

# WASA NEWS

August 2020—Edition 1



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Employee Leaves in Hybrid or Distance Learning

Zoom, August 7, 9–10 a.m.  
To register, click [here](#).

### WASA/OSPI Special Education Conference

Five Sessions—Zoom,  
Session 1, August 10, 8:30–  
11 a.m. Click [here](#) to  
register.

### Leadership Amidst Uncertainty

Two Part Series—Zoom,  
Session 1, August 21, 8:30–  
9:30 a.m. To register, click  
[here](#).

### WASA Professional Learning Opportunities

To view the full calendar of  
WASA Professional Learning  
planned for the coming  
year, click [here](#).

## 2020–21 WASA PRESIDENT-ELECT ELECTION

Ballots for the 2020–21  
WASA President-elect  
Elections were sent to all  
active members by email  
on August 1. Included  
with the electronic ballot  
is a link to the  
candidates' brochures  
and their speeches given  
at the WASA End of the  
Year Celebration in June.  
The deadline to vote is  
August 13 by 5 p.m.  
Results will be  
announced on Monday,  
August 17.

Friends and Colleagues,

Typically, this edition of the *WASA News* would be a “welcome back,” so to speak. But these days are not normal ones. Many of you, after a pressure-packed spring, immediately shifted to a focus on the 2020–21 school year without taking a break. The task of opening schools, aiming toward a target that looks different than ever before amidst an environment that continues to shift and change by the day, is an enormous leadership challenge.

At this time of year, we often ask members of our leadership teams and teachers returning from the summer break to reflect on why they originally got into this great profession. It is a tried and tested strategy to have people pause and reset before jumping into the work of preparing for the arrival of staff and students. This time of reflection serves to remind all of us that our work is about serving and supporting students.

Superintendents and district office administrators are hardwired with a set of core values that center on doing what is best and right for students. Nearly all of you originally got into this business because you possess a deep and sincere interest in making a difference for children and young people. The satisfaction and joy you derived from the job came from the growth and accomplishment of your students. I hope it still does.

Throughout the spring, and now into the summer, it has been our pleasure here at WASA to interact with you, to support you, and to observe you working in a relentless fashion to tackle the problem of providing for ALL students the support and learning experiences they so desperately need. Day after day, your passion, commitment, and core has been on display as you seek to mitigate barriers and find solutions to complex problems—all in the interest of taking care of the kids with an eye on finding ways to support the most vulnerable. While there have been moments of frustration and discouragement, you always revert to a stance of, “we will find a way.”

I am eager to see the launch of the new school year and the innovation and improvements that will be unveiled as you welcome students back—be it virtually or in person. It will not be perfect, but it will be better than last spring. And I am certain it will be better in late September than on the first day of school.

I have three grandsons attending elementary school this fall, and while I wish things were “back to normal,” be assured that I take comfort in knowing their schools are in good and caring hands; exceptional leaders of great character who are dedicated to providing the best school experience possible for each and every student.

In a meeting last week, a superintendent mentioned that with the ever-changing landscape and ongoing uncertainty, he “keeps stubbing his toe.” He went on to say, a bit misty-eyed, “I just want my kids back.”

I think he nailed it.

## REACH OUT TO LEGISLATORS TODAY!

Connecting with lawmakers when the Legislature is not in session is an effective way to build or strengthen your relationships with them. In the past month, we have sent legislators copies of the [WASA 2021 Legislative Platform](#) and [The School Funding Coalition](#) legislative priorities. In reviewing both platforms, you will notice The School Funding Coalition priorities are in strong alignment with WASA's Legislative Platform for the upcoming session.

With massive revenue deficits on the horizon, it will be critically important for WASA members to be actively involved in legislative advocacy efforts in the coming months as we fight to protect school funding. You are encouraged to remind legislators that amidst a pandemic that has threatened the health, safety, and learning of school-age students across the entire state, our students need support and resources now more than ever.

## 2021 SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR

Nominations are being accepted to select Washington's Superintendent of the Year. Those making nominations are strongly encouraged to reach out to their candidate to make them aware of the nomination. Candidates must submit a completed online application to the [AASA website](#) by October 1, 2020. For further information or questions, contact [Shari Parsons](#).

### QUICK LINKS

- [Respond to the Census](#)
- [Substance Abuse Presentation Grant](#)
- [Immunization Changes](#)
- [Training Materials for Paraeducator Certificate Program](#)

## JLARC PUBLIC RECORDS DATA COLLECTION

School districts, like other local governments, are required to provide annual information on public records requests to the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee (JLARC). However, the vast majority of districts have not responded in the last couple of years. Even agencies and districts that don't meet the expenditure threshold are encouraged to respond, indicating they don't meet the criteria.

WASA, along with other local governments, has fought hard for reforms in public records requests, but we had little data to back up our concerns. The requirement to submit information is an effort to collect the necessary data to allow the Legislature to make an informed decision about whether or not the Public Records Act (PRA) should be adjusted. If school districts don't respond, (1) there will be no data to rely on; and (2) it is likely it will be assumed that PRA isn't a concern for school districts.

The reporting system and guidance documents may be accessed through JLARC's website at <http://leg.wa.gov/jlarc/Pages/publicRecAdmin.aspx>. If you have questions, please review the [reporting instructions](#), the [agency guidance](#) the [revisions document](#), or email <mailto:JLARCPublicRecStudy@leg.wa.gov>.

The deadline for reporting 2019 data is September 1, 2020.

## INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- **Racial Justice:** For information and resources, click the [link](#) on the WASA website. The following resources were recently uploaded:
  - [Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State](#) (OSPI)
  - [Research Priority Brief: Best Practices for Implementing Equity Walks](#) (Hanover)
  - [Guidance on Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Remote Education](#) (NYU Steinhardt Centering Equity Access and Educational Justice)
- **Pandemic:** For information and resources, click the [link](#) on the WASA website. The following resources were recently uploaded:
  - [School Practices to Address Student Learning Loss](#) (EdResearch for Recovery)
  - [Imagining September: Principles and design elements for ambitious schools during COVID-19](#) (Reich, J. & Mehta, J. 2020)
  - Our partners at [Hanover Research](#) have made available the following resources (see above, as well) for us to share with you:
    - [Tier 2 and Tier 3 Virtual Learning](#)
    - [How to Succeed in Distance Learning: 5 Tips for Students](#)
    - [How to Succeed in Distance Learning: 5 Tips for Families](#)
    - [Best Practices for Special Education in Distance Learning](#)
- The 9 ESDs have collaborated to create a [Reopening Communications Toolkit and Resources](#). Resources from each of the ESDs will be housed on the AESD main site.
- WASBO is hosting a panel discussion on August 6, from 10 a.m.–12 p.m. Topics include ESSR Funds, Claiming Student FTE, Definition of Instructional Day and Hours, and Nutrition Services. Click [here](#) to register.

### AASA CORNER

- [AASA Resources on COVID-19](#)
- [AASA Issues Statement on Passing on the Passing of Civil Rights Icon John Lewis](#)
- [AASA Advocacy: Three Opportunities for superintendents to engage in federal education policy](#)