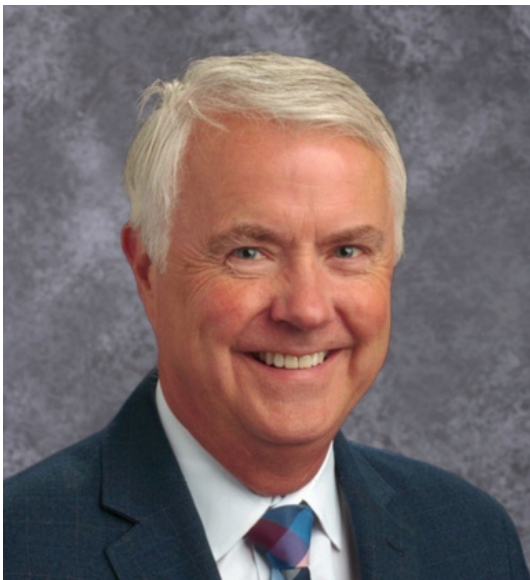


## FEATURING MIKE NELSON

# WASA Employee Spotlight



In this issue, we're proud to spotlight Assistant Executive Director of Professional Learning and Membership, Mike Nelson. Mike joined WASA in July 2020.

*"Mike Nelson has artfully woven a focus on learning into every district and school leadership role statewide. He's relentless yet graceful about our core purpose—improving learning for every educator and student in Washington State."*

Janel Keating, Author

### **What does your job entail at WASA?**

I have the pleasure of designing and implementing Professional Learning for the various member of our organizations. I look for ways to help our members become better in their job by offering lots of different professional learning opportunities. Part of designing and implementing these events is seeking partners to support our offerings, so they can be more affordable.

### **What do you like most about your job?**

Having come to WASA from being a superintendent, this job reminds me why I became an educator in the first place. It takes me back to all the reasons I loved being a teacher.

### **How has WASA changed since you were hired?**

The pandemic has made us learn a lot about online professional learning opportunities, and I believe online professional learning is here to stay. I don't know if we would have thought of virtual professional learning without the pandemic, but I now believe we will always offer it.

### **What is your favorite memory at WASA?**

Last October, we were able to bring all the teaching and learning directors together for an in-person conference. They had spent 18 months working on pandemic management, and not so much time on teaching and learning. When the directors got to experience that WASA workshop, there were a lot of tears of joy. Everyone was excited to get back to teaching and learning.

### **What were you doing before being hired at WASA?**

I was Superintendent of Enumclaw.

### **What do you like to do when you aren't working?**

Family is really important to me. We currently have three grandchildren under three years old, and they are a huge part of my life. When I'm not with family, I love to cook Italian food and garden. I have my own herb garden!

### **Best vacation ever?**

Norway. One year, my entire family and I traveled all over Norway by car. We stopped at every bakery we could, getting a coffee and pastry each time.

### **What is the most memorable place you've been to?**

There's this place near Lake Nicaragua, called Ometepe Island. We went on a mission trip there to support kids in an orphanage who loved playing soccer. It was right next to this big active volcanic mountain, and it was rumbling while we were there.

### **Reflection on your professional mentors...**

I've had a ton of professional mentors and support through my life. They saw things in me that I didn't see in myself and nudged me to take next steps when I thought I couldn't in my career. I'm a first-generation college graduate and I didn't always see myself the way my mentors saw me, so I feel very blessed by that.

## WSLA MEMORIES



Washington State Leadership Academy held an in-person event this summer, with a great turn out of student leaders and educators.

You can see scenes of these leaders in the photos above and to the right.

Contact [Sharon Bower](#) for any questions.

