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## **Tacoma's Carla Santorno National Finalist for Women in School Leadership Award**

*Tacoma superintendent one of two finalists for award honoring professional  
excellence*

**OLYMPIA** — For the second time in two months, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the nation's top professional association for school system leaders, has singled out a Washington state school leader for professional excellence.

**Carla Santorno**, superintendent of Tacoma Public Schools, is the latest honoree and one of two finalists for the national association's Women in School Leadership Award. In December, the AASA announced Dr. Steven Webb, superintendent of Vancouver Public Schools, was one of four finalists for the 2016 AASA National Superintendent of the Year award.

The AASA award for Women in School Leadership is given in two separate categories: the superintendent/assistant superintendent category and the central office administrator/principal category. Santorno is a finalist in the superintendent/assistant superintendent category. The criteria include demonstration of strength in both personal and organizational communication, professionalism and community involvement.

"I am honored to be selected as a finalist. I know of so many exemplary women leaders in Washington who deserve recognition for their work to improve the success of our state's children," said Santorno. "I am grateful to represent them."

Co-sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the award is designed to recognize exceptional leadership of active, front-line female administrators who are making a difference in the lives of students every day and pay tribute to the talent, creativity and vision of outstanding women educational administrators in the nation's public schools.

"Carla's efforts to forge better partnerships between the district and the City of Tacoma are a model for building strong schools," said Dr. Bill Keim, executive director of the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA). "By engaging partners in social services and higher education, Carla has greatly improved the odds of success for many students in her district, which leads to stronger communities for all. "This is a great honor for Carla, for her district and for the City of Tacoma," said Keim.

"We congratulate her on the nomination and look forward to the final announcement in February."

Under Santorno's leadership, Tacoma Public Schools has initiated unique partnerships that have positive results for the Tacoma school community. The district's partnership with the Tacoma Housing Authority has provided housing vouchers for students at a low income, high mobility elementary school. The vouchers are tied to parent engagement and housing stability. Partnerships with three local four-year colleges and universities, both public and private, have yielded gap financial funding for qualified low-income students, priority admission to education programs with guaranteed teacher interviews at graduation from college and a whole child district initiative designed to provide a sustainable system for insuring high quality social emotional learning for PK-12 students.

"This award provides AASA and the nation's education community with an opportunity to showcase the talented women educators who are providing outstanding leadership," said Daniel A. Domenech, executive director, AASA.

Candidates for the award are judged based on leadership in meeting the learning needs of students, personal and organizational communication strength, constant professional improvement of knowledge and skills, and active community involvement.

Both the Women in Leadership Award and National Superintendent of the Year awards will be announced in February at the AASA National Conference on Education held Feb. 11-13 in Phoenix.

To learn more about the award, visit [www.aasa.org](http://www.aasa.org).

***About the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA):***

*WASA ([www.wasa-oly.org](http://www.wasa-oly.org)) is a non-profit organization committed to the development of quality education through professional leadership. Members benefit from a supportive community of professional leaders working to provide insightful, valuable training, support, and resources. WASA also strives to sustain a positive impact on legislative and community leaders. Membership is open to education administrators in Washington state.*

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