

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# A Call to Legislative Action



Happy New Year from WASA!

Page 7 in this issue of the *WASA Hotline* includes a look back to January, 2010. In his *Hotline* message to members 13 years ago, WASA President Monte Bridges issued "[A Call to Legislative Action](#)." Dr. Bridges spoke of "the importance of delivering many voices, creating common messages, reaching for higher ground, and establishing common vision in our legislative work." Back in those days, superintendents assumed most if not all responsibility for engaging with legislators.

Fast-forward to 2023 and the call remains the same. Today however, we urge all WASA members to join in our legislative advocacy efforts by telling the stories of what is needed to care for, nurture, and educate the students in our schools—to convey to legislators the policy and resources necessary to create a sense of belonging for each and every student. We are asking all WASA members to become actively engaged in the important work of legislative advocacy in the weeks and months to come.

WASA, along with members of our [Legislation and Finance Committee](#), is working to build a unified voice among WASA members so that legislators are hearing a consistent message from school district leaders. Through the [School Funding Coalition](#) and Dan Steele's frequent and regular interaction with his colleagues, WASA is constantly working with other associations and agencies to identify common ground and speak with one voice on the big issues—driving a consistent message clearly articulating what is needed for schools and school districts to ensure equity for all students, and position school district leaders to effectively deliver the educational experience our students need and deserve.

This issue of *Hotline* includes articles by Dan Steele (page 4) and Mary Templeton, WASA's Legislation and Finance Committee Chair (page 5). Together, both pieces reinforce the essentiality of legislative advocacy, WASA's stated priorities for the upcoming session, and where to access resources for WASA members to engage in this critical work.

Sound policy and ample resources are essential—the fuel that sustains and bolsters your effectiveness as a school district leader

to build systems and create cultures that ensure all student achieve their potentials. Whether you are a superintendent, district administrator, or principal, policy and resources have a profound impact on your work. Policy and resources either inhibit or enhance your ability to fully meet the needs of the students in your school districts.

The "Call to Legislative Action" has been made. We hope you will respond to the call, in joining the effort to ensure legislators develop policy and provide the resources necessary to care for and educate the 1.1 million children in our schools. Imagine for a moment, if all 2,030 WASA members answered the "Call to Legislative Action." Imagine the strength in that. Imagine the influence we might have during the 2023 session.

Friends, now is the time for action. Thank you for joining us in this noble effort.

Respectfully,

## A MESSAGE FROM WASA PRESIDENT, MICHELLE WHITNEY

Winter is a time for reflection, restoration, and celebration. I have long given up setting New Year's Resolutions, instead, I have committed to a practice of self-reflection and gratitude over the winter season. This year I asked my friends and colleagues from across the state to join me in my journey of restoration. When I asked what was top of mind of WASA members as they look to close 2022, common themes connect our districts and us as colleagues. Themes like the extraordinary opportunity we have every day to watch the heroes in our districts do the impossible and make it look effortless or the hope and optimism that is shared when witnessing the resiliency of staff, students, and communities. Themes that amplify the importance of collective humanity and humbly approach our work from a place of curiosity.



Jeff Snell, Superintendent of Vancouver Public Schools, amplifies the importance of moments. "I have always been focused on 'fixing' with a big picture lens. I want to continue to focus on improvement, and the past several years of leadership have really reminded me that 'fixing' isn't always what's needed or welcomed for the road ahead. I have to be comfortable with ambiguity and look for opportunities to help." He acknowledged that shifting focus can be challenging and is grateful for the moments that have given him hope. "It's the interactions I observe in the classroom. It's watching our principals work their magic on any given day. It's our families and their drive for something better. It's listening to students and their ideas about the world." All of these moments and countless others connect and demonstrate that although the road ahead might be a little uncertain, it will lead to a very bright future.

Mary Templeton, Superintendent of Washougal School District, appreciates the deep reflection that comes in the face of big challenges. She reflects saying, "the 'gem' that has been mined for me has been the new understanding that focusing on our collective humanity is much more important than any skill set, knowledge, or ability we have gained over time. This brings a refreshing freedom to humbly approach the work and not feel like we must always know all the answers. Together, we can learn to better serve one another from this place of understanding."

Lisa Cadero-Smith, Assistant Superintendent in Yelm Community Schools, highlights her gratitude for the opportunity to focus on the "limitless possibilities for all students" as the most important underpinning of the important work of our professional lives. "WASA's dedication to removing opportunity gaps is evident in policy work, professional development, and ongoing support. I am proud to be a WASA member and thankful for WASA's strong voice and advocacy."

Lastly, I stand with my friend and colleague, Kim Fry, WASA Professional Learning Coordinator, who is entering 2023 "filled with hope for the future of students, staff, and stakeholders" and stand ready to "collaborate as we seek solutions to the challenging opportunities that we have before us." Together, WE ARE WASA. We do hard things. Tim Shriver during the WASA Winter Conference stated, "Same before different. Together before separate. It is not us versus them. It is just US."

I am proud and honored to be part of "us" with you and look forward to our next set of shared moments.

Michelle Whitney  
WASA President