

HOTLINE

A PUBLICATION OF THE WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS



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CELEBRATE SUMMER

We hope you are enjoying a well-deserved summer break!

HOTLINE

IN THIS ISSUE OF

WELCOME TO THE SUMMER HOTLINE!

As we enjoy the warmth and rejuvenation that summer brings, this issue is dedicated to celebrating the dedication, resilience, and continuous efforts of our educational community. Throughout this edition, we highlight the achievements and milestones that define our journey towards educational excellence and equity.

This summer, we are proud to spotlight the remarkable progress of our districts and the innovative approaches being implemented to meet the diverse needs of our students. Our districts are leading the way in creating inclusive and forward-thinking educational environments. In particular, we delve into the inspirational story of our inaugural Purple Star Award recipients, showcasing their commitment to supporting military-connected students.

Additionally, we are excited to introduce new faces to the WASA team. Shawn Batstone and Tim Garchow bring a wealth of experience and fresh perspectives that will undoubtedly contribute to our collective mission. Their addition marks a new chapter in our continuous journey of growth and innovation.

We remain committed to supporting our members with the resources, professional development, and legislative advocacy necessary to thrive. We hope this edition of Hotline serves as a source of inspiration and a reminder of the incredible impact you make every day.

Thank you to Mike Villarreal, Joel Aune, Shaun Carey, Alan Spicciati, Dan Steele, Deborah Rumbaugh, Joey Castilleja, Andy Wolf, Kim Fry, Mike Nelson, Matt Yarkosky, Art Jarvis, Kim Headrick, Erin Prince, Natalie Plott, Heather Chard, and Bella Troiani for your contributions to this issue of *Hotline*.

Do you have an idea for our next *Hotline* issue?
Send an email to Bella Troiani at itroiani@wasa-oly.org.

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EMBRACING THE SWING

ROWING TOGETHER TOWARD LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS

"There is a thing that sometimes happens in rowing that is hard to achieve and hard to define. Many crews, even winning crews, never really find it. Others find it but can't sustain it. It's called 'swing.' It only happens when all eight oarsmen are rowing in such perfection that no single action by anyone is out of sync with those of all the others. It's not just that the oars enter and leave the water precisely the same instant. Sixteen arms must begin to pull, sixteen knees must begin to fold and unfold, eight bodies must begin to slide forward and backward, eight backs must bend and straighten all at once. Each minute action—each subtle turning of wrists—must be mirrored exactly by each oarsman, from one end of the boat to the other. Only then will the boat continue to run, unchecked, fluidly, and gracefully between pulls of the oars. Only then will it feel as if the boat is a part of each of them, moving as if on its own. Only then does pain entirely give way to exultation. Rowing then becomes a kind of perfect language. Poetry, that's what a good swing feels like." Brown. J. D. (2023). p. 161, The Boys in the Boat.

As we draw close to the end of the 2023–24 school year, I'm reminded of the powerful metaphor of rowing, as vividly described in Daniel J. Brown's bestseller *The Boys in the Boat*. This story of nine young men who rowed their way to victory at the 1936 Olympics is more than just a narrative of athletic triumph; it's a testament to the spirit of collaboration and perseverance.

"SWING"...This term has resonated with me deeply, altering my perception of rowing from a mere physical activity to a profound lesson in unity and purpose. In rowing, as in our work, true swing is not merely about the mechanics of movement, but about finding that perfect harmony where every oar moves in sync, propelling the boat forward smoothly and efficiently.

As educational leaders, we too are in a boat, albeit metaphorically, navigating the turbulent waters of education uncertainties. This year has brought its share of challenges: budget shortfalls, staffing crises, dwindling student enrollment, and political hurdles. Yet, like a skilled coxswain, WASA is prepared to guide our 295 school districts through these rough waters by focusing on crucial legislative priorities: Special Education, Pupil Transportation, and adequate funding for Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC).

What does this mean for us as members of WASA? It means that now, more than ever, we need to listen, focus, and coordinate our efforts. Every one of us must engage fully, advocating for public education and lobbying for equitable services. We cannot afford to have anyone sitting idly by; the swing we seek requires all 295 districts and 1,900 members working in concert.

I confess, there have been moments this year when I felt like I was merely riding in the boat rather than rowing. But in a rowing race, as in our efforts, disengagement is not an option. Our swing—our collective effort—arises when each of us understands and embraces our role and its impact on our shared goals. Today is your day to engage elected officials and community members to about rowing in alignment with WASA's Legislative priorities. Together, we will change the lives of students across our state. Row and don't sit idle.

Serving as your WASA President has been a profound honor. As we face the challenges ahead, let us commit to rowing harder and together, ensuring that we not only face the challenges but overcome them, united in our purpose and resolute in our efforts.

Let's keep finding our SWING.



Mike Villarreal is WASA President and Superintendent of Hoquiam School District.

INSPIRING HOPE

CELEBRATING WASA MEMBERS AS BEACONS OF LIGHT



Friends and Colleagues,

As we reflect on the past year, I am reminded of the resilience and dedication that each of you has shown.

Last fall in the September *Hotline*, I shared a message emphasizing the importance of being a "Lighthouse"—a beacon of hope and guidance for the students, staff, and communities we serve and lead. *The Lighthouse Effect*, as described by Steve Pemberton, reminds us that ordinary people with a genuine desire to make a difference can have an extraordinary impact on the lives of others.

I am incredibly proud of the "collaborative spirit" that defines WASA and its members. This sense of community and shared purpose makes WASA strong and effective. By embracing this spirit—whether through innovative educational programs, community engagement initiatives, or simply supporting a colleague in need—you

have all shown what it means to lead with hope. The importance of providing hope cannot be overstated. In times of uncertainty and challenge, hope is what sustains us and drives us forward. The past year has presented extreme challenges to most if not all school district leaders. It seems budget constraints, controversial issues, partisan politics, community division, addressing the diverse needs of students, highly assertive unions, and incivility are ever-present. And yet you have risen to the occasion with remarkable strength and unwavering determination. You have been a guiding light for so many, often without fully realizing the profound influence you have had on those with whom you've come in contact.

As leaders, you have instilled hope in your students, showing them that their dreams are within reach. You have provided hope for your staff, inspiring them to persevere and innovate. You have given hope to your communities, demonstrating that together we can overcome any obstacle. And you have supported one another, reinforcing that even in the toughest times, WASA members are not alone.

As a new school year comes into view, I urge you to renew your commitment to being beacons of light. Your work is difficult, stressful, and often thankless. And yet you are privileged to have been gifted the opportunity to make a difference for people—to have, as Pemberton says, "an extraordinary impact on the lives of others".

Thank you for your unwavering dedication, and for the incredible work you do every day. At WASA we are grateful for the opportunity to serve and support your work; work that is making a huge impact on students and the staff working with them.

Wishing you a restful and rejuvenating summer break. No one deserves it more than you.

Respectfully,

G. Joel Aune
WASA Executive Director

WASA 2023–24 Goals and Action Steps

WASA's goals and actions are deeply grounded in the Association's mission and fundamental principles of Leadership, Trust, and Advocacy. The formulation of these objectives and corresponding initiatives is significantly shaped by WASA's embraced Educational Equity Statement. Executive Director Joel Aune and his team exert dedicated efforts to execute each of these objectives consistently throughout the year.

Leadership

Cultivate transformative leaders who model and exert a visible and determined focus on educational equity to effectively lead public education in their communities.

Action A: Design and deliver professional learning for all component members, supporting both individual leadership and systems-level improvement to ensure equity and excellence for each student.

Action B: Develop pathways for all district-level positions that attract leaders who reflect the diversity of our student populations.

Action C: Leverage the expertise within each administrator through collaboration with one another and our educational partners to address complex educational challenges.

Trust

Lead with integrity to build trust and advance a sense of belonging, cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion to achieve excellence in public education.

Action A: Build and expand relationships with and among WASA members and other stakeholders to develop and sustain ethical, visionary leadership for public schools and the students in them.

Action B: From a position of equity, communicate and engage through words, actions, and deliverables to build a unified voice among members, partner organizations, and the general public regarding the value of public education and a system where all students can learn and achieve their educational goals and aspirations.

Action C: Provide service, support, and leadership for WASA members, state agencies, educational organizations, and other stakeholders to elevate the sense of belonging for all students and eradicate opportunity and achievement gaps that are a result of systemic inequities in our schools.

Advocacy

Amplify WASA's voice and influence to champion public education in an inclusive democracy so that each student achieves their educational goals and aspirations.

Action A: Provide leadership and support for ongoing relationships and engagement with legislators and other policymakers to influence legislation and education policy that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure opportunities for each student to achieve successful outcomes.

Action B: In a unified and compelling voice, advance and influence budget and policy positions that support the provision of consistent, equitable, and ample resources to all school districts that will ensure fair treatment, equitable access, and opportunity for each student to achieve successful outcomes.

Action C: Actively influence federal policy to positively impact each student.

Have you read the latest WASA News?

WASA News is published monthly, providing our members with the newest information and resources for school administrators, central office leaders, principals, and superintendents. Learn more about the organization, along with helpful links and trainings that could benefit you and your district! Read this month's WASA News to learn more about:

- WASA President-elect Candidate Videos
- Hear from Summer Conference Keynote, Lori Hayes
- Management Reviews
- Honorary Awards and Scholarships
- New Evaluation Deadline for Principals and Assistant Principals

Interested in receiving WASA's monthly newsletter delivered directly to your inbox? Email itroiani@wasa-oly.org to join our mailing list.



WASA Mission Statement

The Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) is an organization for professional administrators that is committed to Leadership:

Leadership in providing equity and excellence in student learning.

Leadership in developing competent, ethical, and visionary leaders by:

- Promoting community and legislative support for education.
- Providing member services.
- Offering growth opportunities for leaders.

WASA's beliefs are anchored in Leadership, Trust, and Advocacy. WASA is, first and foremost, about Leadership for equity and excellence for all students. WASA members exemplify Trust through competence, integrity, and vision. WASA's Advocacy efforts focus on building widespread support and a singular voice to secure the resources and policy necessary to advance public education in the state of Washington.

In this issue of Hotline, Superintendent Shaun Carey highlights the second pillar of WASA's Mission Statement—TRUST.

Trust is the cornerstone of organizational success, influencing every aspect from employee relations to stakeholder confidence and



loyalty. Serving as one of three foundational goals held by WASA, the organization stands committed to building and cultivating trust, integrity, and DEI within public education, which is both foundational and transformative. By fostering ethical leadership, engaging in equitable communication, and providing robust support, WASA aims to create an educational environment where all students can thrive.

In Stephen M. R. Covey's book, *The Speed of Trust*, the author writes, "Low trust is the greatest cost in life and in organizations, including families. Low trust slows everything down—every decision, every communication, and every relationship. On the other hand, [high] trust produces speed, and the greatest

trust-building key is 'results.' Trust is a pragmatic, tangible, actionable asset that you can create."

WASA is committed to building and cultivating trust within public education, understanding that leaders who are transparent about their goals, challenges, and decision-making processes foster trust with their employees. Conversely, when staff members trust their leaders, they are more likely to align with the school or district's vision and work together towards common goals and objectives.

Trust therefore is not just a nice-to-have; it is essential for sustaining organizational success and growth, particularly in the realm of public education where WASA is dedicated to making a difference.

In organizations that value innovation, trust plays a critical role. WASA supports and encourages leaders to cultivate environments where employees are trusted to take calculated risks without fear, which fosters a culture of

creativity and continuous improvement in the classroom. This culture of trust promotes professional growth, confidence, and career gratification.

During crises, much like the not-too-distant COVID Pandemic, WASA exemplified trust by providing me with tools for communicating openly and honestly with my stakeholders, admitting mistakes, and outlining collaborative solutions. This approach enabled me to demonstrate accountability and reliability, while building and growing relationships. In essence, trust served as the foundation for strong partnerships and effective operations within my district during an extremely challenging time. Trust, therefore, is not just a nice-to-have; it is essential for sustaining organizational success and growth, particularly in the realm of public education where WASA is dedicated to making a difference.



Shaun Carey, Superintendent of the Enumclaw School District, also serves on the WASA Board.

BLAST FROM THE PAST Hotline Eight Years Ago

Check out the May 2016 issue of *Hotline*, which included:

- WASA President Frank Hewins' message, in which he expresses disappointment in the State Legislature's lack of action to meet their paramount constitutional duty. He concludes his message however, with a reminder that schools in Washington State are achieving at levels never seen before.
- Andy Wolf selected as New Assistant Executive Director at WASA.
- WASA Leaders Workshop
- 2016 AWSP/WASA Summer Conference
- WASA/OSPI Special Education Workshop

You can view this historical artifact and others on our website. Throughout the year, we will continue to highlight and compare current issues and topics with those of the past.



EDUCATIONAL EQUITY STATEMENT

WASA believes that Educational Equity, for each and every student, will be attained when barriers are removed throughout the system, ensuring equal access and opportunity for students to achieve successful outcomes. WASA will commit to providing vision, leadership, and support to district leaders as they take action to eradicate gaps that are a result of systemic inequities in our schools.



WASA's Educational Equity Statement, adopted by the Board, articulates WASA's commitment to providing leadership while supporting superintendents and school district leaders as they lead for equity. WASA believes that Educational Equity for each and every student will be attained when barriers are removed throughout the system, ensuring equal access and opportunity for students to achieve successful outcomes.

The statement further defines cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion—all essential elements of educational equity.

In this issue of Hotline, Auburn School District Superintendent Alan Spicciati shares his thinking on diversity...

WASA's approach to articulating a powerful Educational Equity Statement includes explicitly defining the four elements of the statement. Understanding and embracing what Diversity means is foundational to leading for equity.

Over the last generation, Washington's diversity has increased in all of the dimensions of identity. We are a richer, stronger, more vibrant community because of these changes.

In Auburn in 2002, 24 percent of our students were students of color. Today, 71 percent of our students are students of color. We have a large immigrant population from Ukraine and 4.5 percent of our students were born in Afghanistan. Our students are from 105 different countries and speak at least 85 different languages.

We had been talking about equity for several years, but with the national backdrop of DEI critics, it was critical to have a common equity definition for our community. Like WASA, we developed a definition.

In the summer of 2021, we defined equity as "Each student will have an educational experience in which they are seen and valued for who they are now, while developing their full academic and social potential to prepare them for the future they choose." We are very clear about what we mean by equity.

In the 2021–22 school year, we convened a citizens' committee to develop a new Strategic Plan. As part of this process, we examined our vision and mission statements. After robust community discussions, the group replaced the previous vision statement with our equity definition. Equity is now our vision.

This was a pivotal moment that has provided a common equity lens we use to examine our programs, strengthen our practices, and celebrate our diversity.

The diversity of our community is pushing us to be better educators.

Just a few examples of how we are changing to meet the needs of our community:

- More equitable hiring practices as a strategy to hire staff who represent our community
- Piloted AP African American studies at all three comprehensive high schools
- Opened the International Welcome & Newcomer Center
- Implemented AVID at the secondary level and piloting at elementary
- Hired an Afghan family engagement liaison
- Provided Implicit Bias Training for all staff
- Hosted Multicultural Fairs/Celebrations throughout the district

Diversity is a strength. As leaders, we are compelled to create an educational experience where our diverse community thrives.



Alan Spicciati serves as Superintendent of the Auburn School District.



JULY REMINDERS

Connect with Us

Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#) for information on upcoming conferences and workshops, legislative news and updates, and school news.

Update Your Profile

If you haven't already, please help us keep our membership directory up to date by taking a moment to upload your photo to your WASA member profile page. Contact Heather Chard at hchard@wasa-oly.org if you have questions or need assistance.

UNITING IN ONE VOICE

2025 Legislative Session

As discussed in the March issue of Hotline, the 2024 Legislative Session was a bit of a mixed bag for K-12 education. On the positive side, the 2024 Supplemental Capital Budget included historic increases in school facilities funding. On first review, the net funding for K-12 education was insignificant (\$41 million out of an overall increase of \$1.3 billion); however, that was a result of a large reduction in funding (\$295 million) for the School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP), due to unexpected school district bond failures. The two major investments were: a doubling of funding for the Small District Modernization grant program (\$115 million), which will support all of the districts on the waiting list; and a first-in-a-generation update to the Construction Cost Allowance (CCA or cost per square foot), increasing from \$271 per square foot to \$375 per square foot (\$79 million).

The 2024 Supplemental Operating Budget was much less impressive, providing K-12 education only a minor appropriation of \$525 million, including: an increase in the special education enrollment funding cap (\$19.6 million); an increase of \$21 per student for MSOC—Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (\$43.6 million); and an enhancement of the Prototypical School Funding Model to support paraeducators (\$71.8 million). While each of these investments were appreciated, they will do little to provide school districts needed relief as many are in the midst of budget reductions. Further, even though funding for K-12 education was increased, legislators' other priorities received the focus—and larger appropriations. This resulted in a continued decline in the state's share of the Operating Budget being dedicated to K-12 education. In 2019 (following an influx in cash to fund the McCleary "solution"), K-12 education's share of the Operating Budget peaked at 52.0 percent. The 2023–25 Operating Budget adopted last session continued the decline, dropping the K-12 investment to 43.7 percent of the state Budget. The recently adopted Supplemental Operating Budget provides just 43.4 percent of appropriations for K-12 education.

For comprehensive details of the Supplemental Operating and Capital Budgets, as well as a full examination of the many education-related bills that were acted upon this past session, we encourage you to review WASA's [End of Session Report](#). An additional resource is the Legislative Session Wrap-up Lunch & Learn webinar presented at the end of April. The webinar PowerPoint presentation is available [HERE](#); and a recording of the presentation is available [HERE](#). We encourage you to take a look.

With a new two-year Legislature convening in 2025, with the requirement to adopt a new two-year Operating Budget (for 2025–27), WASA has already turned the page to focus on the next session. The WASA Board adopted our [2025 Legislative Platform](#) at the end of March and disseminated it to WASA members shortly after. WASA's Legislation & Finance Committee and the WASA Board will be focusing on three specific budget issues: Special Education, Pupil Transportation, and Materials, Supplies & Operating Costs (MSOC). We are partnering with AESD and are starting to meet with the other education associations in an effort to recruit them to support this deliberately narrow and focused Platform.

Ultimately, it is a question about how "success" is defined. Asking for less than what is needed and achieving it is a defeat.

To have any chance of being successful in 2025, we need our members to participate. Knowing that this may be new to you, or perhaps outside of your comfort zone, we want to make it as easy as possible to engage, so we are developing a Tool Kit that will include key messages, talking points, fiscal data, and other resources. This will inform you, and help us to maintain "message discipline" and speak with one voice. It will be important to maintain consistency in our messaging, causing us to be more impactful and effective. In order for our strategy to work, we need to remain aligned—within WASA and with our partners. Additionally, repetition of our message—and repetition from multiple messengers, not just superintendents—will be critical.

To provide you additional information on the effort and our strategy, we are holding a Lunch & Learn webinar to review the Platform and unveil the initial pieces of the evolving Tool Kit. PLEASE NOTE: this webinar was presented before this issue of HOTLINE was disseminated; however, the materials and a recording of the webinar are available on the WASA website under the [Professional Learning Event Resources](#) tab. We encourage you to review the webinar and utilize the available resources (more will be added in the coming months) to engage with your legislators.

While the January 2025 Legislative Session is almost eight months in the future and it may seem just too early to act, remember it is never too early to engage with your legislators. In fact, effective advocacy is a year-round effort. During the interim between sessions is when legislators have the necessary time to have deeper and more meaningful conversations. We encourage you to jumpstart your advocacy for 2025 by building your relationships now and influence their thinking before they craft their own priorities for next session.

As we build this coalition, we are developing a tool kit—with talking points, fiscal data, and other communication resources—to assist and align our members as you engage with your own legislators. Our effort (and our hope) is to ensure WASA—and our partners—speak with one voice as much as possible. This month, we are also holding a Lunch & Learn webinar to review the Platform and unveil the initial pieces of the evolving toolkit. The webinar is scheduled for Wednesday, June 12, 12:00 pm–1:00 pm. The webinar will be complimentary; however, you must register to receive a link. We encourage you to participate with your colleagues.

Finally, remember it is never too early to engage with your legislators. During the interim between sessions is when they have time have deeper and more meaningful conversations. Jumpstart your advocacy for 2025 by building your relationships now and influence their thinking before they craft their own priorities for next session.

[Read our 2025 Legislative Platform here.](#)



Dan Steele is WASA Assistant Executive Director of Government Relations.

WASA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



WASA Board Members during their June meeting in Spokane.

BOARD

President: Mike Villarreal, Hoquiam
President-elect: Bob Maxwell, Pullman
Past President: Michelle Whitney, Pasco
Secretary: Chrys Sweeting, Arlington
Treasurer: Linda McKay, NCESD 171

Region 101: Jake Dingman, Oakesdale
Region 105: Curt Guaglianone, Mount Adams
Region 108: Michelle Kuss-Cybula, Oak Harbor
Region 109: Chrys Sweeting, Arlington
Region 110: Shaun Carey, Enumclaw
Region 111: Laurie Dent, Sumner-Bonney Lake
Region 112: Jeff Snell, Vancouver
Region 113: Patrick Murphy, Olympia
Region 114: Dana Rosenbach, North Mason
Region 123: Jim Jacobs, North Franklin
Region 171: Tracey Edou, Cascade

COMPONENTS

BPAC

Sarah Thornton, Pasco (Chair)
 Jill Pratt, Rochester (Chair-elect)

IPAC

Linda McKay, NCESD 171 (Chair)
 Denise Daniels, Fife (Chair-elect)
 Jenny Rodriguez, Yakima (Past Chair)

Principals

Matt Yarkosky, Bethel (Chair)

Special Education

John Sander, Franklin Pierce (Chair)

Superintendents

Mary Templeton, Washougal (Chair)
 Joey Castilleja, Mabton (Chair-elect)
 James Everett, Meridian (Past Chair)

WASA's Newly-Elected Board Members



BPAC Component Chair-elect

Chris Gardea, Walla Walla School District



IPAC Component Chair-elect

Amanda Kraft, Puyallup School District



Principal Component Chair

Elyse Mengarelli, Mabton School District



Superintendent Component Chair-elect

Robert Elizondo, Touchet School District

REGION PRESIDENTS

Region 101: Ben Ferney, Cheney
Region 105: Joey Castilleja, Mabton
Region 108: David Forsythe, NWESD 189
Region 109: Chrys Sweeting, Arlington
 Deborah Rumbaugh, Stanwood
Region 110: To be filled.
Region 111: Kevin Alfano, Fife
Region 112: Amy Huntley, Ocean Beach
Region 113: Byron Bahr, Rainier
Region 114: Tim Winter, South Kitsap
Region 123: Thaynan Knowlton, Clarkston
Region 171: Tabatha Mires, Waterville

HONORARY AWARDS

Congratulations to all the recipients of WASA Honorary Awards across Washington State! You have exemplified courage, leadership, and support to your communities, and we thank each of you for your incredible work.



HONORARY AWARDS



WASA Leadership Award
Tom Seigel
Superintendent, Bethel SD



Service to WASA Award
Paul Clay
Attorney, Stevens-Clay



Mertens Legacy Award
Dr. Andrew Sund
President, Heritage University



Golden Gavel Award
Andy Wolf
Asst. Exec. Dir., WASA



Learning from Leaders Award
Ron Banner
Superintendent, Clover Park SD



Most Effective Administrator (Large)
John Parker
Superintendent, Central Valley SD



Most Effective Administrator (Med)
Jon Tienhaara
Superintendent, South Bend SD



Most Effective Administrator (Small)
Andrew Perkins
Superintendent, Thorp SD



Doyle E. Winter Scholarship
Matthew Toth
Asst. Superintendent, East Valley SD



Howard M. Coble Scholarship
Adina Thea
Dir. of ELL, Highline PS

Empowering Inclusive Education

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE STANWOOD-CAMANO EQUITY SYMPOSIUM

The Stanwood-Camano School District's equity team is proud to have provided our staff with the opportunity to participate in an on-site Spring Equity Symposium on March 27, 2024.

The symposium focused on our district's Educational Equity policy and our District's promise that "every student is empowered to learn in an inclusive setting and is prepared for the future of their choice."

Planning for the Equity Symposium began months before the event, including an "all-call" for presenters within our school district, our district equity team, and close partners in the region. As a result, 22 presenters came forward and hosted offerings across four sessions. Presenters provided learning opportunities that reflected their own experiences and journeys related to equitable access for students in the classroom.

Participants could select sessions they found the most meaningful for themselves and their work. A sampling of the offerings included:

- SCSD Equity Policy in Action
- Providing Access for All Students
- Have you Considered Apologizing?
- Strategies for Promoting Student Independence and Encouraging Desired Behaviors in the Classroom Setting
- Allyship 101
- When Worlds Collide: How to Build a Sense of Belonging and Acceptance of Your Biracial and Multiracial Colleagues & Students
- Empowering Neurodiversity in the Classroom
- Supporting Latine Cultural Wealth
- Strategies for Having Difficult Conversations
- What's in a Name: Microaggressions and the Unintended Consequences

- Tier 1 ELA Instruction as an equity strategy: Making shifts: Balanced Literacy to Structured Literacy
- Providing Equitable Access to Core Instruction

What stood out to those who either attended or led the sessions was the strength, wisdom, and courage of our staff and community as they shared knowledge and experiences related to our District promise. These efforts are and will continue to serve our students.



Deborah Rumbaugh serves as Superintendent of the Stanwood-Camano School District.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

The Importance of WASA Membership

As the Membership Chair of the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA), I am filled with pride and enthusiasm to share with you the value and impact of our organization. For me, WASA has been a strategic part of my work both as a representative of a school district and a growing professional. I simply believe we are all better as school leaders when we are associated with and support each other—WASA does an amazing job of facilitating this! As you can tell from my personal experience, WASA is more than just a professional association; it is a vibrant community of dedicated leaders committed to advancing public education in our state.

Our mission at WASA is anchored in three key goals:

Goal I—LEADERSHIP: We strive to cultivate transformative leaders who model and exert a visible and determined focus on educational equity. As members of WASA, we have the unique opportunity to lead our communities with a vision that prioritizes equitable education for all students.

Goal II—TRUST: Integrity and trust are at the core of our leadership. WASA is dedicated to advancing cultural competency, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Through our collective efforts, we aim to achieve excellence in public education, ensuring that every student feels valued and included.

Goal III—ADVOCACY: In partnership with our allies, WASA amplifies its voice to champion public education within our democracy. Our advocacy efforts are critical in shaping policies that enable each student to achieve their educational goals and aspirations.

WASA provides incredible professional learning opportunities tailored to meet the diverse needs of our members. From conferences and workshops to focus learning for our component groups and "just-in-time"

lunch and learns, our programs are designed to support your growth and success as educational leaders.

As we continue to advance these goals, I encourage you to remain a member of WASA and to champion our organization to other administrators. Your commitment to WASA not only enhances your professional development but also strengthens our collective ability to lead, build trust, and advocate for the future of public education for our over 1.1 million students.

I sincerely believe in WASA and those that make up its membership! Together, we can make a significant impact on the educational landscape of our state!

With much admiration for your great work,
Joey Castilleja



Joey Castilleja is Superintendent of the Mabton School District and WASA Membership Chair.



MEET THE STAFF

EXECUTIVE OFFICE



JOEL AUNE

Executive Director

Joel has been with WASA since 2018. Prior to this, Joel served as Superintendent for 20 years in the Snoqualmie Valley and Colfax School Districts. He also previously served as an elementary principal in the Walla Walla SD and as an assistant principal and teacher in the Cashmere SD, where he began his career in 1983. In 2011, Joel was elected WASA President.



SHAWNA KILIZ

Executive Assistant

Joining the team in 2023, Shawna has more than twenty years of experience providing administrative support to superintendents, principals, and board members within the Washington State education system.



BELLA TROIANI

Communications and Production Support

Bella joined the WASA team in October 2021. Prior to joining WASA, Bella had several years of experience with WSU and Washington State RCW.

ACCOUNTING



EVE JOHNSON

Business & Infrastructure Manager

Eve has capably served at WASA for over 35 years, since joining the staff in 1985.



KALEY VONVOLKLI

Accounting Assistant

Kaley started at WASA in March 2022. Prior to coming to WASA, Kaley worked as an Accounting and Card Servicing Specialist. She graduated with her bachelor's degree in June 2022.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & MEMBERSHIP



SHAWN BATSTONE

Assistant Executive Director

Shawn joined the WASA Staff in July 2024, after serving as Assistant Superintendent in the Tumwater School District since 2019. Prior to that, Shawn was superintendent for nine years in the Hood Canal School District. His leadership background also includes time as Director of Teaching and Learning in the Yelm Community Schools, and experience as a principal and assistant principal.



KIM FRY

Assistant Executive Director

Kim brings 32 years of experience in education to WASA, most recently 12 years as superintendent of the Rochester School District. During the course of her career, Kim served as a first grade teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent. Kim started at WASA



RYAN HICKERSON

Professional Learning Assistant

Ryan joined the WASA staff in August 2023. Ryan earned a Bachelor's degree in Education, after which he proudly served in the U.S. Navy as a Training Program Manager for five years.



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



DAN STEELE

Assistant Executive Director

Dan has served as WASA's Governmental Relations lead since 2011. He has many years of varied legislative experience, including service as the executive director of the Washington Student Lobby, a statewide organization that advocates on behalf of Washington's public university students, and as a legislative assistant with the Washington State Senate. Prior to joining WASA, Dan served the state's locally elected school board members for over 13 years with the WSSDA.



HEATHER CHARD

Administrative Assistant

Heather joined WASA in November 2023, and comes to us most recently from Nisqually Red Wind Casino.

MEMBER SERVICES & ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS



TIM GARCHOW

Assistant Executive Director

Tim joined WASA in July 2024, after serving for eight years as Executive Director of the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA).



NATALIE PLOTT

Office Assistant

Natalie joined the WASA staff in September 2023. She earned her Associate's Degree in 2014 and worked as a Resource Paraprofessional for six years in the Olympia School District.

AWSP/WASA Summer Conference

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF HOPE

June 23-25, 2024 | Spokane | www.awsp.org/SC

AWSP ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
WASA EQUITY LEADERSHIP TRUST ADVOCACY



THANK YOU, DIAMOND SPONSORS!

Corporate sponsorship has always been an essential element of WASA's ability to provide an exemplary professional learning and networking experience for our members at a reasonable cost. But our sponsors provide more than just resources for WASA to deliver affordable conferences, workshops, institutes, and academies. Our corporate sponsors are true partners, as they view this relationship with you as a unique and altruistic one. Thank you, sponsors!



PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WASA places a high priority on supporting its members 24 hours a day. WASA executives are experienced, professional colleagues who are available to advise members on situations related to their roles as education leaders. Active WASA members are eligible to access the following through our Professional Assistance Program:

- Advice and Legal Counsel
- Legal Services
- Ethics Assistance
- Conflict Intervention
- Contract Review
- Mentorship

Questions? Please contact Tim Garchow. Tim can be reached at 360.489.3646 or by email at tgarchow@wasa-oly.org.

ANDY WOLF REFLECTS

Saying Goodbye After Eight Years

As I prepare to retire from WASA and embark on new adventures, I want to take a moment to express my respect and admiration for all of you. Over the years, I have been privileged to walk beside you through both the darkest hours and the brightest moments. You face countless obstacles and distractions daily, yet remain steadfast in your commitment to supporting students and helping them reach their fullest potential.

This willingness to go into battle daily is not only daunting but also some of the most honorable and courageous work I have ever seen. Your dedication and resilience inspire me deeply, and I am proud to have stood alongside you in our shared mission.

Remember — all good buildings stand on a strong foundation, and you are the bedrock of your communities and districts. Amid your tireless efforts, it's crucial to take care of yourselves. Lean on each other, focus on what makes you grateful, and always remember that even in the darkest times, you are leading, and people are watching.

Thank you for being such an inspiration throughout my career. I am grateful for the memories, the challenges, and the triumphs we've shared.

Stay true to yourselves and your convictions. Your work is invaluable, and your impact is immeasurable. Thank you for being such an inspiration throughout my career. I am grateful for the memories, the challenges, and the triumphs we've shared. Best of luck to each of you as you continue making a difference every day.

With deep appreciation and respect,
Andy Wolf



Andy Wolf has served as WASA Assistant Executive Director for Member Services since 2016.

A MESSAGE FROM MATT YARKOSKY

The Unique Benefits a WASA Membership Provides Principals

As a Principal and WASA member, I reflect on three specific areas I have benefited by being a member of WASA: highly relevant Professional Development, a better understanding of educational trends and issues — including hot button potential legislation, and the opportunity to build relationships with educational leaders who serve in diverse leadership roles in districts throughout the state.

WASA professional development is timely and relevant for me as Principal. Two recent specific examples stand out. When our building Equity Team was looking for direction, I turned to WASA. The WASA book study on *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity* by Cobb and Krownapple helped me see how to support students with a sense of belonging in school. I recommended the book and together our school equity team used the book to support the work of the equity team. I also think of the PD WASA did around RULER training with Marc Brackett, which helped me be a better building leader for Social-Emotional Learning. I am continually impressed with the offerings that are highly relevant to my work.

WASA gives the best and most thorough legislative updates. This helps me understand what is going on in Olympia, which is so important with the many changes that continually come to education. As a Principal, my staff often ask me questions about how a certain piece of legislation impacts them, or our students. I value that I can often explain what is going on in a straightforward way and feel I can be a good resource to my staff in this area.

WASA professional development is timely and relevant for me as Principal.

Lastly, the relationships I have built by being part of WASA help me be a better Principal. I enjoy getting to know central office leaders throughout the state in areas such as Teaching and Learning, Special Education, and Superintendents.

I get to hear their perspective on the work of supporting all students and it helps me know how to use them better as resources, or even how to phrase my questions, when I am in need.

When I assumed the Principalship, I appreciated that my Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent encouraged me to be involved in this organization. There is a lot of professional value-add I get by being a member of WASA.



A WASA Board member representing the Principal Component, Matt Yarkosky is Principal at Graham-Kapowsin High School in the Bethel School District.

TINKER, LEARN, LEAD



As educational leaders, fostering an environment of experimentation is crucial in supporting the utilization of AI among staff.

Encouraging your team to tinker and play with AI tools is a vital part of the learning process—especially considering AI, like any emerging technology, is still in its infancy, and so are we as users. This means both the technology and its users should expect to experience moments of imperfection that will diminish in time.

Leaders should reinforce that AI imperfections are expected and normal. By embracing these imperfections with a cheerful attitude, you model the value you place on learning to utilize AI and your growth mindset. Watching you fumble and persist with AI illustrates strong executive sponsorship and reassures staff that exploration and revisions are part of the journey.

Promoting a culture where experimentation is valued not only fosters innovation but also builds confidence and self-efficacy in using AI. Remember, our goal is to learn and grow together, embracing the learning curve and evolving with the technology.



Kim Fry is WASA Assistant Executive Director for Learning Innovation and AI.

WHY I SERVE:

Reflections from a Long-Time Leader

During this, my 59th year of service in Washington schools, it is predictable that someone asks why I still do this work.

Stressful times seem to heighten that inquiry. My answer is simple—heartfelt gratitude for the gift of joy and satisfaction from our work. (It also feels good to hear, “Your work must be keeping you young.”)

One might guess that I have reflected often on this Why question. Those who know my career might identify times when tears and anguish were painfully present. Yet even in those moments, I recall beautiful people and incredibly special happenings that shone amid the shadows of grim times. So many treasures arise from those memories that it would be impossible to push them aside with recollections only of darkness.

As I remember the joy and satisfaction, I also think about two debts I owe in return. First is remembering the trust given to us as leaders. We in WASA have the daunting honor to be in positions where hopes and dreams of children and staff have been placed in our hands. Occasionally, that is so imposing we look at our positions and doubt that we are deserving. We might even suffer from “imposter syndrome” in which we wonder if we are worthy. At other times, doubts arise when we face challenges that seemingly have no positive outcomes. In answer, I offer a lesson I learned when I approached a school staff meeting about a program for children with highly challenging behaviors. After negative comments arose, an awe-inspiring teacher stood up and said, “Is there any staff better than us to serve these children?” The issue was settled.

Is there anyone better to serve our young people and our schools than you?

To all of you I repeat that question. Is there anyone better to serve our young people and our schools than you? I would add a second challenge, “Is there any better moment as a professional than when you see the rich results of your work? Whether it be for one child or an entire community, your legacy will continue into that proverbial future that we will never see.

The second of the debts is to recall supervisors who considered my ideas and then offered permission, advice, and support. While I had not entered education with a mission to innovate and change, I have found endless cues and opportunities. Especially amazing was to discover supervisors who listened and gave their enthusiastic sponsorship. I cannot help but consider the effect on my life and career if my ideas had regularly wasted away from a lack of support. Instead, with a keen memory of those wonderful, enabling supervisors, I now pursue a quest to provide sponsorship to inspired educators who are striving to make a difference. ‘Giving hope’ is a magnificent tool for us.

I challenge each of us to repay others for the help given us along the way. Say ‘Yes’ to someone’s promising idea. You can bring joy to our business, especially in this time of stress and trauma. Help refresh the spirit which led so many of us into education. I remind myself that we hire special people to change lives of children through their artistry and imagination, not to do rote activities dictated by the system. Their joy and excitement as they do their magic will stay in your heart longer than any negative memory might remain in your mind.

And so, you have a glimpse as to why I wholeheartedly recommend and continue this work. Thanks for doing what you do — and thanks for benefit for decades ahead!



Art Jarvis began his teaching career in 1965 in Waitsburg. He has served 35 years as superintendent in seven different school districts.

CONGRATULATIONS TO The First Recipients of Washington State's Purple Star Awards



This year, the Purple Star Award Program was launched in Washington, recognizing school districts that support students and military-connected families. Sponsored by OSPI and WASA, the award celebrates districts that address the unique needs of students affected by military deployments and relocations, ensuring their educational and emotional well-being.



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



We recognize and commend those districts who have achieved the Purple Star designation

- Bremerton School District
- Central Kitsap School District
- Cheney School District
- Clover Park School District
- Medical Lake School District
- North Mason School District
- North Thurston Public Schools
- Oak Harbor Public Schools
- Peninsula School District
- Steilacoom Historical School District
- Sumner-Bonney Lake School District
- Yelm Community Schools

Supporting Military Families REFLECTIONS FROM MEDICAL LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Nestled beside Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington lies the Medical Lake School District, a community where military families find not just an education, but unwavering support. This deep connection has earned our district the prestigious Washington State Purple Star Award, a testament to our dedication to military-connected students.

This partnership flourishes on multiple levels. Michael Anderson Elementary, located directly on Fairchild, offers a nurturing environment for pre-kindergarten to grade 5 students. Older base residents attend Medical Lake Middle and High Schools, just a short bus ride away. This geographical proximity fosters a sense of familiarity and belonging for military families, easing the transition between school and home.

But the support extends far beyond location. The Medical Lake School District understands the unique challenges faced by military children. Frequent relocations can disrupt education, and deployments can create emotional strain. To address these issues, the district has implemented a robust support system.

Firstly, the district prioritizes a smooth transition process. Military families receive dedicated assistance with enrollment, ensuring a seamless academic journey. Additionally, our schools cultivate a welcoming environment where military culture is appreciated and understood by creating spaces within our buildings that highlight our military children and their value to our schools and community.

Secondly, Medical Lake Schools have earned a reputation for academic excellence. Our focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education prepares students for the rigors of college or future careers in these vital fields. This strong academic foundation provides stability for military children, who may face school interruptions due to relocations.

Finally, the district recognizes the emotional well-being of military children. We have school counselors and mental health interns who are trained to identify and address issues related to deployments, separations, and anxieties associated with military life.

Additionally, our district Military Family Advocate is dedicated to supporting our military families throughout their time at MLSD. Through all this, our schools foster a strong sense of community, providing a safe space for students to connect and build friendships.

This unwavering commitment to military-connected students is what truly sets Medical Lake School District apart. Our dedication to fostering a safe and supportive learning environment through a culture of belonging has earned us the Washington State Purple Star Award. It's a recognition of the strong bond we've built with Fairchild Air Force Base, ensuring a thriving educational experience for all military children.



*Kim Headrick is
superintendent of the
Medical Lake School
District.*

SALUTING EXCELLENCE

Washington's Purple Star Award Recipients

Washington State proudly hosts numerous military families, including active-duty members, reservists, and veterans.

Recognizing the need to support military-connected students, the 2023 Legislature established the Purple Star Award Program. Jointly administered by OSPI and WASA, this program recognizes school districts that implement military-friendly practices.

State Superintendent Chris Reykdal commended the districts, stating, "We honor these districts for creating supportive environments for military-connected students."

Joel Aune, WASA's Executive Director, added, "These districts exemplify a commitment to addressing the unique educational needs of military-connected students."

To earn the [Purple Star Award](#), districts must address educational, social, and emotional challenges faced by military families; maintain dedicated resources; and provide professional development for staff. The application process for the 2025 Purple Star Award opens this summer.



ERIN PRINCE REFLECTS

Purple Star Districts

I can't imagine moving every two or three years, starting over, and then saying goodbye.

Yet our military-connected students face this reality every day, and they do so with incredible grace and strength. I am so proud of them, and so humbled to be part of their story.

It's easy for these students to feel lost when they start at a new school. Transitions and deployments bring unique challenges and sometimes hardships. That's why we are determined to ensure our military-connected students feel loved and welcomed, and to help them build resiliency life skills and confidence for the path ahead.

Central Kitsap Schools is a proud neighbor of Naval Base Kitsap, the third-largest Navy installation in the United States. We are honored to receive the Purple Star designation, recognizing our commitment to our military-connected students and families. We demonstrate this support in several ways.

We have Military and Family Life Counseling Program counselors based in nine schools providing vital support, although eligible students at any of our 19 schools can access these services. Counselors help students learn to anticipate and resolve challenges associated with military life.



Our "Anchored4Life" peer-to-peer program helps students form connections while building change and resiliency skills. One elementary student described his efforts to welcome new military-connected students and explained, "I love seeing sad faces turn into happy faces."

We've also created a website portal with our Navy Region Northwest and Naval Base

Kitsap School Liaison to ensure smooth communication and support for our military families. This portal provides quick links for registering online and learning more about our support programs, as well as resources for tutoring, counseling, transitions, childcare, and more.

These efforts reflect our dedication to helping military-connected students thrive.

We're committed to making every student and family feel at home in our schools—no matter where their journey takes them!



Erin Prince is Superintendent of the Central Kitsap School District.

National Superintendent of the Year® (SOY)



Nominations and applications for the 2025 National Superintendent of the Year are now open. This program is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active, front-line superintendents. It is not a recognition of service at retirement or a program to reward current state or national leaders. Each candidate for the National Superintendent of the Year Award® must first be named by their state association as the State Superintendent of the Year.

Each State Superintendent of the Year is judged on the following criteria:

- Leadership for Learning—creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.
- Communication—strength in both personal and organizational communication.
- Professionalism—constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.

- Community Involvement—active participation in local community activities and understanding of regional, national, and international issues.

The deadline to apply for the 2025 Washington Superintendent of the Year is October 1, 2024. The selected superintendent's application will be submitted to the National Superintendent of the Year®. To submit an application or make a nomination, click [here](#). Questions? Contact [Joel Aune](#) or visit the AASA [website](#) for additional information.

About SIRS



Find out more about the benefits of becoming a SIRS member district.

SIRS is a non-profit organization that provides data and information on school organization, administration, operation, finance, and instruction to specifically meet the needs of superintendents, central office administrators, principals, and schoolboard members. SIRS contracts with WASA for management services. Andy Wolf, WASA's Assistant Executive Director for Administrative Services, serves as the SIRS Executive Director.

LEADERSHIP INFORMATION (LI)

LI is a series of monthly and quarterly articles that will help to shape and inform your educational leadership practice. These articles contain relevant school information research on the best practices being utilized in today's educational setting. SIRS has partnered with Hanover Research to provide this service to our members.

SIRS SALARY SURVEY REPORTS

SIRS annually compiles and publishes a timely salary-and-benefits report of Washington's school employees in three parts: 1) administrators, 2) classified personnel, and 3) teachers. Only SIRS members can access the full online surveys. The Excel spreadsheets allow members to create specialized reports by grouping information for any position from any size district.

SIRS LEGISLATIVE HANDBOOK

SIRS Legislative Handbook is an annual guide to the Washington State Legislature. It provides school administrators and professional associations with information about our state government, including directories, website links and email addresses, legislative maps, and much more. The handbook is a valuable tool for participating effectively in the legislative process.

It is also an excellent addition to social studies classrooms and school libraries. The handbook is available online to SIRS members and can be downloaded and distributed to your staff.

Farewell to Andy and Mike

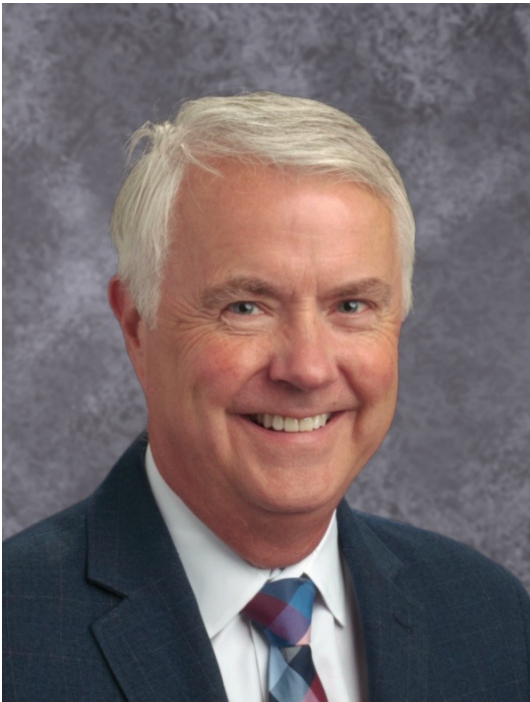
Andy Wolf and Mike Nelson retired from WASA on June 30 this year, leaving behind remarkable legacies of service to the association and its members. We extend our heartfelt thanks to them for sharing their talents, wisdom, creativity, and energy with us.

In Steve Pemberton's book, *The Lighthouse Effect*, he writes, "Lighthouses remind us that even in the darkest times, there is a light that will guide us home."

Mike and Andy have certainly achieved this ideal during their entire careers. What a difference they have made. We wish them the very best in their future endeavors.



Andy Wolf



Mike Nelson



The Meaning Behind the Logo

The WASA Logo, adopted by the Board in 2021, is a representation of the three foundational pillars of WASA—Leadership, Trust, and Advocacy, along with a commitment to Equity that threads through all we do at WASA.

The color blue represents trustworthiness, maturity, security, and reliability, while gold promotes optimism and hope. The gradient effect shows movement both forward and upward as we envision a future full of possibility for WASA and for you.

The WASA logo features the word "WASA" in large, bold, blue letters. To the left of "WASA" is the word "EQUITY" in smaller, orange letters. Below "WASA" are the words "LEADERSHIP | TRUST | ADVOCACY" in small, blue, all-caps letters.





WASA BOOK CORNER

*This month, WASA Assistant Executive Director, Mike Nelson, covers the book **Leading with Intention** by Peter M. Dewitt & Michael Nelson.*

Have you ever gone to a conference where the speaker gave a list of inspiring ideas, most of which you wanted to try back at school, but after a few days, those inspiring ideas were put on the side of your desk or in the cloud, never to be thought of again?

Over the years that we have attended professional learning sessions, we realized that we were being told about great ideas but not given any time to process them. As facilitators of learning, we have had many experiences where participants attend our sessions but do not understand why they are necessarily in the room. Or worse, they were told to be there without an explanation.

Those are a few of the many reasons we wrote *Leading With Intention: How School Leaders Can Unlock Deeper Collaboration and Drive Results* (Corwin Press, May 2024). We believe leadership is about how we learn as leaders, and how we set up psychologically safe spaces for those under our care to learn as well.

To us, it begins with understanding the importance of leadership self-awareness. What do we need in our leadership position? What improvements are we trying to make? How does our own thinking impact the way we communicate about important initiatives or strategies?

We then look to fostering human interconnectedness. What we know is that anxiety is at an all-time high in our world, and that impacts how people show up to our schools and districts each day. Bandura's research tells us that when people feel anxious it diminishes their self-efficacy, and negatively impacts how they learn.

Our book focuses on what we do about it. In our case, we look at our meetings, coaching sessions, and conversations as an opportunity to engage in professional learning. We send out pre-engagement letters with our success criteria and ask participants to consider their own learning needs. During the sessions we use interactive tools to get real time formative assessment and use that in how we deliver the content. Lastly, we believe leading and professional learning are both about "the dash." It's not just the moments we are together that matter; it's about how we apply what we learn after we walk away from each other.

Leading is about learning. Every moment that we engage with others offers us an opportunity to learn. However, improving classroom practices means improving our practices in meetings, and how we interact with each other during workshops and coaching. Leading with intention is less about one person making or forcing improvements, and more about how improvement is based on the interconnection among all of us.

PETER M. DEWITT
MICHAEL NELSON

LEADING WITH INTENTION

How School Leaders Can Unlock Deeper Collaboration and Drive Results



Foreword by John Hattie
Afterword by Shelley Harwayne

CORWIN

This book is filled with research, practical stories and experiences, and places for the reader to contribute to make the book better through their personal thoughts and leadership insights. It is our dream to guide the reader on their own leadership journey so that at the end they become the third author of a one of a kind first edition professional learning book titled **Leading with Intention**.



*Mike Nelson is recently retired WASA's Assistant Executive Director of Professional Learning and Membership. He is currently a Thought Partner for the Instructional Leadership Collective and Co-Author of **Leading with Intention** with Peter DeWitt.*

Leading Inclusion

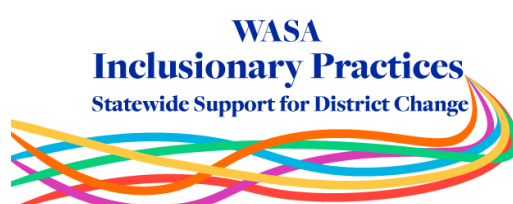
The success of WASA's Inclusionary Practices Project districts is featured in the insightful article, "Leading Inclusion," co-authored by Katie Novak and Helene Paroff. Novak and Paroff share the remarkable strides made in inclusive education in Washington, highlighting a significant 12.8 percent increase in inclusion rates across participating districts.

They delve into the multifaceted approach that fosters inclusive learning environments. This comprehensive piece covers essential strategies from establishing effective leadership teams to leveraging community-wide collaboration and ongoing professional development. If you're eager to understand and replicate successful inclusion practices in your district, the article is available [here](#).

WASA will apply for the next round of OSPI funding to continue supporting inclusionary practices integration in Washington's school districts. Stay tuned for more information!



Kim Fry is WASA Assistant Executive Director for Learning Innovation and AI.



EMPATHY, POSITIVE INTENT, AND COMPASSION: A Lifelong Lesson from My Early Teaching Days

I was 22 when I began teaching. My first position was teaching second grade at Orting Elementary. I clearly remember the pressure I felt to have all students make significant progress during their year with me. Even in the mid-1980's, Orting had moved to standards-based practices. The principal asked us to use our classroom assessments to evaluate each student on grade level student learning objectives for reading, writing, and mathematics before filling out their report cards. In Orting, the report cards contained both checklists and narrative sections and were turned into the principal for his review prior to distributing them to families.

Jimmy had strawberry blond hair and blue eyes. He was on the shorter side of students in our classroom and was stout for an eight-year-old. He had a grin (not smile) that could light up a room.

In drafting my first set of cards, it became clear that Jimmy wasn't meeting standards. I tried a variety of strategies, but often Jimmy would just sit. If I nudged too much, I would begin to see his eyes well up. At that time, we had one phone in the staff room that all teachers needed to use when calling parents. Even though I was very nervous, I courageously used the phone to call Jimmy's dad to see if he could meet. He said his hours were long and could not meet. I offered to come to his home and after a bit of back and forth, he agreed to meet at 7:30 one evening.

At the time, I didn't question doing this and I didn't tell the principal or other staff this is what I had arranged. *Note: This is not good practice.* It was a cold, dark rainy evening in the Pacific Northwest when I drove toward their home which was significantly off of the main road. After driving for what felt like several miles, I arrived at a small bubble trailer. Before I was able to get out of my car, Jimmy was at my window with his grin.

He invited me up the two steps of the trailer and together we walked through the small door. His dad was a large man which was magnified by the small trailer. His first words were, "I don't know who you are, Mr. Nelson, but Jimmy here talks about you all the time. He thinks you are something special and I am grateful. It's like he has come out of his shell for the past two months."

At this moment, tears were welling in my eyes. I had come to "tell" in a tough manner that Jimmy was behind, and we needed to do something. Instead, I chose to listen and say how much I enjoyed having Jimmy in my class and how much I wanted to support him with his learning, but we had some catching up to do. Even though Jimmy's father clearly told me he could not teach Jimmy, I asked for his help, and he agreed to support me. As we said goodbye, Jimmy's father said, "I can see why Jimmy likes you."

Jimmy made progress and became a reader during our year together. I quickly realized this moment wasn't entirely about Jimmy. It was a life lesson for me and as I look back, I would consider it one of my greatest learning experiences as an educator. The events of this one evening have remained with me 39 years later, even though my title shifted from teacher to leader.

- Jimmy's home environment was very different from the one in which I was raised. I needed to always have **empathy** for the many things I might not know about students (and staff).
- Jimmy's father was trying to be the best parent he could be. I needed to always believe parents had **positive intent**.
- Jimmy's father actually wanted me to hear their story. I needed to **listen**.
- Jimmy's father never came to our classroom for a meeting even though we met in person many times during that school year. I needed to **go to him**.
- Jimmy's father wanted to know I cared about his son. I needed to **demonstrate love, kindness, and compassion**.

As my time at WASA comes to a close, I continue to think of Jimmy and his father and the career lessons they taught me on that rainy November evening in 1985. As we lead and support others in our work, may we all bring empathy, assume positive intent, listen to others, go to them rather than waiting for them to come to you, and finally (and what I consider most important) demonstrate love, kindness, and compassion.



Mike Nelson is recently retired WASA's Assistant Executive Director of Professional Learning and Membership. He is currently a Thought Partner for the Instructional Leadership Collective and Co-Author of Leading with Intention with Peter DeWitt.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES!

INTEGRATED MTSS CONFERENCE
Empowering Excellence: Co-Designing Systems through Instructional Leadership
JULY 31 - AUGUST 2, 2024 | Washington State University Pullman, Washington
In partnership with...

Integrated MTSS Conference
July 31 – August 2 | Pullman

ONE CONFERENCE, TWO LOCATIONS | OCT. 16-18 | SEATAC, WA | OCT. 17-19 | SPOKANE, WA
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE innovation summit
Shaping the Future of K-12 Education in Washington

AI Innovation Summit
October 16 – 18 | Seatac
October 17 – 19 | Spokane

Staff Spotlight

FEATURING NATALIE PLOTT



In this issue, we're proud to spotlight our Office Assistant, Natalie Plott. Natalie joined WASA in September 2023.

Natalie is bright-minded and wholeheartedly embraces WASA's commitment to exemplary customer service. She is a genuinely kind person who positively influences our workplace climate and contributes significantly to the culture we aim to achieve.

—Joel Aune,
WASA Executive Director

What is your role at WASA?

I'm the Office Assistant.

What does your job entail?

A variety of administrative tasks such as event registrations, data collection and input, customer service inquiries regarding our association and services, and general support for our wonderful WASA team.

What do you like most about your job?

There's always something new to learn and do. I enjoy the opportunity to support my team and play my part in the smooth operation of our organizations. Most importantly, I value the connections I've made with our members and my colleagues.

How has WASA changed since you were hired?

Since I've joined, we've started our weekly AI meeting, hosted by Kim Fry, to learn more about AI and how we can best utilize it in our roles at WASA.

What were you doing before being hired at WASA?

Resource paraeducator in the Olympia School District.

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

Attend sporting events, concerts, comedy shows, play soccer in the SWSA leagues, engage in outdoor water activities and board games, try new restaurants, and spend quality time with my husband and dogs.

Best vacation you've been to?

In 2013, I island hopped the Philippines. The best part of that vacation was parasailing in Boracay and going diving to interact with whale sharks in Donsol.

Where's your favorite place in the world?

Moonlight State Beach in Encinitas, California. Many childhood memories were made there.

Reflect a bit on your professional mentors.

Mike — I admire his out-of-the box thinking and willingness to always provide guidance and support to others. He has a lot of patience and handles challenges with so much grace.

Kim Fry — She is an inspiring role model, especially for women. Her adaptability, commitment, and expertise are a few of the many things she possesses that I look up to.

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360.489.3641

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Bella Troiani, Website, Communications, and Production Assistant | itroiani@wasa-oly.org

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
360.489.3642

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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & MEMBERSHIP SERVICES
360.489.3640

Shawn Batstone, Assistant Executive Director | sbatstone@wasa-oly.org
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ACCOUNTING
360.489.3643

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MEMBER SUPPORT & ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS
360.489.3646

Tim Garchow, Assistant Executive Director | tgarchow@wasa-oly.org
Natalie Plott, Office Assistant | nplott@wasa-oly.org

WASA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Bob Maxwell, Pullman

PRESIDENT-ELECT
To be determined.

PAST PRESIDENT
Mike Villarreal, Hoquiam

SECRETARY
Chrys Sweeting, Arlington

TREASURER
Linda McKay, NCESD 171



MEETING THE CANDIDATES

2024-25 PRESIDENT-ELECT



Mary Templeton

Superintendent
Lake Stevens SD



Shaun Carey

Superintendent
Enumclaw SD

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Superintendent of Schools | Lake Stevens SD (Present)
- Superintendent of Schools | Washougal SD (2018-24)
- HR Director | Spokane PS (2014-18)
- Professor | WSU, Pacific University (2022-Present)
- Asst. Principal, High School | Spokane PS (2007-14)
- Teacher | Spokane PS, Idaho, California (1992-08)

EDUCATION

- Doctor of Education | WSU
- Master of Education | EWU
- Bachelor of Arts | University of Oregon

WASA SERVICE

- WASA Legislative and Finance Committee, Chair
- WASA Superintendent Component, Chair
- WASA Board Member
- WASA Equity Ad Hoc Advisory Committee
- WASA ESD 112 Regional President
- Active WASA Member

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & RECOGNITION

- AASA Learning 2025 Demonstration School District
- AASA Equity in Action Cohort
- AASA Women in Leadership Consortium
- CoSN Superintendent Collaborative
- AASA Communities of Practice Facilitator
- IDEAL Cohort (Innovative Districts Empowering All Learners): Site Visit Host
- AVID National Superintendent Collaborative
- AASA Learning 2025: Lighthouse Demonstration System
- Washougal SD Award: AWSP Principal of the Year
- WSSDA Board of Distinction: Washougal SD
- Washougal SD Award: ESD 112 Teacher of the Year
- WSPRA State Branding & Marketing Award
- Washougal SD Award: CTE Regional Administrator of the Year

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Superintendent | Enumclaw SD (2020-Present)
- Deputy Superintendent of PK-12 | Franklin Pierce SD (2017-20)
- Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and the Business Office | Franklin Pierce SD (2015-17)
- Director/Exec. Dir. of HR | Franklin Pierce SD (2011-15)
- Principal, Elementary | Franklin Pierce SD (2001-11)
- Teacher | Franklin Pierce SD, Clover Park SD (1994-99)

EDUCATION

- Doctor of Education | WSU
- Administration Credentials | PLU
- Master of Education | City University of Seattle
- Bachelor of Arts | PLU

WASA SERVICE

- Active WASA Member
- WASA Aspiring Superintendent Cohort
- Dr. Doyle E. Winter Selection Committee Member
- Superintendent of the Year Selection Committee Member
- Milliken Leadership Academy Attendee
- WASA Board Member, Region 110

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & RECOGNITION

- Former WSPA Regional Representative and President
- PSESD Superintendent's Advisory Committee Co-chair
- OSPI Superintendent's Round table Member
- Office of Professional Practices (OPP) APCAC Member
- NSPRA Superintendents to Watch
- Featured Articles in District Administration Daily Online
- Hanover Research Superintendents Leadership Council Webcast
- *Innovator's Mindset Podcast* with George Couros

New WASA Members

We've welcomed 67 new members since March 2024.

Our newest class of WASA members joins over 1,600 members from across Washington. Collectively, they represent diverse districts from every corner of the state.



Lynn Green, Aberdeen
Traci Sandstrom, Aberdeen
Scott McDaniel, Battle Ground
Erick Suksdorf, Battle Ground
Arionda Feeney, Bellingham
Melissa Munson-Merritt, Bethel
Ryan Nickels, Bremerton
Teneka Morley-Short, Bremerton
Jennifer Hernandez, Bremerton
Bonny Theis, Brewster
Sheree Gomez-Clark, Camas
Cheryl Erickson, Cape Flattery
Scott McDaniel, Central Kitsap
Jennifer Chase, Central Valley
Rob Curnow, Central Valley
Laura Lindley, Central Valley
Jeremy Wheatley, Dayton
Paula Dawson, Dieringer
Dawn Bushyeager, East Valley - S
Mat Orndorff, East Valley - S
Ken Murray, Ephrata
Aaron Cummings, Ephrata
Aaron Cummings, ESD 123
Michael Paquette, ESD 123

Gwendolyn Dain, Fife
Juan Gandara-Vera, Franklin Pierce
Erinn Bennett, Highline
Kisa Hendrickson, Highline
Holly Ferguson, Highline
Tove Tupper, Highline
Daniel Calderon, Highline
Stephanie King, Issaquah
Karla Shannon-Garvey, Issaquah
Luisa Sanchez-Nilsen, Issaquah
Wesley Benjamin, Kalama
Thomas Brillhart, Kennewick
Shannon Hughes, Lamont
Kari Montgomery, Longview
Jeff Naslund, Mead
Andrea Staton, Mead
Melissa Robertson, Mercer Island
Weston Lucas, Mercer Island
Kimberly Thompson, Morton
Mitchell Thompson, Moses Lake
Miguel Perez, Mount Vernon
Richard Zimmerman, North Beach
Mike Merlino, North Kitsap
Angela Wageman, North Kitsap

Michelle Roper, NWESD189
Donny Fraser, NWESD189
Marta Bloomquist, NWESD189
Michelle Blackmon, Olympic ESD 114
Laura Jones, Pasco
Katie Fosnick, Puyallup
Stephanie Glenisky, Puyallup
Jennifer Farmer, Renton
Theresa Burch Finley, Republic
Jeff Cochran, Selah
Andrea Zier, Snoqualmie Valley
Will Sarett, South Kitsap
Scott Peacock, South Whidbey
Kari Terjeson, Steilacoom Historical
Herman Lartigue, Taholah
Jessica Proctor, Tukwila
Meagan Dawson, Tumwater
Piper Gallucci, WA State Center for Childhood Deafness & Hearing Loss
Tawnya Martinez Halliday, Warden
Amy Low, White River

July

JULY 21-22

Incoming Superintendents Conference

JULY 31-AUGUST 2

Integrated MTSS Fest
 Washington State University
 Pullman, WA

August

JULY 31-AUGUST 2

Integrated MTSS Fest
 Washington State University
 Pullman, WA

September

SEPTEMBER 25

Listen & Learn Part I: Platform Review
 Virtual
 12 - 1 p.m.

Professional Learning Opportunities

Continue your professional learning and growth with conferences, academies, and workshops from WASA Professional Learning. Find more at wasa-oly.org.

