



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASA Recognizes Outstanding Educational Leaders at the 2022 WASA/AWSP Summer Conference

Washington state educators celebrate successes and focus on leadership, equity, and opportunity for our state's students

SPOKANE — June 27, 2022 — More than 1,200 school superintendents, central office administrators, and principals from across Washington state gathered at the Spokane Convention Center this past week to attend the 40th annual Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) and Association of Washington School Principals' (AWSP) Summer Conference. The theme of this year's conference, "You Belong Here," focused on school leaders' passion for excellence, diversity and equity, and school safety for Washington's students.

The event also featured WASA's 2022 Honorary Awards Luncheon where WASA state-level awards — including the PEMCO Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Awards, the Piper Sandler Doyle E. Winter Scholarship for Administrative Leadership in Education, and the Gallagher Howard M. Coble Scholarship Under-Represented Educational Leaders — were also presented.

WASA Executive Director Joel Aune said the in-person event was a welcome change of pace given the pandemic's impact on administrators, teachers, staff, and students.

"For the past two years, mired in a devastating world-wide pandemic, public schools have been a place where students and community can find caring people, safety, and stability," said Aune. "It has never been more important to honor the work and contributions of all educational leaders in the state of Washington. They have been nothing short of magnificent."

“The 2022 WASA state award recipients are truly distinguished in the leadership, contributions, and service they selflessly provide to others and the students here in Washington state each day,” he added. “Their work, and the manner which they go about it, are shining examples of WASA’s commitment to educational equity and our core tenants of Leadership, Trust, and Advocacy. WASA’s recognition program, with generous support from long-time sponsors, is in part intended to amplify the telling of powerful and inspiring stories of leadership and service in public education.”

Those receiving special recognition this year included:

WASA State Level Awards

- WASA Leadership Award: **Shane Backlund, Superintendent, Selah School District**
- Service to WASA Award: **Tim Garchow, Executive Director, Washington State School Directors’ Association (WSSDA)**
- D.A. Davidson Barbara Mertens Legacy Award: **Mick Hoffman, Executive Director, Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA)**
- Golden Gavel Award: **Dr. Michael Dunn, Superintendent, NorthEast Washington ESD (NEWESD) 101**
- Regional Awards: Several regional awards and milestones were also acknowledged. For a complete list of WASA regional awards, visit the [WASA website](#).

PEMCO Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Awards

The Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Awards, sponsored by PEMCO Insurance and WASA, seek to recognize outstanding public school administrators in Washington state. One highly effective superintendent, central office administrator, or building administrator is selected from a small school district (up to 500 students), medium school district (501–2,000 students), and large school district (over 2,000 students). A \$10,500 award is equally divided among the three winners. A peer committee selects the recipients from nominations that describe how each nominee is taking part in realizing the nine characteristics of high performing schools/districts as defined by research from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

This year’s Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Awards were presented to:

- Large District: **Dr. Kathi Weight, Superintendent, Steilacoom Historical School District**
- Medium District: **Renae McMurray, Assistant Superintendent, Washougal School District**
- Small District: **John Hannah, Superintendent, Morton School District**

Piper Sandler Doyle E. Winter Scholarship for Administrative Leadership in Education

The 2022 Doyle E. Winter Scholarship for Administrative Leadership in Education was presented to **Jose Rivera, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Grandview School District**.

The Piper Sandler Doyle E. Winter Scholarship is designed to assist talented and committed educational administrators as they enhance those skills needed to serve as educational leaders in the field of public education. The scholarship was established in honor of Dr. Doyle Winter, who retired in 2002 after completing 44 years of service for Washington public schools. Winter is a former executive director of WASA and has been recognized repeatedly for exhibiting exemplary leadership ability and enhancing school administration throughout his career.

Gallagher Howard M. Coble Scholarship for Under-Represented Educational Leaders

The 2022 Howard M. Coble Scholarship for Under-Represented Educational Leaders was presented to **Maria Santos Lucero, Principal, Yakima School District.**

The Gallagher Howard M. Coble Scholarship was designed to assist talented, under-represented educators to pursue graduate studies that prepare for central office leadership positions. The scholarship was established in honor of Dr. Howard Coble.

About the Washington Association of School Administrators

The [Washington Association of School Administrators](#) is committed to the development of quality education through professional leadership. Members benefit from a supportive community of professional leaders working to provide insightful and valuable training, support, and resources to education leaders, and to sustain a positive impact on legislative and community leaders. With over 1,980 members, membership is open to all education administrators in central office, building management, and educational agency positions. A not-for-profit organization, WASA is funded by membership dues and association events.

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WASA Leadership Award
Shane Backlund
 Superintendent, Selah SD



Service to WASA Award
Tim Garchow
 Executive Director, WSSDA



D.A. Davidson Barbara Mertens Award
Mick Hoffman
 Executive Director, WIAA



Golden Gavel Award
Dr. Michael Dunn
 Superintendent, NEWESD 101



Most Effective Administrator (Large)
Kathi Weight
 Superintendent, Steilacoom Historical SD



Most Effective Administrator (Med)
Renae McMurray
 Asst. Superintendent, Washougal SD



Most Effective Administrator (Small)
John Hannah
 Superintendent, Morton SD



Doyle E. Winter Scholarship
Jose Rivera
 Asst. Supt., Teaching & Learning, Grandview SD



Howard M. Coble Scholarship
Maria Santos Lucero
 Principal, Yakima SD