



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASA Recognizes Outstanding Educational Leaders at the 2023 WASA/AWSP Summer Conference

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

SPOKANE — June 26, 2023— More than 1,000 school superintendents, central office administrators, and principals from across Washington state gathered at the Spokane Convention Center this past week to attend the 41st annual Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) and Association of Washington School Principals' (AWSP) Summer Conference. The theme of this year's conference, "Lighting the Way for Leadership," focused on the accomplishments of the 2022-23 school year and gaining insights on the year to come with sessions focusing on innovation, inclusion belonging, effective teams, social emotional learning, culture, systems, operations, and academic success.

The event also featured WASA's 2023 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 for Under-Represented Educational Leaders — were also presented.

"Schools are the heartbeat of communities, and public education is the backbone of American democracy," said WASA Executive Director Joel Aune. "The 2023 WASA state award recipients truly embody exceptional leadership, integrity, and a deep commitment to both communities and public education. Their tireless efforts are making a significant and lasting impact on students throughout the entire state of Washington.

WASA's recognition program, with generous support from long-time sponsors, aims to highlight and amplify the powerful and inspiring stories of leadership and service in public education, Aune continued. "The stories of this year's award recipients are representative of the amazing work occurring in schools each and every day by school district leaders across the entire state.

"WASA represents competence, integrity, vision, and leadership in pursuit of equity and excellence. This year's state award recipients are shining examples of what WASA stands for, as well as exceptional school district

leadership,” added Aune. “We congratulate them on this well-deserved recognition and thank them for their incredible dedication to the profession and the students we are privileged to serve.”

Those receiving special recognition this year included:

WASA State Level Awards

- WASA Leadership Award: **Kevin Chase, Superintendent, Educational Service District 105**
- Service to WASA Award: **James Kowalkowski, Director, Rural Education Center**
- D.A. Davidson Barbara Mertens Legacy Award: **Dr. Glenys Hill, Director, Washington State University**
- Golden Gavel Award: **Helene Paroff, Director, WASA’s Inclusionary Practices Project**
- 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 recipients. 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: **Ron Banner, Superintendent, Clover Park School District**
- Medium District: **Dr. Stephanie Spencer, Director of Teaching and Learning, Vashon Island School District**
- Small District: **Richard Staley, Superintendent, Oakville School District**

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

The 2023 Doyle E. Winter Scholarship for Administrative Leadership in Education was presented to **Robert Aguilar, Principal, College Place 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 for exhibiting exemplary leadership ability and enhancing school administration throughout his career.

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

The 2023 Howard M. Coble Scholarship for Under-Represented Educational Leaders was presented to **Salina Machida, Assistant Principal, Battle Ground School District**.

The Gallagher Howard M. Coble Scholarship is designed to assist talented, under-represented educators to pursue graduate studies that prepare them for central office leadership positions. The scholarship was established in honor of Dr. Howard Coble, a legendary school superintendent who served as Executive Director of WASA from 1980-1991.

About the Washington Association of School Administrators

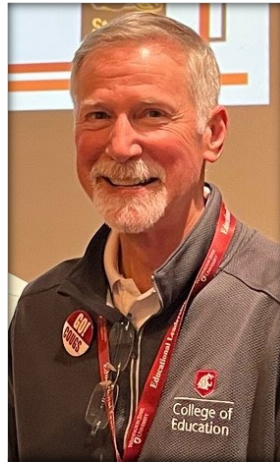
The [Washington Association of School Administrators](#) is committed to the development of quality education through professional leadership. Members benefit from a supportive community of professional leaders working

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 2,000 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
Kevin Chase
Superintendent, ESD 105



Service to WASA Award
James Kowalkowski
Director, Rural Education Center



D.A. Davidson Barbara Mertens Award
Dr. Glenys Hill
Director, WSU



Golden Gavel Award
Helene Paroff
IPP Director, WASA



Most Effective Administrator (Large)
Ron Banner
Superintendent, Clover Park SD



Most Effective Administrator (Med)
Dr. Stephanie Spencer
Dir., Teaching & Learning,
Vashon Island SD



Most Effective Administrator (Small)
Richard Staley
Superintendent, Oakville SD



Doyle E. Winter Scholarship
Robert Aguilar
Principal, College Place SD



Howard M. Coble Scholarship
Salina Machida
Asst. Principal, Battle Ground SD