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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Leadership, Equity, and Excellence Take Center Stage in Spokane**

*Washington's top school administrators honored for advancing equity, excellence, and opportunity*

**SPOKANE — June 23, 2025** — More than 1,000 school superintendents, central office administrators, principals, and aspiring leaders from across Washington state gathered in Spokane this past week to attend the 43rd annual **Summer Conference** hosted by the **Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA)** and the **Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)**.

The three-day event offered professional learning opportunities, leadership development sessions, and collaborative engagement focused on strengthening educational leadership throughout the state. A key highlight of the conference was the **2025 WASA Honorary Awards Luncheon**, where WASA's most prestigious state-level awards and scholarships were presented to outstanding educational leaders.

WASA Executive Director **Joel Aune** emphasized the significance of celebrating educational leadership and the impact of public school administrators:

"Throughout the past year, our public schools have served as beacons of hope and stability—thanks to the steadfast leadership and unwavering dedication of school administrators across Washington," said Aune. "Now more than ever, it is vital that we celebrate and uplift the extraordinary efforts of these leaders, whose impact on students, families, and communities is both profound and enduring."

He continued, "The 2025 WASA state award recipients reflect the very best of our profession. Their exemplary leadership, service to others, and deep commitment to students are powerful illustrations of WASA's guiding principles: **Leadership, Trust, and Advocacy**. Through the support of our long-standing sponsors, WASA's recognition program shines a light on inspiring stories of educational leadership that are transforming public education in meaningful ways."

Those receiving WASA's prestigious state level awards this year included:

- **Mary Beth Tack, Superintendent, Kelso School District** — WASA Learning from Leaders Award
- **Dr. Erin Prince, Superintendent, Central Kitsap School District** — WASA Leadership Award
- **Dan Steele, Assistant Executive Director, WASA** — D.A. Davidson Barbara Mertens Legacy Award

- **Joel Aune, Executive Director, WASA — Golden Gavel Award**

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**

Sponsored by **PEMCO Insurance** and WASA, the **Robert J. Handy Awards** recognize exceptional leadership by school administrators across Washington. Each year, highly effective administrators are selected for this special recognition. A \$10,500 award is shared equally among the recipients. This year's Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Awards were presented to:

- Large District: **Dr. Ian Saltzman, Superintendent, Everett Public Schools**
- Medium District: **Glenn Johnson, Superintendent, Cashmere School District**

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

The 2025 Doyle E. Winter Scholarship for Administrative Leadership in Education was presented to **Richard Zimmerman, Superintendent, North Beach School District**.

This scholarship supports educational leaders in their pursuit of advanced leadership training and was established in honor of **Dr. Doyle Winter**, a former WASA Executive Director known for his 44 years of dedicated service to public education and exemplary leadership throughout his career.

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

The 2025 Howard M. Coble Scholarship for Under-Represented Educational Leaders was presented to **Ravinder Dhillon, Principal, Ferndale High School**.

The Gallagher Howard M. Coble Scholarship is 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 1,985 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  
**Erin Prince**  
 Superintendent, Central Kitsap SD



D.A. Davidson | Barbara Mertens Award  
**Dan Steele**  
 Asst. Executive Director, WASA



Golden Gavel Award  
**Dr. Joel Aune**  
 Executive Director, WASA



Learning from Leaders Award  
**Mary Beth Tack**  
 Superintendent, Kelso SD



Most Effective Administrator (Med)  
**Glenn Johnson**  
 Superintendent, Cashmere SD



Most Effective Administrator (Large)  
**Dr. Ian Saltzman**  
 Superintendent, Everett SD



Doyle E. Winter Scholarship  
**Richard Zimmerman**  
 Superintendent, North Beach SD



Howard M. Coble Scholarship  
**Ravinder Dhillon**  
 Principal, Ferndale HS