallup Fair Opportunities:**

September 16-17, 2011: Private schools interested in hosting a (free) booth or providing entertainment on the Education Stage during Private School Days at the Western Washington State Fair, please contact Stan Cross, Education Building Superintendent, at 253.848.8883.

College Fair at the Fair will take place on September 25. School counselors should contact Stan Cross at 253.848.8883 to obtain passes for interested high school sophomores and juniors.

See educator position postings at  
<http://wfis.org/educators/washington-state-private-schools-jobs.asp>

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