Dear Colleagues:

Anyone working in Washington’s public schools in 1993 likely has vivid memories regarding the passage of HB 1209 by our state legislature. That education reform bill was Washington’s first venture into the education accountability movement, which swept the nation in subsequent years. Since the systems created by HB 1209 have become so integrated into the daily life of our schools, it’s hard to understand the scale of changes introduced by that legislation. For the first time in our state, all public schools were required to teach to the same standards in core subjects; annual testing aligned with those standards was required; and schools were held accountable based on their students’ test scores.

While there are many critics of the reforms introduced in 1993, Washington did a much better job than many other states with our reform efforts. One of the positive and unique aspects of the new system was that student learning growth was a central part of the accountability system. In her 1998 parent guide about these changes, State Superintendent Terry Bergeson said, “Districts and schools should be expected to improve and be evaluated based on their improvement over time.”

The improvement metric used by CEPA is the growth in student learning during the five years between 3rd and 8th grade. They use each state’s standardized tests scores to calculate the learning growth in terms of years. The Washington districts listed in Figure 1 were among the highest performing in the nation using this improvement metric.

As I began my doctoral studies in 1998, this approach to accountability became the focus of my dissertation research. There were countless studies at that time showing a strong correlation between achievement levels and student demographic factors such as poverty. In my review of literature, I found almost no research regarding the relationship between learning improvement and such demographic factors. The good news from my research was I found no relationship between elementary schools’ improvement on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and the demographics of the students served by those schools.

Unfortunately, this well-thought-out accountability system was eliminated by the flawed accountability notions in the Federal No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001. State Board of Education utilized a “Growth Factor” in its Achievement Index, but the improvement factor was embedded within a rating that was dominated by federal law. Recent research by Stanford’s Center for Education Policy Analysis (CEPA) provided a great mechanism for examining the levels of learning improvement for every school district in the nation. This work was shared in a New York Times article “How Effective Is Your School District?”

Figure 1
Each of these districts has achieved more than six years of learning on average for their students in the five years between 3rd and 8th grade testing. For six of the nine listed districts, that rate of growth ranked them higher than virtually every school district in the country.

The scatter plots in Figures 2 and 3, for Methow Valley and Union Gap respectively, provide a great visual representation of this ranking.

In these scatter plots, the vertical axis represents the years of learning over five years, and the horizontal access represents district wealth, with poorer districts to the left. The circles in the plot represent the 2000 largest school districts in the nation, with larger districts represented with larger circles.

From the improvement lens, Methow Valley and Union Gap are nearly comparable. But as the scatter plots in Figures 4 and 5 indicate, they start from quite different places (Union Gap is in the Chicago circle).

Methow Valley’s 3rd grade achievement is a little above average while Union Gap’s 3rd graders were about a year behind based on their test scores. Those starting points are likely due to as many non-school as school-related factors. What’s remarkable is that the Union Gap staff were able to more than close that gap within five years.

These top performing school districts deserve recognition for the efforts that led to their remarkable rates of improvement. This information also points to the value of improvement rates as a metric for accountability purposes. At the end of the day, isn’t it more important where our students finish than where they begin? And isn’t the growth between those points what really matters most for evaluating school effort and success? Congratulations to all of the districts listed in Figure 1 for their outstanding effort and success in that regard.
WASA Names New Executive Director

Joel Aune, superintendent of Snoqualmie Valley School District, will serve as the association’s new executive director beginning July 1. Aune will replace Dr. Bill Keim, who will retire this summer after leading the association for the past five years. Over the course of his 35-year educational career, Aune has served as a teacher, coach, principal, and superintendent in both small and medium-sized school districts in Washington. His work reflects a mix of the state’s own diverse school populations, with experience ranging from ethnically diverse and high poverty districts to affluent and high performing districts. “The WASA Board of Directors could not be more pleased in the selection of Joel Aune to succeed Bill Keim as executive director. His demonstrated leadership and involvement in WASA for nearly two decades will make this transition seamless,” said Dr. Steve Webb, WASA president and superintendent of Vancouver Public Schools.

2018–19 WASA President-elect Nominees

Candidates for this year’s WASA President-elect are Krestin Bahr, superintendent of Eatonville School District, and John Bash, superintendent of Tumwater School District. Candidate biographies will be included in the May edition of Hotline. Voting is scheduled to take place beginning August 1 through August 11.

WASA Superintendent Mentor Program

WASA is committed to providing support to incoming superintendents. Whether a veteran moving to a new district or someone new to the superintendent role, today’s leaders know they have just one opportunity to make the most of those “first 90 days.” WASA recognizes how critically important it is to make a smooth and effective transition. Among the resources provided to incoming superintendents is a “mentor” relationship with a colleague in the region. WASA mentors provide a friendly and supportive contact to assist those transitioning to their new role/new district. Specifically, mentor superintendents can:

- Make introductions within the region to jump-start professional networking.
- Provide guidance in developing and implementing transition/entry plans.
- Be a source of information regarding services and resources available within the region.
- Provide confidential problem solving.
- Be a colleague committed to success.

If you are an incoming superintendent and want to further explore the WASA Mentor Program, please contact Andy Wolf at 360.489.3646 or awolf@wasa-oly.org.

Grant Opportunity

Safeway and Albertsons know that teachers in our community can think of many answers to this question, and that’s why they’re proud to announce another round of the Innovation in Education Grants for 2018! Educators can enter by submitting ideas for creative projects in literacy, math, reading, science, health, art, engineering, and social studies. Innovation is encouraged, as well as unique ideas and unorthodox approaches. The contest is open to classroom teachers and specialists working with kids in grades K–12. The teacher can apply on his or her own, or if available, a school district foundation can apply on behalf of the teacher. To apply, go to www.safewayfoundation.org and click “Get Funded.”

See Executive Director Bill Keim’s most recent post at http://billsblog-wasa.weebly.com. Bill updates his blog regularly, so check back often for association news, information on education issues, and education success stories.
Upcoming Conferences

2018 WASA WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
May 5 | Campbell's Resort, Chelan
Register at https://wasa-oly.org/WIL18.

2018 WASA SUPERINTENDENT CONFERENCE
May 6–8 | Campbell's Resort, Chelan
Register at https://wasa-oly.org/Supt18.

2018 WASA/AWSP/WSSDA EQUITY CONFERENCE
May 23 | DoubleTree Hotel, SeaTac
Register at https://wasa-oly.org/Equity18.

2018 WASA/AWSP SUMMER CONFERENCE
June 24–26 | Spokane Convention Center, Spokane
Register and book your housing at www.awsp.org/sc18.

2018 WASA INCOMING SUPERINTENDENT CONFERENCE
July 23–24 | DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Olympia

2018 WASA/OSPI SPECIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE
August 2–3 | Hotel Murano, Tacoma
Call for Presenters opens April 11.

2018 WASA FALL CONFERENCE
October 9 | Location TBD

WASA Leaders Workshop
April 17, 2018
Four Points by Sheraton at Seattle Airport South

WASA leadership will come together to discuss WASA’s goals and direction for the 2018–19 school year in April for the WASA Leadership Workshop. WASA members in the following leadership roles should plan to attend:

- WASA Board of Directors 2017–18
- Region Presidents 2017–18
- Region Presidents-elect 2017–18
- Region Presidents-elect 2018–19
- Standing Committee Chairs 2017–18
- Standing Committee Chairs 2018–19

Incoming President, Randy Russell, will facilitate the day’s work.

WASA Honorary Awards

There is still time to submit nominations for this year’s Honorary Awards. Nomination forms for the following awards can be found at http://bit.ly/2ma4Hdp.

STATE AWARDS
The deadline to submit STATE nominations is May 1, 2017.
- Golden Gavel
- Barbara Mertens Legacy
- Service to WASA
- WASA Leadership

REGION AWARDS
Nomination deadlines for regional awards vary by region—see the Region Honorary Awards Application for further information.
- Award of Merit
- Student Achievement
- Community Leadership
- Twenty-Year (Self Nomination)
- Retirement (Self Nomination)

Are you connected to WASA?

Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Twitter for information on upcoming conferences and workshops, legislative news and updates, and school news.
AASA Governing Board Elections

Due to increased AASA membership, WASA has qualified for a fourth position on the AASA Governing Board. There will now be two eastside and two westside positions. Elections to fill the new eastside and Frank Hewins’ expiring westside position will happen in early May. Candidates will need to submit a photo and short bio. Deadline to submit interest in serving on the AASA Governing Board is April 24, 2018. At this time the following candidates will be running for the AASA Governing Board:

Eastside: Jake Hinkman and Michelle Price.
Westside: Krestin Bahr.

For further information, contact Executive Director Bill Keim at bkeim@wasa-oly.org or 360.943.5717.

WASA, AWSP, and WSSDA are partnering to offer our Third Annual Equity Conference.

The overall goal of this conference is to increase organizational leadership capacity by providing systemic strategies for equity and access, so all students can achieve at a high level. Participants from districts, ESDs, and state agencies will focus on research-based high-leverage core practices necessary for organizational growth in leadership for equity.

Audience: District, ESD, and state agency leaders. Team participation is strongly encouraged.

The $250 per person registration fee includes light breakfast, lunch, and clock hours.

Register and learn more at www.wasa-oly.org/Equity18.

WASA's Superintendent Conference Inspire.Inform.Impact. provides the opportunity to gather to learn with and from each other in a relaxed atmosphere. The conference will give you a chance to sort through and address some of the most pressing issues you are faced with as a superintendent. As always, you will hear from your colleagues as well as national and state leaders.

Book your housing and register now at www.wasa-oly.org/Supt18.

WANT TO TELL YOUR STORY?

Public education has never been better. WASA is looking for stories on the great learning and teaching taking place in our Washington schools. To “Tell Your Story,” please send information, pictures, materials, etc., to Tricia McCosh at pmccosh@wasa-oly.org.
Spotlight on a WASA Diamond Level Sponsor: D.A. Davidson and Co.

As the largest full-service investment firm headquartered in the Pacific Northwest, D.A. Davidson & Co. ranked as the No. 1 underwriter of Washington school district bond issues in 2017 for the 10th straight year, according to Thomson Reuters. D.A. Davidson & Co. has a strong commitment to helping school districts throughout Washington develop and nurture robust public education facilities. Our clients range in size from major metropolitan districts to rural one-room schoolhouses. With our customized, client-focused approach, Davidson’s education finance professionals in Seattle and Spokane are the go-to resource for school administrators.

The school finance team leaders, Jon Gores, David Trageser, and Cory Plager, are backed by experienced professionals who specialize in Washington local government finance. D.A. Davidson serves as bond underwriter and financial advisor to clients across the state, supporting school districts in many details of the financing process, starting from the beginning planning stages through levy certification and continuing disclosure.

At D.A. Davidson, we develop and execute long-range financial plans, provide election assistance, develop and implement bond rating strategies, monitor existing debt for refinancing opportunities, and support boards and communities with tax rates and property taxes. The D.A. Davidson team has a unique advantage as we have firsthand experience in facilities planning and capital funding from a school district perspective. This experience adds another level to our customer service and support to school districts as they navigate the complex process of capital financing.

The company is employee-owned, promoting accountability and allowing D.A. Davidson to empower its associates to do what is best for clients. Throughout the firm’s 83-year history, D.A. Davidson has been committed to educational philanthropy and supporting student financial literacy.

D.A. Davidson further supports the work of school district leaders by sponsoring WASA, the Barbara Mertens Legacy Award, and the Superintendent of the Year Award.

For more information, please visit www.dadavidson.com.

Upcoming Awards & Scholarships

**Doyle E. Winter Scholarship for Administrative Leadership in Education**

- Designed to assist talented and committed educational administrators as they enhance those skills and abilities needed to serve as educational leaders in the field of K–12 public education.
- **Application Process:** March 1–April 25, 2018

**WASA HONORARY AWARDS**

**State Awards**

- The state awards include the Golden Gavel, Barbara Mertens Legacy, Service to WASA, and WASA Leadership.
- **Application Process:** March 1–May 1, 2018

**Region Awards**

- These awards are handled at the region level and include the Award of Merit, WASA Student Achievement Leadership, Twenty-Year, Retirement, and Community Leadership.
- **Application Process:** March 1–May 2018 (deadlines vary by region)

**Superintendent of the Year**

- The Superintendent of the Year program is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active, frontline superintendents.
- **Application Process:** May 1–October 1, 2018

*To review the criteria for the various awards, visit the WASA website at [http://bit.ly/2g3DV0W](http://bit.ly/2g3DV0W). More information will be included in future editions of Hotline.*

**Dr. Doyle E. Winter Scholarship**

The deadline to submit a Doyle Winter Scholarship for Administrative Leadership in Education is April 25, 2018. The $1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a school administrator who is presently in or will begin a doctoral program in education. The application can be found at [http://bit.ly/2lAvXP9](http://bit.ly/2lAvXP9).

Please Update Your WASA Profile

Just as districts around the state are asked for staff and student demographics, WASA often receives requests regarding our members’ gender, race, and ethnicity. This information is helpful when specific invitations are made for members to serve on committees, task forces, or workgroups. In addition, we are also asked for a mix of geographic area (east/west) and/or size of district (small to large) as needed. Please take a moment to update your membership profile to assist us in appropriately responding to the requests we receive. Go to WASA’s website at [www.wasa-oly.org](http://www.wasa-oly.org) to log in/My WASA Profile/Update. You may also upload a photograph onto your profile.
## Region Events—April & May

Many WASA regions conduct monthly gatherings and/or provide activity reports in conjunction with ESD meetings (not listed below).

### Region 101
- **President—Brian Talbott**
  - April 25, 11:30 a.m. Awards Luncheon, Center Place Event Center, Spokane Valley
  - May 17, 9:30 a.m. General Member Meeting, NEWESD 101, Spokane

### Region 105
- **President—Shane Backlund**
  - April 19, 8–11:30 a.m.
    - May 10, 5:30–8:30 p.m.
    - May 17, 8–11:30 a.m.

### Region 108
- **President—Ron Spanjer**
  - May 3, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

### Region 109
- **President—Justin Blasko**
  - May 10, 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m.

### Region 110
- **President—Tammy Campbell**
  - May 18, 12–1:30 p.m.

### Region 111
- **President—Amy McFarland**
  - April 27, 7:30–8:30 a.m.
  - May 17, 11:30–1 p.m.

### Region 111 (Cont.)
- **General Member Meeting, Topic: Emerging Issues, Fife District Office, Fife**

### Region 112
- **President—Andrew Kelly**
  - May 18, 9–10:15 a.m.

### Region 113
- **President—Kim Fry**
  - May 23, 5–8 p.m.

### Region 114
- **President—Dana Rosenbach**
  - April 16, 6–9 p.m.
  - April 27, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
  - May 25, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

### Region 123
- **President—Wade Hahn**
  - June 14, 5–8 p.m.

### Region 171
- **President—Tom Venable**
  - April 19, 9:30 a.m.–12 p.m.
  - May 17, 7:30–8:30 a.m.

### Contact WASA

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360.943.5717 / 800.859.9272

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**2017–18 WASA Officers**
- President: Steve Webb, Vancouver
- President-elect: Randy Russell, Freeman
- Past President: Lois Davies, Pateros
- Secretary: Vicki Bates, Auburn
- Treasurer: Corine Pennington, Puyallup