

HOTLINE

A PUBLICATION OF THE WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS



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Policy Changes in
Public Education**
from WASA
President.

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Leadership Award**
Congrats Alicen
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**SPRING SPROUTS
CHANGES**

Spring can be a time
of changes and new
beginnings.

HOTLINE

IN THIS ISSUE OF

LEADING SCHOOLS IN A TIME OF CHANGE

This month's WASA *Hotline* highlights the leadership, adaptability, and shared commitment of Washington's school system leaders during a time of continued change and opportunity.

President Bob Maxwell opens this edition with a message on navigating today's shifting policy landscape—reminding us of the strength found in collective leadership. Executive Director Joel Aune encourages us to stay grounded in purpose, while Michelle Whitney explores trust—WASA's second organizational pillar—and how it shapes impactful, ethical leadership across our districts.

John Welch challenges us to lead for equity by embracing diversity, and Dan Steele provides a clear summary of key education budget outcomes from the 2025 Legislative Session. You'll also meet our 2025–26 WASA President-elect candidates, learn about the AI proficiency gap in education, and read highlights from the WASA Leaders Workshop.

This issue also welcomes Dr. Jeff Snell as WASA's incoming Executive Director, celebrates this year's award winners, and shares new resources on global instructional leadership, upcoming professional learning events, and more.

Thank you for all you do to lead with Leadership, Trust, and Advocacy in every corner of our state.

Thank you to Bob Maxwell, Joel Aune, Michelle Whitney, John Welch, Dan Steele, Kim Fry, Shawn Batstone, Tim Garchow, Dominique Wilson, Kaley VonVolkli, 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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NAVIGATING POLICY CHANGES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

In recent weeks, the Trump Administration has issued several Executive Orders and Dear Colleague Letters that significantly affect public education. As public education leaders, it is crucial to stay informed about these changes to ensure the best outcomes for our students, families, and staff.

One of the latest Executive Orders, *Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling*, directs federal agencies to identify and potentially withhold funding from schools teaching content deemed as “indoctrination.” This specifically targets critical race theory and gender ideology, while promoting “patriotic education.” Additionally, recent federal guidance has reinstated the 2020 Title IX regulations, reversing earlier changes and defining sex as an immutable characteristic. These policy shifts have sparked mixed reactions and raised concerns about their potential impact on school funding, curriculum decisions, and student rights.

To address these concerns, we must advocate for stable funding through active legislative engagement and explore alternative funding sources, all while prioritizing essential programs. Curriculum decisions should be reviewed to ensure compliance with state standards, supported by professional development and stakeholder engagement to maintain educational integrity. Schools must also regularly evaluate policies to protect student rights, strengthen equity initiatives, and ensure clear communication with students and families, providing them with the support they need during these transitions.

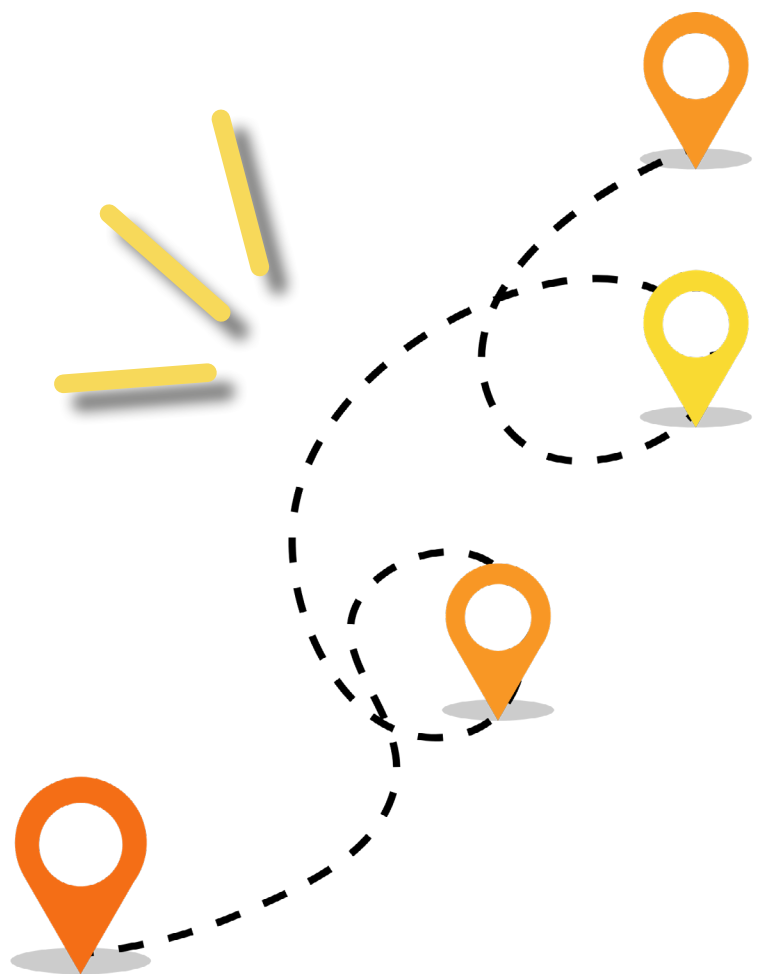
The recent policy shifts present complex challenges for public school leaders, especially when supporting students and families from diverse backgrounds. These changes contribute to ongoing stress and uncertainty, which affect the mental health of students, families, and staff.

Furthermore, the difficulty of fairly distributing limited resources increases the strain on educators and administrators, leading to moral distress.

To address these challenges, we can support educators and administrators by fostering open communication, providing professional development opportunities, and encouraging collaboration. Emotional support through wellness programs, alongside advocacy for increased funding, is essential. Involving educators, parents, and the community in decision-making processes helps create sustainable solutions and reduces moral distress.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has provided valuable lessons in decision-making, equity, and resource allocation. As we confront new uncertainties, it is essential to develop strategies that prevent unintended discrimination and ensure policies do not create disparities in treatment.



Transparency, proactive communication, and fact-based decision-making are critical to maintaining trust and stability within our schools and communities.

As policies evolve, we can foster stability and confidence by staying informed about policy changes and clearly communicating the facts to staff, students, and families. Addressing concerns through regular meetings, newsletters, or community forums ensures everyone is well-informed. Engaging with stakeholders and actively listening to their feedback helps build trust and creates a shared understanding, which can ease uncertainty and support a positive school environment.

I encourage all WASA members to stay engaged, informed, and dedicated to our shared mission of supporting public education. Together, we can navigate these challenges and continue advocating for the success of all students.



Bob Maxwell is Superintendent of Pullman Public Schools and WASA President.

LEADING AHEAD



SIX TRENDS EVERY DISTRICT LEADER SHOULD WATCH IN 2025

Over the past few years, WASA has forged a strong partnership with our friends at Hanover Research. Their recently released 2025 Trends in K–12 Education report highlights key issues shaping the current and future landscape of public education. As we collectively navigate the post-ESSER landscape and prepare for a new wave of policy shifts and resource decisions, staying ahead of national trends is more important than ever.

As leaders of Washington’s school districts, WASA members must be more than responsive—we must be forward-thinking. Our role requires us to look ahead, anticipate what’s coming, and begin preparing for tomorrow’s challenges today. Reports like this one help leaders to see around the corner and sharpen our focus as we prioritize, plan, and lead in rapidly evolving environments.

In this report, Hanover outlines six key trends shaping the educational landscape in 2025—each with real implications for the work underway in our schools:

1. Academic Recovery Remains Uneven

Persistent learning gaps—especially among vulnerable student populations—continue to demand rigorous assessment of curriculum, instruction, and intervention systems. Districts are embracing instructional audits, new frameworks, and reimagined assessment strategies to address these needs.

2. Enrollment Fluctuations Drive Innovation

With enrollment patterns in flux, districts are exploring strategic partnerships, community engagement initiatives, and targeted marketing to stabilize enrollment and rebuild trust in public education.

3. Strategic Resource Use Is Essential

The expiration of ESSER funds and uncertain future funding make it imperative to align expenditures with data-driven insights. Many school systems are building capacity for program evaluation and cycle-based budgeting to ensure effective use of every dollar.

4. Student Well-being Is a Top Priority

Mental health challenges, school climate, and student engagement are front and center. Even with limited resources, districts are investing in tiered supports, climate improvement strategies, and careful consideration of cell phone policy reforms.

5. Growing Staff Leadership Capacity

To meet today’s demands, teachers and staff need support in building leadership, communication, and change management skills. Differentiated professional learning, coaching, and succession planning are helping to bolster organizational capacity and culture.

6. Literacy Reform Takes Hold Nationwide

The science of reading is reshaping instructional practices across the country. Districts are focusing on foundational skills, cross-disciplinary literacy strategies, and sustained professional development to improve literacy outcomes at all levels.

The Hanover report affirms that while the work is challenging, WASA members are not alone in navigating it. Across the country, education leaders are demonstrating creativity, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to continuous improvement. As you shape your district’s goals for 2025–26 and beyond, I encourage you to use this report as a catalyst—to stretch your thinking, scan the horizon, and lead with intention.

See the Hanover Research study [here](#).

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "G. Joel Aune".

G. Joel Aune
WASA Executive Director



2024–25 WASA Goals and Action

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 (taking advantage of the rapid change in technology) 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 which 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 cultural competency, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging to achieve excellence in public education.

Action A: Further expand relationships with and among all members to elevate awareness and boost involvement in WASA, thereby developing and sustaining 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 all 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 all 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

In alignment with our partners, 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, our partners, and other policymakers to influence legislation and education policy that promotes diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging to ensure opportunities for each student to achieve successful outcomes.

Action B: In a unified, 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.

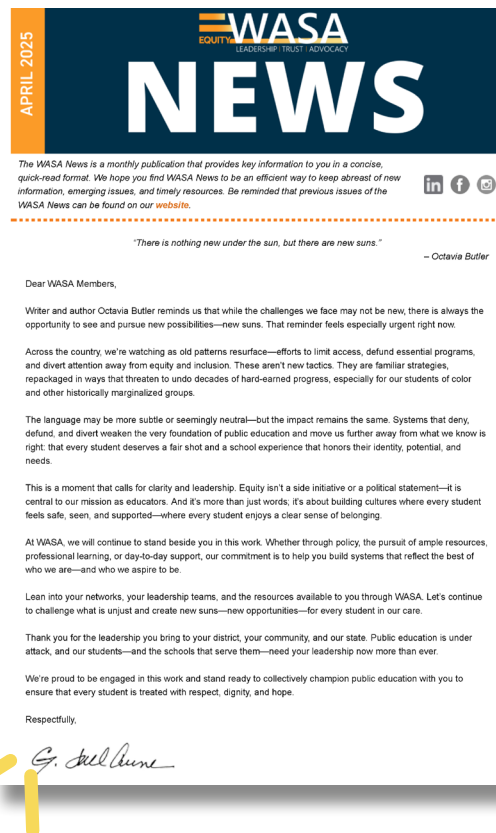
Action C: Actively influence federal policy to positively impact each student.

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:

- Executive Director message: New Suns, Same Commitment
- Legislative Update: LEA, Big Three, Apportionment
- First President-elect Intro Videos
- WASA Executive Director Announced
- Resources for AI and Misinformation

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

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 Michelle Whitney highlights the second pillar of WASA's Mission Statement—TRUST.

In times of uncertainty, trust becomes the cornerstone of effective leadership in public education. As we navigate challenges, it is easy for doubt and fear to undermine the collective spirit. Yet, the power of trust can create a foundation on which educators, students, and communities can rise together, even in the most turbulent moments.

Trust isn't just about following through on promises—it's about fostering an environment where transparency, empathy, and consistency thrive. By openly communicating the realities we face, making thoughtful decisions, and demonstrating a genuine care for the well-being of all involved, trust is built from the ground up.

In these times of change, it is essential to remind ourselves that trust is a two-way street. Leaders must be willing to trust the educators, families, and students they serve, empowering them to contribute to solutions and shape the educational experience. When everyone feels valued and heard, the collective resilience of the community becomes unstoppable.

Leading with trust is an invitation to embrace vulnerability, to acknowledge our shared challenges, and to uplift one another through collaboration. The future of education depends not just on navigating these uncertain times, but on doing so with confidence in the strength of relationships that have been forged on trust.

As members of WASA, we are part of an organization that is deeply rooted in the core beliefs of leadership, trust, and

advocacy. These values guide our actions and decisions, reminding us that our responsibility goes beyond managing schools—it's about shaping futures. Being part of WASA means being part of a community that is committed to advocating for every student, supporting our colleagues, and leading with integrity. In times of uncertainty, it is this collective commitment to trust that will empower us to overcome challenges and continue to build educational environments where every student and educator can thrive. We can take immense pride in knowing that we are united in purpose and driven by these guiding principles.



Michelle Whitney, former WASA President, is Superintendent of the Pasco School District.

BLAST FROM THE PAST *Hotline* Seven Years Ago

Check out the [April 2018 issue of *Hotline*](#), which included:

- WASA Executive Director Bill Keim highlighting Washington's early focus on student growth in accountability and celebrates districts that showed exceptional learning gains from grades 3 to 8. He emphasizes that student improvement—not just starting points—should be the true measure of school success.
- The WASA Board's selection of Joel Aune to succeed Bill Keim as Executive Director.
- Introduction of WASA President-Elect nominees Krestin Bahr and John Bash.
- Information on WASA's Superintendent Mentor Program.
- Promotion of WASA's third annual Women in Leadership Conference at Campbells in Chelan

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 April 2022, 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.

Embracing Diversity ON THE JOURNEY TOWARD EQUITY

The Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) has long demonstrated its commitment to educational equity. At the heart of that commitment is the pillar of diversity—not a milestone to reach or a buzzword to claim but a driving force behind the kind of educational environments where all students can truly thrive.

The Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) serves 425,000 students across the region, of whom 60 percent identify as students of color. Our region's school districts serve a large immigrant and refugee population, and more than 105 languages are spoken in our students' homes.

Guided by our north star, "To ensure success for each child and eliminate opportunity gaps while leading for racial equity," we strive to create racially just and humanizing school communities for all students. When we say 'humanizing,' we mean creating an environment where every student

feels valued, respected, and understood, regardless of their background. While we call out and lead with race, we recognize and honor the intersections of all identities. A single word cannot define a student. When we acknowledge diversity in our schools, we embrace inclusion and equity.

Diversity in our schools should mirror the richness of our communities. It includes—but is not limited to—differences in culture, race, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, religion, language, educational background, and socioeconomic status. It looks like accessible classrooms for students with mobility challenges, equitable pathways to career training after high school, and pay equity for staff with the same responsibilities. It's broad, deep, and interwoven into everything we do.

Exposure to diverse perspectives in our schools deepens empathy and helps students understand and value the experiences of others. It also plays a vital role in reducing prejudice, stereotypes, and

bias. As students engage with different viewpoints, they learn to examine situations from multiple angles—strengthening the critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for success in today's interconnected world.

At PSESD, we are actively working to become an anti-racist, multicultural organization. This is an ongoing journey, and while we know we haven't arrived yet, we are far ahead of where we once stood. Our commitment to embracing diversity keeps us focused and moving forward. We're grateful for the educators across the Puget Sound region—and the state—who are on this journey with us. Together, we are building the future our students deserve.



*John Welch is
Superintendent of the
Puget Sound ESD.*



APRIL REMINDERS

Connect with Us

Be sure to follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [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.

MEETING THE CANDIDATES

2025-26 PRESIDENT-ELECT



Thayne Knowlton

**Superintendent
Clarkston SD**



Tabatha Mires

**Superintendent
Manson SD**

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Superintendent | Clarkston SD (2019–Present)
- Superintendent | Kettle Falls SD (2013–19)
- Principal | Goldendale Primary School Principal (2004–13)
- Director of Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction | Goldendale SD (2001–04)
- Regional School Improvement/Assessment Trainer | ESD 105 (1998–2001)
- School Psychologist | Goldendale SD (1996–2003)
- Teacher | Family Skills Program (1999–2004)
- Presenter/Teacher | Columbia Gorge Community College (1998–2001)

EDUCATION

- Ed.D. Educational Leadership | WSU
- Superintendent's Certificate | WSU
- Principal's Certificate | Heritage University
- Program Admin. Certificate | Heritage University
- ESA Certificate (School Psych) | EWU
- M.S. Clinical Psychology | EWU
- B.A. English/Psychology | BYU

WASA SERVICE

- ESD 123 Regional President
- ESD 123 SAC Superintendent Component Representative
- ESD 101 Leadership Steering Committee

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & RECOGNITION

- Tri-State Memorial Hospital Foundation Board member
- Rotary International member
- Providence Rural Committee Board member
- Kettle Falls Downtown Association Vice President
- Paula Gmelch Scholarship in Educational Leadership Award
- George B. Brain Administrative Leadership Award
- Washington State Leadership Academy graduate
- Presented dissertation research on trustworthy leadership in Seattle, Washington

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Superintendent | Manson SD (2023–Present)
- Superintendent/K–6 Principal | Palisades SD (2021–23)
- Superintendent | Waterville SD (2018–21)
- Principal | Waterville Elementary School (2015–16)
- CTE Director | Waterville SD (2015–17)
- Principal | Waterville Jr/Sr High School (2012–21)
- Dean of Students | Waterville SD (2011–12)
- Jr/Sr High Teacher | Waterville SD (1995–2012)

EDUCATION

- Superintendent Credential | WSU
- Principal Certification | Heritage University
- Master of Education | Lesley University
- Bachelor of Education | EWU

WASA SERVICE

- WASA Isolation and Restraint Focus Group
- WASA Legislation and Finance Committee
- WASA Region 171 Vice President and President
- WASA Small School Component Chair
- WASA Superintendent Mentor
- WASA Small School Conference Presenter
- WASA/AWSP Summer Conference Presenter
- NAN National Advocacy Network Washington State

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & RECOGNITION

- Rural Alliance Board Member
- WASA Student Leadership Achievement Award
- WASA Award of Merit
- Rural Education Center Member
- AASA Member
- Leader in Me Lighthouse School Administrator
- Gates Grant School Reinvention Steering Committee
- AWSP Principal Mentor
- Manson Booster Club Member
- Waterville Shocker Booster Club Member
- Together For Drug Free Youth Advisory Board
- National Board Certification Social Studies
- ESA Special Education Advisory Committee
- NCESD Superintendent Advisory Committee
- Leader in Me National Symposium School Presenter
- WIAA Superintendent Advisory Committee Member

BUDGET UPDATES FOR THE 2025 Legislative Session

On January 13, legislators convened the 2025 Legislative Session, the first year of the 69th Biennial Legislature. During this “long” session—limited to 105 days—a major priority will be to adopt new two-year Operating, Capital, and Transportation Budgets. Never a simple task, drafting and adopting the 2025–27 Operating Budget will be even more difficult, as budget-writers will be grappling with a projected budget shortfall, potentially as high as \$12 billion. (To provide context, understand the current 2023–25 Operating Budget appropriates \$71.95 billion.) There is a heavy debate regarding the actual size of the shortfall; however, it is clear that there will be significant conversations about cuts to current programs, and limitations on adopting new programs or increasing current programs. Additionally, there is expected to be ongoing conversations about a revenue package—that is, “taxes.”

In the midst of the budget shortfall, WASA will be aggressively advocating for our [2025 Legislative Platform](#)—which urges the Legislature to amply fund Special Education, Materials, Supplies and Operating Costs (MSOC) and Pupil Transportation. Securing the necessary appropriations (potentially \$1.5 billion) to “fully fund” these programs will certainly be an uphill battle.

In any session, asking for billions of dollars is a tricky proposition; asking for those significant investments in the face of a potentially massive state budget shortfall will be even more difficult. Given that the Legislature has not been providing the necessary resources to keep up with schools’ increasing needs and increasing costs, however, what we are asking for is not a “want to have,” but a “need to have.” And it is high time legislators positively respond. Adding to our argument, ample funding of Special Education, MSOC, and Pupil Transportation is not an optional decision—they are basic education programs which the Legislature is constitutionally obligated to fully support.

With the session underway, we are building on the momentum we have gathered in the last nine months since our Platform was adopted. What has always been clear—and continues to be clear—is that school administrators, on the ground, building relationships with legislators and engaging in the legislative process is the necessary ingredient to push us over the top. We call

on all school administrators to consistently engage in the process and “tell your stories.” We know that some administrators may be new to the advocacy game—or may be uncomfortable engaging. WASA stands ready to assist you in your advocacy efforts.

First, if you were unable to participate in our “Finding Your Voice” advocacy Lunch & Learn series, each of the webinars (WASA Platform Review; Advocacy Training; 2025 Session Preview) have been recorded and the PowerPoint presentations are also available for your use on the WASA website, under [Professional Learning Event Resources](#). We also continue to update our [Advocacy Toolkit](#), which houses talking points, videos, social media content, and other communication resources—to assist and align our members as you engage with your own legislators. One key resource we recently added are [sample templates](#) to help you display funding shortfalls (state funding vs district expenditures) of Special Education, MSOC, and Pupil Transportation in a common form. Our effort is to ensure WASA—and our partners—not only regularly engage, but also speak with one voice as much as possible. We encourage you to use the resources in the Tool Kit to advocate for WASA’s 2025 Platform.

Given that the Legislature has not been providing the necessary resources to keep up with schools’ increasing needs and increasing costs, what we are asking for is not a “want to have,” but a “need to have.”

In terms of our partners, it is important to remember school administrators in WASA are not moving down this road alone. Eight other education associations have followed our lead and have included the “Big Three” on their legislative platforms. They, too, are using the Toolkit as we join together and speak with one voice. Right out of the gate, we joined forces with the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD), which has been assisting us with communications, including the development

of the Toolkit (and our school funding website: www.waschoolfunding.org). Our other partners are: Washington State School Directors’ Association (WSSDA), Washington Association of School Business Officials (WASBO), Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), Alliance of Educational Associations (AEA)—which represents two associations: Washington Association of Maintenance and Operations Administrators (WAMOA) and Washington School Nutrition Association (WSNA)—Washington Association of Career and Technical Administrators (WACTA), and Washington State Parent Teacher Association (WSPTA).

In addition to these specific resources developed to assist with the advancement of WASA’s 2025 Legislative Platform, we will continue to produce our weekly legislative newsletter [\[This Week in Olympia, or TWIO\]](#) and our weekly [Legislative Report Podcast](#). These two resources will keep you up-to-date with action in the Capitol. WASA members automatically receive TWIO, every Friday in your e-mail inbox (let us know if you are not receiving). Our legislative podcast is produced and available every Monday or Tuesday. We encourage you to subscribe using your preferred podcast site (Apple Podcasts, Spotify, etc.) and you will be notified when a new podcast is posted. While both resources will assist your efforts, we encourage you to use the podcast to supplement the newsletter, rather than replace the newsletter.

The 2025 Legislative Session could be pivotal in providing needed supports to school districts across the state that are struggling financially. As noted above, achieving success will be an uphill battle. If we fight together, we may not get everything we need; however, if you sit on your hands and watch from the sidelines, losing is almost guaranteed. Remember what the great Wayne Gretzky said, “You miss 100 percent of the shots you don’t take.”



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: Bob Maxwell, Pullman

President-elect: Shaun Carey, Enumclaw

Past President: Mike Villarreal, Hoquiam

Secretary: Dana Rosenbach, North Mason

Treasurer: John Sander, Franklin Pierce

Region 101: Jake Dingman, Oakesdale

Region 105: Ellen Perconti, Goldendale

Region 108: Michelle Kuss-Cybula, Oak Harbor

Region 109: Chryst Sweeting, Arlington

Region 110: Israel Vela, Kent

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 Fry, College Place

Region 171: Rodriguez Broadnax, Grand Coulee Dam

WASA Board Meeting

The WASA Board met on April 14 in SeaTac, ahead of the 2025 Leaders Workshop. Led by President Bob Maxwell, the meeting included updates from WASA staff on professional learning, member services, and governmental relations. The Board approved

a three-year contract for incoming Executive Director Jeff Snell and adopted the board meeting schedule for next year. A status report on the 2024–25 association goals, as well as an update on the budget were provided by Joel Aune and the executive

COMPONENTS

BPAC

Jill Pratt, Rochester (Chair)

Chris Gardea, Walla Walla (Chair-elect)

IPAC

Mira Gobel, Pasco (Chair)

Amanda Kraft, Puyallup (Chair-elect)

Linda McKay, NCESD 171 (Past Chair)

Principals

Elyse Mengarelli, Mabton (Chair)

Special Education

John Sander, Franklin Pierce (Chair)

Superintendents

Miriam Mickelson, (Chair)

Robert Elizondo, Touchet (Chair-elect)

Mary Templeton, Lake Stevens (Past Chair)

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.



REGION PRESIDENTS

Region 101: Ken Russell, Riverside

Region 105: Lisa Gredvig, Union Gap

Region 108: James Everett, Meridian

Region 109: Dan Chaplik, Sultan

Region 110: Susana Reyes, Shoreline

Region 111: Ed Hatzenbeler, Orting

Region 112: Denny Waters, Battle Ground

Region 113: Lisa Grant, Centralia

Region 114: Erin Prince, Central Kitsap

Region 123: Pete Peterson, Kiona-Benton

Region 171: Nik Bergman, Quincy

WASA Leaders

On April 15, leaders from across the state came together for the 2025 WASA Leaders Workshop at Sea Tac. This annual gathering brings together WASA Board members and regional leaders to collaborate with the executive team, acknowledge the association’s achievements, and strategize for the upcoming year.

At this year’s event, participants were engaged in activities that raised or reinforced awareness of WASA’s mission, goals and priorities, services and support provided members, and progress toward goals established for the current year. WASA leaders were also introduced to incoming President Shaun Carey’s vision for 2025–26. A major portion of the day was dedicated to collaborative dialogue, providing Executive Director Joel Aune and the WASA team with valuable input to guide priorities for next year.

The workshop culminated with dedicated time for region leadership teams to begin planning for next year.

This workshop is instrumental in setting WASA’s strategic direction, reflecting the organization’s commitment to supporting superintendents and school district leaders statewide. We extend our gratitude to the WASA leaders for their time and dedication.

Thank you to our WASA leaders, including President-Elect Shaun Carey, for engaging in meaningful conversations about the association’s current work and helping shape the vision for next year!



WASA WELCOMES New Executive Director!



Following an extensive search process, Dr. Jeff Snell has been selected as WASA's next Executive Director. Snell currently serves as Superintendent of Vancouver Public Schools and brings

nearly 30 years of experience in public education—as a teacher, principal, district leader, and superintendent. His long-standing involvement with WASA, deep commitment to equity, and passion for leadership development make him exceptionally well-suited to guide the association into its next chapter.

The search attracted a number of highly qualified applicants, each offering a strong vision and a deep dedication to public education. Seven candidates participated in first-round interviews, from which three finalists were selected—making for a highly competitive and thoughtful final decision by the interview team, composed of WASA Board members and region leaders from across the state.

Dr. Snell will succeed Joel Aune, who is retiring after seven years of distinguished leadership at WASA. Aune praised Snell as “a thoughtful and authentic leader” whose “deep investment in students and their communities” will continue to advance

WASA's mission of leadership, trust, and advocacy.

Special recognition is extended to Northwest Leadership Associates—Tom Rockefeller and Denise Ray—for their expert guidance and steady facilitation throughout this important leadership transition.

Join us in congratulating Dr. Snell and welcoming him as the new Executive Director of WASA. Jeff becomes the 10th Executive Director in WASA's proud 53-year history!

Learn about ERNN



The Employee Relations and Negotiations Network (ERNN) was created to better organize and communicate information between school district administrators and ESDs. Membership in our statewide network provides regular updates on emerging bargaining and employee relations issues, greatly enhancing your district's perspective in negotiations.

ERNN membership is for districts not individuals. Membership includes all the administrators in the District. Access to the Members Only page portion of our website will be provided to any administrator

designated by their superintendent. The cost of membership is based on student FTE, with most districts paying less than \$500 per year.

ERNN Member District Services Include:

- Regional Representative and Member District Networking
- Access to CBAs from across the state
- Bargaining and Negotiations Training and Workshops
 - Fall Virtual Trainings
 - Spring In-Person Trainings
- ERNN Online Resource Center
- Archived Presentations and Resources from Past Trainings

NEW THIS YEAR: The CBA Index

To assist ERNN members in preparing for bargaining, ERNN has created a new tool, The CBA Index. This tool allows members to sort WA school districts by FTE/ESD/County, identify the comparables that you want, and then get one click access to each district's website where they post the current version of their CBAs.

UPCOMING TRAINING: What You Need to Know Going Into Bargaining Season

Come join your colleagues from around the region to sharpen your knowledge and skills regarding communication strategies, bargaining rules/basics, financial facts for bargaining, anticipated bargaining topics, and much more. Stevens Clay will be bringing a wealth of information and resources, and participants will help shape the topics presented based on their individual needs. This training will be held in three locations and participants are encouraged to register for the time and location that best fits their schedule.

[ERNN Member Registration](#) | [Non-Member Registration](#)

ESD 113 in Tumwater | May 23, 2025 (Fri) | 8:30 am to 3:00 pm

If your district is not yet a member, I encourage you to reach out to me, Tim



Garchow, at tgarchow@wasa-oly.org or by phone at 253.831.5968. Let's work together to empower our bargaining teams with the information and resources they need.

CONGRATS!

QUINCY'S ALICEN GAYTLEY WINS National Leadership Award



WASA congratulates Alicen Gaytley, Director of Teaching and Learning for the Quincy School District, on being named a 2025 Women in School Leadership Award recipient by AASA, The

School Superintendents Association. This prestigious national honor, presented in partnership with Horace Mann Educators Corporation, recognizes outstanding female leaders in education. Gaytley was selected as the winner in the Central Office/Principal category for her exemplary leadership in advancing student achievement, fostering staff development, and driving educational innovation.

Alicen is an exceptionally innovative and talented educational leader who cares deeply about the success of each and every student.

Quincy Superintendent Nik Bergman notes, "The Quincy School District is so fortunate to have Alicen leading QSD Teaching and Learning efforts. Alicen is an exceptionally innovative and talented educational leader who cares deeply about the success of each and every student. This award represents

Alicen's enduring commitment to academic equity and excellence."

This well-deserved recognition highlights Gaytley's commitment to student success and professional growth within her district and beyond. Gaytley received the award at the AASA National Conference on Education in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she was honored among the nation's top educational leaders. WASA applauds her achievement and the inspiration she provides to educators across Washington and the country.

CONGRATULATIONS TO The 2025 Recipients of Washington State's Purple Star Awards



The Purple Star Award Program was launched last year 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.

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

- Anacortes SD
- Bethel SD
- Coupeville SD
- North Kitsap SD
- South Kitsap SD

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.



DOMINIQUE WILSON

Executive Assistant

Dominique joined the WASA team in September 2024. Before joining WASA, Dominique acted as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Community Liaison for the Tumwater School District.



BELLA TROIANI

Website, Communications, and Production Assistant

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, Learning Innovation and AI

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 in 2022.



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.



BEAU WILSON

Professional Learning and Innovation Assistant

Beau joined the WASA team in August 2024 after serving as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Community

Liaison for the Tumwater School District.

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



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 worked as a Resource Paraprofessional for six years in the Olympia School District.

The Expanding AI Proficiency Gap in Education

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES



The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education offers significant opportunities to enhance teaching and learning. AI-powered tools can automate routine tasks, personalize instruction, and provide valuable insights to educators, thereby improving overall classroom efficiency. However, a notable challenge persists: the widening AI skills gap among educators. This divide often results from limited access to professional development, varying levels of digital literacy, and the rapid evolution of AI technologies that outpace educators' familiarity. Addressing this gap is essential to ensure that all educators can effectively utilize AI tools to enrich the educational experience, regardless of their background or access to resources.

A Case Study: Building AI Literacy Through Collaborative Teacher Development

A compelling example of a grassroots approach to bridging this AI skills gap is the initiative undertaken by a group of middle school science teachers in Illinois. Recognizing the growing need to integrate AI into their classrooms, these educators took the initiative to participate in a **case-based AI professional development program** offered by their local educational cooperative. Unlike traditional tech-focused workshops, this program emphasized **practical, hands-on learning** and encouraged teachers to explore AI integration strategies that were directly relevant to their specific subject areas.

Throughout the program, the participating teachers engaged in **collaborative problem-solving** and explored AI applications that aligned with their instructional goals. For instance, they experimented with using AI-powered tools to analyze student data, develop adaptive learning paths, and generate personalized feedback. Teachers also examined real-life scenarios where AI could enhance inquiry-based learning by providing students with AI-generated simulations and data visualizations to explore scientific concepts.

A key strength of this approach was its **emphasis on peer collaboration** and reflective practice. Teachers shared their successes and challenges, providing constructive feedback and refining their AI integration strategies over time. The program also incorporated **ongoing mentorship and follow-up sessions**, ensuring that educators had continued access to expert guidance as they applied AI concepts in their classrooms. As a result, these teachers developed greater confidence in using AI tools, ultimately enhancing their ability to engage students and personalize learning.

Measurable Impact and Lessons Learned

The results of this initiative were highly encouraging. After six months, over 80 percent of the participating teachers reported a significant increase in their AI proficiency and confidence. More importantly, they observed a **positive shift in student engagement and learning outcomes**. Students became more invested in their learning as AI-powered simulations and interactive tools made abstract scientific concepts more accessible and engaging. Teachers also noted that AI tools provided them with **actionable insights** that allowed for timely interventions, thereby improving individualized support for their students.

This case highlights several key lessons for educational administrators. First, **professional development must be ongoing and context-specific**. A single workshop or introductory session is insufficient for fostering AI literacy. Instead,

sustained learning experiences, coupled with opportunities for collaboration and reflection, empower educators to internalize and apply AI concepts effectively. Second, **peer support and mentorship** play a critical role in building confidence and resilience among educators navigating new technologies. By fostering a culture of collaboration, schools can create a supportive environment where educators feel empowered to experiment with AI and refine their teaching practices.

Recommendations for Administrators: Closing the AI Skills Gap

For educational administrators seeking to reduce the AI skills gap within their institutions, this case underscores the importance of investing in professional development programs that focus on **practical, hands-on experiences**. Encouraging teachers to participate in case-based AI training, allocating time for collaborative planning, and providing resources for experimentation with AI tools can collectively enhance educators' competencies. Additionally, creating a **professional learning community** where educators can share experiences, discuss challenges, and support one another ensures sustained growth and confidence in AI integration.

By prioritizing these strategies, administrators can create a more equitable and future-ready educational environment. Building internal capacity for AI integration empowers educators to leverage AI tools effectively, ensuring that all students benefit from the transformative potential of AI in education. As technology continues to evolve, fostering an inclusive and AI-literate teaching workforce becomes an essential step in preparing students for a rapidly changing digital landscape.



Kim Fry is Assistant Executive Director of Learning Innovation and AI.

TAKE YOUR LEADERSHIP To the Next Level

Are you ready to grow and lead with greater impact? Next Level Leaders is a two-year leadership academy offered by WASA and AWSP designed to help individual leaders and school district teams thrive. Through a dynamic learning community, participants can build the skills and strategies needed to navigate today's educational leadership challenges.

Cohort 2 is open to:

- **Individual leaders** (WASA or AWSP members with a minimum of three years of educational leadership experience) at **\$600 per year**
- **School district teams** (up to five WASA and AWSP members) at **\$3,000 total**

Visit the Next Level Leaders website, www.nll.academy, to learn more and apply today.

Are you an experienced, innovative leader who wants to
keep learning and growing your leadership?



WASHINGTON STATE'S PREMIER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

Consider joining the Next Level Leaders 2025/26 Cohort!

Washington State's Premier Leadership Development Program

Please contact: ashley@NLL.academy or visit <https://nll.academy>

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!



Global Instructional Leadership Network

During the 2024–25 school year, WASA has engaged in an exciting partnership with a team from the Instructional Leadership Collective to offer the **Global Instructional Leadership Network**. This initiative has brought together over sixty leaders from across North America in pursuit of excellence in instructional leadership. The additional details below will give you a glimpse into this powerful opportunity for learning and leadership.

GILN: What You Need to Know

Who We Are: Dedicated school and district leaders from across North America committed to personal leadership learning and continually seeking strategies and tools to facilitate the learning and growth of those we serve.

What We Do:

Meet virtually once per month throughout the school year in eight engaging, practical sessions facilitated by our expert team. We study current research, learn strategies for instructional leadership, and share promising practices with one another.

Highlights of Our Network:

- **Engaging, Practical Sessions**
Interactive discussions, actionable leadership moves, and session follow-up resources
- **Research-based Leadership Growth**
Apply the latest research and practical strategies to our leadership
- **Focus on What Matters Most**
Clarify priorities and leverage data for meaningful impact
- **Network Across North America**
Connect with school and district leaders to share insights and solutions

- **Affordable, High-impact Professional Learning**
Eight expert-led sessions for just \$599, plus a complimentary slide deck and linked resources after each session

What Our Members Are Saying:

“Leaders often work in isolation, but the Global Instructional Leadership Network has given me the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded individuals. Through these connections, I’ve gained valuable insights and practical strategies that have strengthened my ability to lead impactful change. Not only has this enhanced our collective influence on student and adult learning, but it has also given me the confidence to share that learning beyond the network.”

Ian Knox, Elementary School Principal
Bethlehem Central Schools, Albany, NY

“The GILN community has been a game-changer for me! My leadership skills and beliefs have been affirmed and reimaged through the opportunity to interact with colleagues.”

Susan Inman, Principal,
Sanford Pride Elementary School Sanford, ME



“The Global Instructional Leadership Network provides instructional leaders with high-quality professional development and meaningful opportunities to network with building and district leaders. I have appreciated learning and deepening my skill set alongside leaders who are dedicated to doing what’s best for students and student learning.”

Angie Franklin, Director of Teaching & Learning
University Place School District, University Place, WA

Join Us for the 2025–26 Cohort

To sign up to join the 2025–26 cohort of the Global Instructional Leadership Network, you can access the registration page by [clicking here](#).

New WASA Members

We’ve welcomed 15 new members since December 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.

Jody Moehrle, Colton
Daniel Read, Onion Creek
Shannon Panattoni, Ellensburg
Toron Wooldridge, Toppenish
Jennifer Murphy, Monroe

Dandi Daniels, Federal Way
Melissa Pointer, Highline
Eric Wyand, Muckleshoot
Sarah Jahn, Steilacoom
Angela Brooks, North Thurston



Brenda Padgett, Onalaska
Greggery Teel, White Pass
Kristine Michael, North Mason
Laura Batcheller, OESD 114
Lee Collyer, OESD 114

AI Summit

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE 2025 innovation Summit

Shaping the Future
of K-12 Education

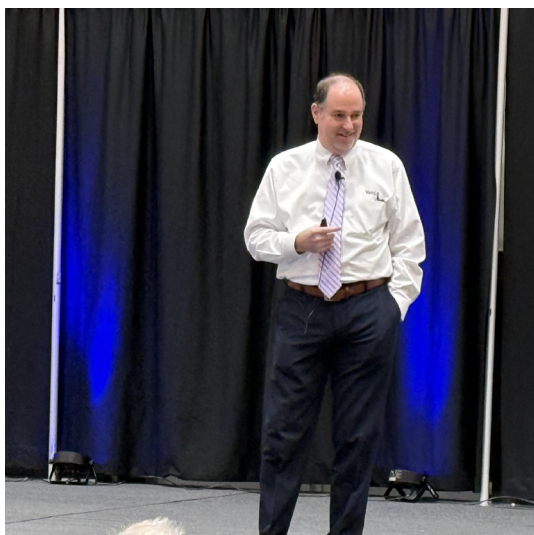
The AI Innovation Summit was a transformative three-day event where district and building teams delved into the power of artificial intelligence in K-12 education. Whether participants were new to AI or already implementing it, this statewide conference offered invaluable insights, strategies, and collaborative opportunities. Attendees engaged in hands-on sessions, crafted actionable AI implementation plans, and networked with colleagues across the AI spectrum. Ideal for board members, administrators, educators, and IT professionals, everyone left with concrete next steps to enhance their district's AI capabilities.



Spring Conference

FOR SMALL SCHOOL LEADERS

Thank you to everyone who attended our Spring Conference for Small School Leaders in Wenatchee, WA this past March. Special guests included keynote speaker, Dr. Joe Sanfelippo, as well as the Lake Chelan Schools High School Jazz Band under the direction of Stephen Burdick and 6th Grade Icicle River Middle School Choir, Cascade School District under the direction of Darryl Wall. From leadership communication to AI-driven planning, budgeting, and funding strategies, we explored real solutions for small school districts.



WASA BOOK CORNER

Dr. Joe Sanfelippo's *Lead From Where You Are: Building Intention, Connection, and Direction in Our Schools* offers an inspiring and practical guide for educational leaders at all levels.



A nationally recognized education leader and former superintendent of Fall Creek School District in Wisconsin, emphasizes that leadership is not about titles—it's about intentional actions that build trust and direction within a school community.

Rooted in real-world experiences, the book is centered on three key leadership principles: intention, connection, and direction. The stories and strategies illustrate how small, consistent efforts can create lasting impact, empowering educators to foster a positive and engaged school culture.

As the keynote speaker at this year's Spring Conference for Small School Leaders, Dr. Sanfelippo energized attendees with his message of shared leadership and the importance of investing in relationships. His book extends that message, offering a roadmap for leaders looking to inspire and support their teams.

For education leaders, *Lead From Where You Are* is an essential read—full of practical insights, relatable stories, and a clear call to action: **Every interaction matters!**

Foreword by New York Times best-selling author Dan Heath

LEAD FROM WHERE YOU ARE

BUILDING INTENTION,
CONNECTION, AND DIRECTION
IN OUR SCHOOLS

DR. JOE SANFELIPPO

About SIRS



School Information and Research Service (SIRS) is a vital resource for Washington State public school districts, educational service districts, and public educational management and leadership associations. By becoming a member, your district or organization gains access to a wealth of information designed to support and enhance educational leadership and management. The [annual membership](#) fee for school districts is based on student FTE.

One of the key benefits of SIRS membership is our **Leadership Information Articles**. These monthly and quarterly publications provide up-to-date research and insights into the best practices currently shaping educational settings. We are proud to partner with Hanover Research to deliver this invaluable resource, helping you stay informed and effective in your leadership roles. This year we are also conducting a three part research study on student cell phone use in schools, complete with a policy

creation toolkit that will be released in May.

Another significant resource is the **Legislative Handbook**, an annual guide that equips school administrators and educators with detailed information about the Washington State Legislature. This handbook is a must-have tool.

Our **SIRS Salary Survey Report** offers comprehensive data on salaries and benefits for school employees across the state. This report, exclusive to SIRS members, is fully customizable and serves as a critical reference for making informed decisions about compensation.

If your district is not yet a member, I encourage you to reach out to me, Tim Garchow, at tgarchow@wasa-oly.org or by phone at 253. 831.5968. Let's work together to empower our schools with the best information and resources available.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES!



Women in Leadership Conference
May 3, 2025 | Wenatchee



Superintendents Conference
May 4 – 6, 2025 | Wenatchee

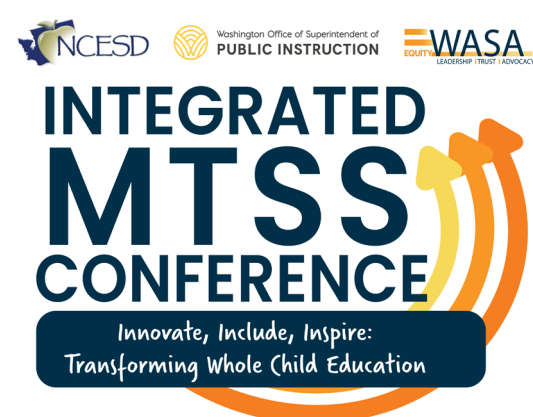


AWSP/WASA Summer Conference
June 22 – 24, 2025 | Spokane

Preconference:
June 21 – 22, 2025 | Spokane



Leading for Inclusion Lunch & Learn
April 24 & May 8 | Virtual



JULY 30 – AUGUST 1 2025
WENATCHEE, WASHINGTON

MTSS Conference
July 30 – August 1, 2025 | Wenatchee

Staff Spotlight

FEATURING DOMINIQUE WILSON



In this issue, we're proud to spotlight our Executive Assistant, Dominique Wilson. joined WASA in September 2024.

Dominique brings more than positive energy to WASA—she brings a deep sense of purpose.

Her sincere appreciation for public education and equity aligns perfectly with our mission. For Dominique, this is more than a job; it's a chance to support and be part of meaningful work that makes a real difference for school district leaders across the state as they serve and educate the students in our schools.

—Joel Aune,
WASA Executive Director

What is your role at WASA?

I am the Executive Assistant.

What does your job entail?

It's a broad spectrum: A lot of emails, planning meetings and events, customer service for WASA members, board members, and region presidents. Plus, all things honorary awards and scholarships.

What do you like most about your job?

I really like getting to interact with the membership and the face-to-face interactions of board meetings and conferences. I enjoy being a part of the helpful aspects WASA offers—the moments where seemingly unimportant emails come to fruition to make a real difference and you can genuinely feel like you helped somebody.

How has WASA changed since you were hired?

There is going to be a lot of exciting, new changes soon with two positions of leadership, and I feel there is a lot of responsibility and growth for my position that will come with that.

What were you doing before being hired at WASA?

Community Liaison at Tumwater SD.

What is your favorite memory at WASA?

I remember when I hadn't even officially started yet, and all my coworkers invited me to eat as a way to get to know everybody. They extended the olive branch to me without even knowing me, and that set the precedent for my work here.

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

I love being at home with my family and animals. Just being outside and taking care of my things and dreaming of the possibilities and future brings me a lot of joy.

Best vacation you've been to?

I took a trip with my family for Spring Break two years ago, from New York to Florida. We visited several historical sites along the way and then we ended the trip with DisneyWorld. I loved Washington DC. We went to a play in DC, and I found an unrealized love for art galleries. The food and the history was so impressive!

Where's your favorite place in the world?

I'm going to say home because I love the landscape, the people that are there, the atmosphere. All my things are there.

Reflect a bit on your professional mentor.

Shawn Batstone: Shawn saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. When I didn't think I was capable or had anything special to offer, he opened doors, pulled back a chair, and gave me a seat at the table. That opened so many opportunities, work-wise and in discovering another part of myself I hadn't tapped into, given that I had been a stay-at-home mom. Shawn's constant encouragement and humility to treat everyone around him as equals is inspiring. He has such a collaborative, open policy that really helped my confidence. I thrived pretty quickly under his mentorship because he created that atmosphere. I owe a whole lot to Shawn Batstone.

CONTACT US

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360.489.3641

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Dominique Wilson | Executive Assistant

Bella Troiani | Website, Communications, and Production Assistant

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Heather Chard | Administrative Assistant

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Shawn Batstone | Assistant Executive Director

Ryan Hickerson | PL and Membership Assistant

Beau Wilson | PL and Innovation Assistant

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Natalie Plott | Office Assistant

WASA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Bob Maxwell, Pullman

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Shaun Carey, Enumclaw

PAST PRESIDENT

Mike Villarreal, Hoquiam

SECRETARY

Dana Rosenbach, North Mason

TREASURER

John Sander, Franklin Pierce



April

APRIL 24

Global Instructional Leadership Network
Virtual
8:30 – 10 a.m.

APRIL 24

Aspiring Central Office Leadership Academy
Virtual
9 – 11 a.m.

APRIL 24

Leading for Inclusion Lunch and Learn
Session 1: Comprehensive Inclusive Education in Washington: Crafting and Implementing an Inclusive IEP
Virtual
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

APRIL 25

Leading Your District's AI Integration
Virtual
12 – 1 p.m.

May

MAY 1

Special Education Directors Academy
Virtual
8:30 – 10 a.m.

MAY 3

Women In Leadership In-Person Conference
Campbell's Resort, Wenatchee

MAY 4–6

Superintendent Conference
Campbell's Resort, Wenatchee

MAY 8

Leading for Inclusion Lunch and Learn
Session 2: Break the Barriers: Instructional Leaders Disrupting Inclusive Education Myths
Virtual
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

MAY 20

Legislative Session Wrap-Up
Virtual
12 – 1 p.m.

MAY 21

Global Instructional Leadership Network
Virtual
8:30 – 10 a.m.

MAY 23

ERNN Regional Training: What You Need to Know Going Into Bargaining Season
Tumwater
8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

MAY 29

Special Education Directors Academy
Virtual
8:30 – 10 a.m.

June

JUNE 21–22

WASA/AWSP Summer Pre-Conference 2025
Spokane Convention Center

JUNE 22–24

WASA/AWSP Summer Conference 2025
Spokane Convention Center

July

JULY 21–22

Incoming Superintendents Conference
ESD 113
Tumwater, WA

Professional Learning Opportunities

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

