

**50 Years of WASA**  
Celebrating five decades of transforming Washington's schools

Day 133

# 50 Years of WASA



# Celebrating five decades of transforming Washington's schools

2

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Welcome, new school administrators and superintendents! We're glad you're here.

# HOTLINE

IN THIS ISSUE OF

## WE HAVE ARRIVED.

We made it to 2022. 50 years, thousands of members (and even more memories), and one global pandemic later. Here we are.

This month's *Hotline* isn't a look back, it's a celebration of where we are today. Back together in-person and doing what we are all called to do: to be leaders. To be trusted partners with our colleagues. To advocate for students and educators in Washington. **Leadership, Trust, Advocacy, and Equity.** It's more than what we do, it's who we are.

Thank you for looking back with us over the past year. What fun it's been to reminisce over 50 years of WASA.

Now, onward to the next 50 years... and beyond.

*Cover collage: A look back on WASA in the 2020s, featuring WASA leaders, members, and conference attendees.*

Thank you to Joel Aune, Aaron Leavell, Lisa Cadere-Smith, Jake Dingman, Wade Smith, Jim Kowalkowski, Ron Thiele, Michael Greene, Mike Villarreal, Dan Steele, Helene Paroff, Andy Wolf, Sheila Chard, Shari Parsons, and Bella Troiani, for your contributions to this issue of *Hotline*.

Do you have an idea for our next issue of *Hotline*? Send an email to **Shari Parsons** at [sparsons@wasa-oly.org](mailto:sparsons@wasa-oly.org).

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## A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOEL AUNE



WASA Friends and Colleagues,

For the past year, we have been celebrating WASA's 50th anniversary. Chartered in 1972, WASA

has grown from a fledgling association of 300 members at its inception, to the premier association for school district leaders here in the state of Washington—now 1,900 members strong.

In previous issues of the *Hotline*, we have told of WASA's proud history, heard from visionary leaders, and recounted the association's evolution from its earliest beginnings to the present day. Grounded in the pillars of Leadership, Trust, and Advocacy, WASA has provided service, support, and guidance to school district leaders who aspire success for all students. As WASA's 50th year comes to a close, the Board has adopted our first-ever Educational Equity Statement—a public declaration of our commitment to the advancement of educational equity.

As we look to the future, what's in store for WASA and the school district leaders we serve? What might WASA be celebrating in 2032, WASA's 60th anniversary year? Perhaps the answer to that question can be found in the challenges and opportunities that are presenting themselves at this very moment:

- **The social and emotional well-being of the students we serve needs tending.** In recent years, the frequency and number of

students profiling mental health challenges is on the rise. The pandemic has further exacerbated this concerning trend. Trauma and learning loss are top-of-mind for school district leaders.

- **Staff turnover is on the rise.** The ability to attract and retain staff, ranging from classified staff to the superintendent and everyone in between, will in many school districts necessitate implementation of new and different strategies to mitigate staffing shortages and increase retention.
- **Work to advance educational equity will face severe resistance in many communities.** WASA members will need to think carefully about a strategy to shift the conversation from one that is polarized, to one of shared values. This reframing will enable you to build consensus on a clear and positive vision for moving forward—taking action to effect necessary system change.
- **The current atmosphere in many communities is politically charged, divided, and all too often lacking in civility.** Working with school boards and staff to rebuild relationships, bring communities together, and reset norms for two-way engagement that is both open and civil will be essential in the post-pandemic recovery period.

While these are exceedingly complex challenges, there are also unique opportunities in how we might—in new and different ways—more effectively engage with students, staff,

parents, and community patrons, serve students, provide support to staff, and build a new consensus with key stakeholders. Taking this into account, what will the educational landscape look like in 2032? No one knows for sure.

What I do know, is that on WASA's 60th anniversary in the year 2032, WASA members will have weathered the storm, stepped up to these challenges, and turned them into opportunities. In 2032, our schools and those leading them will be better than ever before. I am certain of this because for the past fifty years, WASA members have made their way through the darkest of days, met every challenge, and taken our schools and school districts to the highest levels of excellence ever. My friends and respected colleagues, history is on our side. Most importantly, YOU are on our side.

WASA stands ready to walk with you into what will be a challenging but bright future for our schools and the students in them. We will continue to serve and support you in the important work of educating children, ALL children, in your communities. We will continue to nudge your thinking and encourage innovation in the pursuit of excellence for ALL kids. And we will continue to be an unrelenting advocate for resources and policy that strengthen public education so that ALL children can achieve bright futures.

With deep respect and sincere appreciation,

## AARON LEAVELL REFLECTS: COMING FULL CIRCLE



In April of 2020, shortly after the school closure and switch to remote learning, I was approved by the WASA Board of Directors as one of two candidates nominated for WASA President. In the

August 2020 election, I was selected by my peers and colleagues to become President-elect and in 2021-22, WASA President. It has been an absolute honor and privilege to serve our organization in these roles for the past two years and I feel fortunate that I have another leadership role to play as Past-president next school year. In reflecting back to April 2020, it all seems so surreal. So many things have happened—and not happened—in our school district worlds. On one hand, time has gone by at lightning speed and on the other, it has felt slow as molasses. It is during

these challenging times that I appreciate and respect my WASA family more than ever.

As your incoming WASA president last July, I was motivated by a handful of goals I hoped to see come to fruition during my year of leadership; Most notably, my desire for WASA to continue to focus our work in the realm of educational equity and inclusivity for all members and school districts we serve. I am proud of the intentional efforts that our WASA Executive Team and Board of Directors are taking. The WASA brand and logo reflect our commitment to educational equity. WASA is walking its talk with a purposeful thread of inclusivity and cultural competency in our professional development offerings, and collaboration through opportunities—such as the Women in Leadership Conference and conversations with leaders of color. Ultimately, the collective creation of an

educational equity statement, that WASA members and staff can live out as we move forward as an organization, serves as a living capstone to the efforts deployed in our goals.

Serving as your President for the 2021-22 school year is a highlight in my professional career. Despite many challenges with the pandemic, and the social constructs playing out in school districts and district board rooms across our state—we did it! Thank you for your encouragement, support, and collegiality.

I am excited to pass the baton to incoming President, Michelle Whitney, Superintendent of Pasco School District. We are fortunate to have Michelle step into this role. Take good care everyone. We are WASA!

**Aaron Leavell, WASA President 2021-22**

## WASA 2022-23 PRIORITIES

# Emphasis on Educational Equity

During their June 25 meeting, the WASA Board approved [Goals and Actions for 2022-23](#). The goals are grounded in the Association's mission and the core values of *Leadership*, *Trust*, and *Advocacy*. WASA's newly adopted Educational Equity Statement was a prominent driver in the development of these goals and actions.

Executive Director Joel Aune and his team will now develop tasks for each of the actions to propel implementation of next year's priorities.

01

### LEADERSHIP

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

02

### TRUST

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

03

### 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.

## JUNE MINUTES IN BRIEF

# Board Meeting

### The Board approved the following:

#### Consent Calendar:

- June 2022 Comparative Membership Report
- April 2022 Board Meeting Minutes
- May 2022 Income Statement, Balance Sheet, and Trial Balance
- Bylaw Change: Dues for Lifetime Members
- 2022-23 WASA Goals and Actions
- 2023 WASA Legislative Platform
- Election of WASA Board Secretary and Treasurer

### The Executive Director's Report included:

- 2021-22 WASA Goals, Actions, and Tasks Final Status
- Board of Tellers to Certify the WASA President-elect Election
- 2022-23 Preliminary Budget

### WASA Assistant Executives reported on:

- Professional Learning: Quick Facts Since the April Board Meeting
- What's Next in Professional Learning
- Legislative Update
- Legislation and Finance Committee
- School Funding Coalition
- Management Reviews
- SIRS
- Superintendent Mentor Program

### Other items presented:

- Travel Insurance
- WASA Honorary Awards Luncheon

*The next WASA Board meeting is Sunday, October 2, 2022, held in conjunction with the Fall Conference.*

## 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, and
  - 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.



## LISA CADERO-SMITH REFLECTS

## Centering Educational Equity

*"There is no passion to be found in playing small—in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living." Nelson Mandela*

This quote by Nelson Mandela is inscribed on the wall above my desk. Each day, it reminds me to be brave in my leadership and embrace the vulnerability of the unknown. Similarly, WASA leadership made a courageous decision this past year to increase their influence in the area of educational equity. As one small part of these efforts, I was honored to serve on an 18-member Ad Hoc Committee convened to support their work. The Ad Hoc Committee was assembled last December to advise WASA leaders on the development of an educational equity statement aligned to the association's mission and beliefs. The statement would focus on students, provide a lens for future decision-making, and accurately reflect the membership. WASA's passion for getting the work right was palpable, and I was happy to join my colleagues

across the state in supporting their goals.

The process was rigorous. In the beginning, facilitator Helene Paroff, guided participants through an exercise aimed at clarifying members' personal and collective WHYS related to educational equity. This provided a solid foundation for the work ahead. The core concepts of diversity, equity, cultural competency, and inclusion were investigated to ensure a shared understanding by all. Research findings on effective equity statements were analyzed, and samples from several Washington school districts and organizations were carefully reviewed. Throughout the process, members listened thoughtfully to one another's perspectives and remained open to divergent opinions. In the end, the committee agreed that the final statement would guide WASA in supporting district leaders to build equitable learning systems for their students.

WASA demonstrated an unwavering commitment to excellence throughout the process. A well-planned course of action was initiated, and the resulting message is both aspirational and actionable. The most challenging work now lies ahead. Districts will benefit greatly from WASA's continued leadership and support in operationalizing the work. I am grateful for the earnest and compassionate leadership demonstrated by WASA thus far and am fully confident they will continue guiding and assisting district leaders in implementing the [Educational Equity Statement](#) in the years to come.



*Lisa Cadero-Smith is the Assistant Superintendent of K-12 Education for Yelm Community Schools.*

## JAKE DINGMAN REFLECTS

## #NightHawkProud

On June 3, 2022, the day before graduation at Oakesdale High School and the morning after the senior class returned late from their senior trip, two of the eleven seniors—Carley and Ryan—were called in early to be interviewed by a Spokane news station.

Two attributes were on full display when Carley and Ryan were interviewed that early morning: the pride of growing up in a small school and the traditional legacy of having their graduation photos displayed on the cafeteria wall for generations to come. Schools, regardless of size, should be filled with pride and tradition.

**Leave a legacy.** In *Training Camp*, Jon Gordon lists this as number ten of the "Eleven Traits of the Best of the Best." In Oakesdale, staff reflect on these eleven traits with regularity, through personal and professional lenses, leading to recurring conversation about how we are leaving a legacy. At school, our legacy continues to be the respect and understanding of the humans who are our students; knowing their personalities and styles; interests and motivators. Part of our legacy as the adults in our 170 students' lives is that we help them learn how to use their individual attributes. Attributes to succeed academically, yet more

importantly, to identify what their personal legacy, now and later, will be.

*...our legacy continues to be the respect and understanding of the humans who are our students...*

While the seniors from the Nighthawk Class of 2022 looked at the photos on the wall of the cafeteria, they spoke fondly of the family and reminisced about the friends who graduated before them. With equal excitement and sentimentality, they spoke of their pictures, soon to be added. The legacy of each group is different from the other, yet each contributes to the pride of the school, now and later.

Jon Gordon lists the eleventh trait of the "Best of the Best" as "The best makes everyone around them better." The legacy of a century of Oakesdale graduates inspires current students, whether there are three or eighteen, to be their best, to serve, and to represent the community with pride, while in school and after.

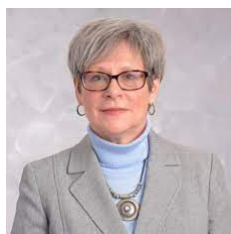
The next 50 years of WASA provides us the opportunity to do exactly what the legacy of the first 50 years has done; just as the century of graduation photos will do for graduates to come. We as individual leaders leave our own legacy, contributing to the legacy of WASA. Be proud of our accomplishments, reflect on them, then—being the best of the best—continue to make everyone better.



*Jake Dingman has served as superintendent in Oakesdale for 14 years, including two as superintendent in Palouse and Oakesdale concurrently. His service to WASA includes time as a Board Member, Superintendent Component Chair, Small Schools Component Chair, Regional Awards Chair, and Region President.*

# WASA INCLUSIONARY PRACTICES PROJECT: Past, Present, and Future

*Contributed by Helene Paroff*



For those of you who are veteran educators like me, you might remember a time when students with disabilities were often excluded from the typical activities of any school. For years, I taught students with learning disabilities and behavior disorders (the terms of the day) at the middle and high school level. The arc of my own career, beginning in 1978, has taken me from teaching in a self-contained classroom next to the 1950s bomb shelter of a school, to the honor of serving as the Project Director of WASA's Inclusionary Practices Project.

Fueled by investments made by the Legislature to support more inclusive schools in Washington, WASA—with WSSDA as our partner—was funded for the well-defined purpose “to provide professional learning and support to assist districts as they develop and/or refine plans to move to more fully inclusive learning environments for students with disabilities.” Since its launch in January 2020, WASA has had more than sixty districts

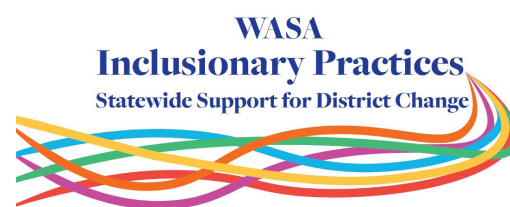
from across the state engage in the work, with consideration of all aspects of students' lives.

While changes in Least Restrictive Environment data tell one aspect of the story of the positive impact of the WASA Inclusionary Practices Project, even more significant are the stories of change that come directly from our participating districts. As one district recounted, “One major piece of evidence that change is happening in the district is from the students themselves—especially those with disabilities. Students are organized into action groups at the high school and middle school and are asking for different responses from teachers—one that looks at their strengths.”

Clearly, the focus of the work for WASA and the districts we serve is more than a check box, a seat in the room, or compliance for students with disabilities. As we already know, and will continue to highlight, the powerful and necessary combination of holding the beliefs, skills, structures, and systems to lift each and every student is essential. This coming year, with the current funding from the Legislature drawing to a close in June 2023, districts will,

in part, turn their attention to building internal capacity; knowing that the path forward lies within themselves and their system for the benefit of students. Among other activities, the project will aid districts in supporting staff to provide professional learning directly.

The arc of the WASA Inclusionary Practices Project continues as districts move their plans into action and move the hopes and dreams for every student into more than words on paper. As the WASA Educational Equity Statement indicates, inclusion will be achieved through the intentional actions that create and sustain belonging, safety, respect, and attention to individual needs and backgrounds to ensure all students fully engage in available activities and opportunities.



## CELEBRATING A GREAT YEAR OF INCLUSIONARY PRACTICES!

On May 24 and 25, Leadership Teams from approximately 50 districts gathered to celebrate the culmination of the year's work as a participant in the WASA Inclusionary Practices Project. The attendees furthered their work with Dr. Katie Novak and learned from and with colleagues from across the state. Plans for this coming year's project and applications for those interested in continuing and/or joining the project will be available soon!

Pictured: 1: Joel Aune, WASA Executive Director, welcomed participants and highlighted the importance of the inclusionary practices work they are engaging in. 2: Dr. Katie Novak addresses District Leadership Teams from across the state. 3: Dylan Koutsky, Administrative Intern, and Gaye Bungart, Co-Director, Special Education, share Highline Public School's journey to build an inclusive educational system. 4: Terry Sanders and Sarah Samuelson, Consultant Teachers, present on how the Lake Chelan School District has used their learning about Universal Design for Learning to support staff in meeting their students' needs. 5: The Snell family, founders of Micah's Miles, share their inspirational story with the WASA Inclusionary Practices Project participants.





## WADE SMITH REFLECTS

## Beyond the Pandemic

As we approach the endemic phase of COVID-19's ire, many of our daily lives and routines are beginning to once again feel "normal." And while students are back in school, athletes have retaken the fields, and performers once again adorn our stages, some of our nation's children are far from being 'okay.' Parents, teachers, and concerned citizens across our country are asking one another—"Why haven't many of our kids bounced back?"

However, anyone who is familiar with the social-emotional and well-being data prior to the pandemic is keenly aware that even before COVID-19 arrived on our shores two years ago, our country's youth were exhibiting troubling markers. Anxiety, mental health, and depression were already taking its toll on many students and experts were struggling to find cause. Rather than an isolated issue, I believe it is more likely a confluence of multiple factors; influences most adults my age never experienced when growing up. By attempting to put oneself in the shoes of an adolescent nowadays, this attempt at perspective building may help begin to explain why many of our nation's kids are "not okay."

For example, benign earthquake drills that many of us once recall as customary rituals have been overshadowed by intense lockdown exercises due to the prevalence of terrifying active shooter incidents. The recent tragedy at Robb Elementary School in Texas will only serve to heighten student anxiety during these drills. Comic books and baseball card collections have been swapped for the 24-7 constant barrage of TikTok and Snapchat social media platforms.

Growing up, I recollect that my call for concern for the environment focused on limiting aerosol hair spray purchases, saying goodbye to Styrofoam McDonald's containers, and the minor annoyance of having to choose between leaded or unleaded gasoline at the pump. Nowadays, our children are actually inheriting a planet where visible climate change all around them will undoubtedly impact their lives and futures. At one time, trusted news anchors like Cronkite and Brinkley could be found by a simple turn of the dial on the TV. Now all one seems to find are hyper-partisan and divisive personalities from both sides that feed viewers anything but "news." And even more troublesome, real relationships and meaningful interactions seem to have been substituted for "digital friends" and "Instagram likes."

In fact, most kids nowadays have known no world where a smart phone hasn't inundated their entire lives. Even prior to the pandemic, 50 percent of teens admitted to feeling addicted to their mobile devices. Most revealed that they couldn't focus on any task for more than two minutes without checking up on their social media streams (Common Sense, 2016). Bring on nearly two years of isolation, trauma, and upheaval, the effects of COVID have seemed to compound and intensify this reality. Nationwide, chronic absenteeism rates have doubled since the pandemic (McKinsey & Co, 2022), emergency department visits for suspected suicides in teen girls is up 51 percent since 2019 (CDC, 2021), and rates of student dysregulation and behavior have significantly intensified. Regrettably, almost one-third of high school students now struggle with persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness (USDHHS, 2021).

*I remain optimistic that school districts across our state are on the path toward student recovery.*

Despite these concerning trends, I remain optimistic that school districts across our state are on the path toward student recovery. More and more attention and support are being resourced to assist students who are struggling, and many school leaders and their school boards have taken bold and creative steps to help address these issues. Leveraging temporary federal COVID relief resources, as well as some modest legislative steps towards improved funding for physical, social, and emotional supports our schools desperately need, districts have been able to increase critical staff. Schools across our state are leveraging partnerships with community organizations, implementing powerful student-led initiatives—like the Sources of Strength program—and are intentionally focusing on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum that bolsters student resiliency, grit, perseverance, and self-worth.

Many schools are expanding partnerships with local childcare and early learning providers, in addition to implementing game-changing Transitional Kindergarten programs necessary to ensure that foundational learning is accessible for many of our at-risk and

underserved learners. A great number of districts are leveraging student voice and implementing student advisory groups, in addition to rekindling parent relationships with improved engagement and outreach. And lastly, many schools are witnessing remarkable leadership from their youth as districts continue efforts around building cultures of belonging and purpose for each and every child.

In Walla Walla, and in communities across our state, passionate community partners and programs are joining us in this critical work. For those individuals or businesses who wonder what they can do, I encourage them to contact their neighborhood school-volunteer, read to a child, mentor a youth, provide internships in your business, coach a youth activity, or simply attend a sporting event or concert and cheer on our students. By coming together and rallying around our youth, I am confident that our path forward beyond the pandemic remains promising.



Wade Smith has served as superintendent of Walla Walla Public Schools since 2016. He has also served as WASA Region 123 President and is currently on the WASA Board of Directors.



## Fall Conference

Student Voice as a Lever for Excellence and Continuous Improvement

with Dr. Tammy Campbell

Four Points Sheraton

OCTOBER 2, 2022

4:00 PM - 8:30 PM

OCTOBER 3, 2022

8:30 PM - 3:00 PM

*It is not enough to simply listen to student voice. -Adam Fletcher*



# LEGISLATIVE *Outlook*

*A look ahead to the 2023 session from Dan Steele*

## WASA BOARD ADOPTS 2023 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM Advocacy is a Year-Round Effort



On June 25, the WASA Board of Directors took action to adopt the Association's Legislative Platform for the 2023 Legislative Session. As recommended by WASA's

Legislation & Finance

Committee, the Platform addresses school administrator, school district, and student needs. The Platform is closely aligned with WASA's goals, including a clear emphasis on educational equity.

The 2023 Legislative Platform provides recognition for the Legislature's efforts to address K-12 education concerns in the 2021-23 biennium; however, while many of the investments and policy changes were positive and appreciated, many urgent, ongoing concerns were not addressed. WASA's Platform is comprised of seven planks that express school administrators' priorities for the upcoming 2023 Legislative Session:

- Advance equity
- Support basic education compensation rebase
- Fully fund special education
- Fix pupil transportation
- Update staffing allocations
- Invest in Learning Recovery
- Support capital facilities

WASA's adopted [2023 Legislative Platform](#) describes in greater detail the specific issues for which we will be advocating. We encourage you to review the Platform—and share these priorities with your legislators. The 2023 Legislative Session will not convene for another six months; however, legislators are already in process of researching and developing their own personal and caucus priorities. Advocacy is a year-round effort and meeting with legislators well-before the session begins allows you to build stronger relationships with your elected officials—and provides an opportunity to influence their thinking before their legislative priorities are established. Remember, advocacy does not have to be hard—or intimidating. But you do have to commit to it.


It is also important to remember that 2022 is an election year. All 98 seats in the House will be on the ballot, along with almost half of the Senate's 49 seats. In addition, almost two dozen current legislators are not running to retain seat—so regardless of election outcomes, there will be a large crop of new legislators. Contact your legislators now (and often) and continue to build good relationships with them, but do not forget to take the time to get to know legislators' challengers or candidates running for an open seat. Discuss our education priorities and be prepared to voice your opinion and concerns during the election season. You deserve to know if legislative incumbents and challengers alike will support or oppose our priorities.

*Remember, advocacy does not have to be hard—or intimidating. But you do have to commit to it*

WASA stands ready to assist you in your advocacy efforts. In addition to our traditional in-session activities (including TWIO, the legislative podcast, and the annual Legislative Conference), staff is preparing a series of pre-session activities. We are in-process of planning a public roll-out of the new 2023 Legislative Platform, which will be disseminated to our members, other education associations, legislators and legislative candidates, and the media. Staff is also developing a two-part advocacy "Lunch & Learn" webinar. The first part will be a complete review of WASA's 2023 Platform, including the rationale behind the positions, additional detail, and talking points. The second part will be an advocacy primer (Advocacy 101, if you will), providing you with the tools, tips, and tricks to be an effective advocate. Part one will be held in the early fall; Part two will be held in late November or early December. Keep an eye out for information in WASA News and via e-mail from WASA.

A final note regarding the Platform is in order. As you review WASA's established priorities, you might view them as being rather ambitious. Our priorities are "stretch" goals to say the least; however, there is a specific reason for that. WASA's legislative strategy is to be bold and honest, advocating for what our students and school districts NEED—not simply what we think we might be able to achieve. We firmly believe that if we ask for anything less than what is necessary to support our students and staff, we are doing our school districts and our members a disservice. Certainly, we will analyze the legislative landscape and will likely have to temper our expectations—and it may be necessary to tweak our approach or messages—but if we ask for less than what we actually need, we will never truly be successful. Additionally, we will continue to play the "long game," building momentum and laying the groundwork for future success.

YOU are WASA and we are only as strong and effective as our members. We encourage you to continue, if not ramp up, your advocacy activities.



*Save the Day!*

**Regional Equity Workshops**

*with Dr. Tammie Campbell*  
8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

**October 25**  
Northeast Washington ESD 101

**October 26**  
Northwest Washington ESD 189

**October 28**  
ESD 101

*providing vision, leadership, and support to district leaders*



# SCHOOL FUNDING COALITION PRIORITIES

## Enhancing Staffing Allocations



In the 2022 Session, the School Funding Coalition successfully advocated for enhancements in staffing allocations in the Prototypical School Funding Model. Specifically,

the Legislature provided funding to phase-in over three years increased staffing ratios for physical, social, emotional support staff (including nurses, social workers, psychologists, counselors, and other staff that provide physical, social, and emotional support to students). While this was a major win for the education community, the ultimate goal of reaching more realistic state-funded staffing levels across the entire Prototypical School Funding Model, as recommended by the 2019 Staffing Enrichment Workgroup, will take additional time and effort.

The Staffing Enrichment Workgroup recommended a six-year plan to increase each of the staffing allocations in the Prototypical School Funding Model. The recommendations

were divided into two phases. The initial funding to increase staffing ratios for physical, social, emotional support staff (previously called social-emotional health and safety staff) is a major component of Phase One of the recommendations, but additional components in Phase One were not addressed (Phase Two of the recommendations were never discussed).

The School Funding Coalition, led by WASA and the Washington Association of School Business Officials, is comprised of seven education management associations (WASA and WASBO, along with Washington School Personnel Association, Washington State School Directors' Association, Association of Washington School Principals, Alliance of Education Associations, and Association of Educational Service Districts) continues to maintain its singular focus on advocating for enhancements to staffing allocations—specifically supporting full implementation of the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup's recommendations. Aligned with WASA's [2023 Legislative Platform](#), the Coalition's 2023 priority is to advocate for the completion of the Workgroup's Phase One recommendations. This includes improving

state-funding staffing levels for school principals; providing additional professional development to close achievement gaps; and adding continuous improvement coaches as an enhancement to the Prototypical School Funding Model.

While it is likely unrealistic to believe the Legislature will make much of an effort to further enhance staffing allocations in the Prototypical School Funding Model in 2023—when the phase-in of increased staffing ratios for physical, social, emotional support staff has just begun—the Coalition believes it is important to keep this issue on legislators' radar. Similar to WASA's legislative strategy, the Coalition intends on continuing to ask legislators to follow through with their commitment to provide realistic state-funded staffing levels across the entire Prototypical School Funding Model.

The School Funding Coalition's adopted priority document will be completed and disseminated this summer.

## THANK YOU, 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, 50th Anniversary 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 Andy Wolf. Andy can be reached at 360.489.3646 or by email at [awolf@wasa-oly.org](mailto:awolf@wasa-oly.org).



# WASA HONORARY AWARDS

The WASA Honorary Awards Program provides recognition at both the region and state level to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to K-12 education, including advancing educational equity. WASA's State Awards include the Golden Gavel, DA Davidson Barbara Mertens Legacy, Service to WASA, and WASA Leadership. At the region level, the WASA Student Achievement Leadership Award, Award of Merit, Community Leadership Award, Student Leadership Award, and Twenty-Year and Retiree Awards recognize school district leaders, community leaders, and student leaders.

***Congratulations to this year's recipients. Your stories are truly inspiring!***



**GOLDEN GAVEL AWARD**  
**MICHAEL DUNN**  
*Superintendent  
NEWESD 101*



**WASA LEADERSHIP AWARD**  
**SHANE BACKLUND**  
*Superintendent  
Selah School District*



**SERVICE TO WASA AWARD**  
**TIM GARCHOW**  
*Executive Director  
WSSDA*



**D.A. DAVIDSON**  
**BARBARA MERTENS  
LEGACY AWARD**  
**MICK HOFFMAN**  
*Executive Director  
WIAA*



**PEMCO ROBERT J. HANDY  
AWARD (SMALL-SIZED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT)**  
**JOHN HANNAH**  
*Superintendent  
Morton School District*



**PEMCO ROBERT J. HANDY  
AWARD (MEDIUM-SIZED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT)**  
**RENAE MCMURRAY**  
*Assistant Superintendent  
Washougal School District*



**PEMCO ROBERT J. HANDY  
AWARD (LARGE-SIZED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT)**  
**DR. KATHI WEIGHT**  
*Superintendent  
Steilacoom Historical  
School District*



**REGION 114**



**REGION 123**



## REGION 101



## REGION 105



## REGION 108



## REGION 109





# WASA HONORARY AWARDS





# New WASA Members

**We've welcomed eight new members since May 2022.**

Our newest class of WASA members joins nearly 2,000 members from across the state. Collectively, they represent diverse districts from every corner of Washington State.

Kasey Johnson, Raymond  
Erin Bayer, Yelm Community Schools  
Brandon King, Bethel  
Dave McKellar, Arlington  
Elissa Dornan, Bethel  
Wesley Allen, Mukilteo  
Jodi GreyEyes, Bethel  
Zac Robbins, Marysville

## Incoming Superintendents

*Please join us in welcoming these incoming superintendents for the 2022–23 school year. We look forward to supporting you in your new role.*

Jeffrey D. Thake, Aberdeen  
Richard Serns, Boistfort  
Donna Colosky, Bremerton  
Lynnette Blackburn, Brewster  
John Anzalone, Camas  
John Parker, Central Valley  
Ben Ferney, Cheney  
Kevin Knight, Colville  
John Belcher, Cle Elum-Roslyn  
Brian Freeman, Curlew  
Chad Prewitt, Davenport  
Becky Berg, Eastmont  
Aaron Kombol, Easton  
Rebecca Miner, Edmonds  
Greg Whitmore, Entiat  
Steve McCullough, ESD 123  
John Boyd, Evergreen –Vancouver  
Kristi Dominguez, Ferndale  
Brett Agenbroad, Garfield  
Gerald Grubbs, Grapeview  
Elyse Mengarelli, Glenwood  
John Cordell, Harrington  
Ivan Duran, Highline  
Jose-de-Jesus Melendez, Hood Canal  
Heather Tow-Yick, Issaquah  
Steve Jantz, Keller  
Israel Vela, Kent  
Kendrick Lester, Klickitat  
Brad Wilson, Lake Chelan  
David VanderYacht, Lynden  
Bruce Todd, Mansfield  
Zachary Robbins, Marysville  
Susan Zetty, McCleary

Fred Rundle, Mercer Island  
Monty Sabin, Moses Lake  
Robert Roettger, ESD 101  
Michael Tolley, Northshore  
Michelle Kuss-Cybula, Oak Harbor  
John Bruce, Odessa  
Aaron Leavell, ESD 114  
Kristin Soderback, Onalaska  
Dan Read, Onion Creek  
Joe Beckford, Orchard Prairie  
Joe West, Paterson  
Jeff Davis, Pioneer  
Mel Houtz, Queets-Clearwater  
Nikolas Bergman, Quincy  
Kasey (K.C.) Johnson, Raymond  
John Farley, Republic  
Susan Leach, Riverview  
Jennifer Bethman, Rochester  
Brent Jones, Seattle  
Regan Nickels, Sequim  
Kevin McKay, Selah  
Kimberly Casey, Soap Lake  
Raymond (Ray) Leaver, Sprague  
Ryan Maxwell, Sunnyside  
Kevin Young, Tonasket  
Angela Allen, Toutle Lake  
Jerry Lewis, Trout Lake  
Carole Meyer, Tumwater  
Mandi Rehn, Valley  
Bill Eagle, Wenatchee  
Scott Harrison, White River  
Guy Strot, Wishram

## REGION PRESIDENTS

**Region 101** Travis Hanson, Deer Park  
**Region 105** Jinger Haberer, Ellensburg  
**Region 108** Mary Sewright, Mount Baker  
**Region 109** Dana Geaslen, Edmonds  
**Region 110** Ron Thiele, Issaquah  
**Region 111** Michael Farmer, Dieringer  
**Region 112** Mary Beth Tack, Kelso

**Region 113** Brian Wharton, Yelm  
**Region 114** Marty Brewer, Port Angeles  
**Region 123** Michelle Whitney, Pasco  
**Region 171** Tracey Beckendorf-Edou, Cascade

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

**President:** Aaron Leavell, Bremerton  
**President-elect:** Michelle Whitney, Pasco  
**Past president:** Brian Talbott, East Valley  
**Secretary:** Jennifer Bethman, Bethel  
**Treasurer:** Linda McKay, NCESD 171

### Regions

**101** Jake Dingman, Oakesdale  
**105** Henry Strom, Grandview  
**108** Larry Francois, NWESD 189  
**109** Chrys Sweeting, Arlington  
**110** Shaun Carey, Enumclaw  
**111** Laurie Dent, Sumner-Bonney Lake  
**112** Nathan McCann, Ridgefield  
**113** Patrick Murphy, Olympia  
**114** Dana Rosenbach, North Mason  
**123** Wade Smith, Walla Walla  
**171** Tracey Beckendorf-Edou, Cascade

### Components

**BPAC:** Sarah Thornton, Pasco, chair |  
Melissa Beard, Steilacoom, chair-elect

**IPAC:** Jennifer Bethman, Bethel, chair |  
Jenny Rodriguez, Yakima, chair-elect |  
Linda McKay, NCESD 171, past chair

**Principals:** Matt Yarkosky, Bethel, chair

**Special Education:** John Sander,  
Franklin Pierce, chair

**Superintendents:** Jeff Snell, Vancouver,  
chair | James Everett, Meridian, chair-elect |  
Deb Clemens, North Thurston, past chair

### Liaisons

**AASA:** Kevin McKay, ESD 105 |  
Michelle Price, NCESD 171 |  
Nathan McCann, Ridgefield |  
Krestin Bahr, Peninsula

**Higher Ed:** Marge Chow, City University

**OSPI:** Michaela Miller

**PESB:** Alexandra Manuel

**Retirees:** Rick Anthony

**SBE:** Susana Reyes, Shoreline

**WIAA:** Doug Burge, Zillah

## AASA CORNER

### LIVE WELL. LEAD WELL. DISCUSSION SERIES



Join AASA President, Paul Imhoff, each month for a discussion series focusing on self-care, student care, and staff care, plus leadership change and bringing communities back together.

For each discussion topic, there will be an hour-long Expert Forum where you will hear from an expert in the field plus a superintendent practitioner. In the month following the Expert Forum, join us for an hour-long Guided Workshop consisting of a short introduction of the topic followed by small group sharing in breakout rooms. To learn more about the program, [click here](#).

Upcoming Topics (click to register):

- July 26: [Leadership Change Expert Forum](#)
- September 27: [Bringing Communities Back Together Expert Forum](#)

### 2023 WASHINGTON SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR (SOY)



2022 Superintendent of the Year, Susan Enfield

The 2023 Washington State Superintendent of the Year process is underway. The online application can be found on the AASA website.

To be considered for Washington's SOY process, the deadline to apply is October 1,

2022. WASA will convene a panel of judges who will review and score the applications submitted to determine Washington's Superintendent of the Year for 2023.

The selected candidate for Washington State will be submitted to AASA to be considered for the 2023 AASA National Superintendent of the Year to be announced at the 2023 AASA National Conference on Education, February 16–18, 2023, in San Antonio, Texas.

For information on the Superintendent of the Year program and process, visit [soy.aasa.org](http://soy.aasa.org). For questions on Washington's SOY process, contact Shari Parsons at 360.489.3641.

### AASA WOMEN IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

The AASA Women in School Leadership Award program is designed to recognize the exceptional leadership of active, frontline female leaders who make a difference in students' lives every day. Three awards are available—Superintendent Award, Central Office/Principal Award, and The School Driven Leadership Award. Applicants are judged on the following criteria—leadership for learning, communication, professionalism, and community involvement.

- [Nominations](#) must be made by September 9, 2022
- Applications must be completed [online](#) by October 7, 2022
- Finalists will be announced on November 15, 2022
- Winners will be announced on February 16–18, 2023, at the AASA National Conference

For further [information](#), visit the [AASA website](#).

### AASA EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION SCHOLARSHIPS

AASA's Educational Administration Scholarships were created in 1949 to provide incentive, honor, and financial assistance to outstanding graduate students in school administration who intend to make the school superintendency a career.

Seven top graduate students in educational administration will receive a scholarship from AASA. The scholarships are given in honor of AASA's former executive directors.

To review the eligibility information and FAQ, visit the [AASA website](#), where applications are also available.

The deadline to apply is September 30, 2022.



### 2022–23 PRESIDENT-ELECT



2022–23 President-elect candidates Michael Green and Mike Villarreal. Read their letters to WASA members and goals on pages 15–16 of this newsletter.

The WASA President-elect campaign is underway. Michael Green, Superintendent, Woodland School District, and Mike Villarreal, Superintendent, Hoquiam School District, are candidates. Electronic candidate brochures and a series of three brief introductory videos from each candidate are posted on the WASA website, in addition to the video of the candidate speeches from the WASA Honorary Awards Luncheon held on Monday, June 27. Electronic ballots for the WASA President-elect Election will be sent to WASA Active Members on August 1, and voting will be open until August 13. Election results will be shared with the membership on August 16.

## JULY REMINDERS

#### Connect with Us

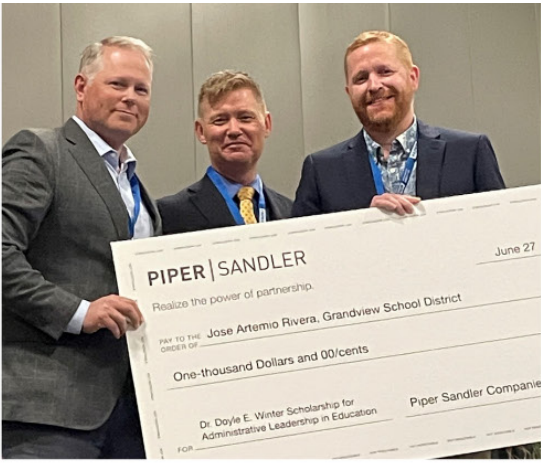
Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) for information on upcoming conferences and workshops, legislative news and updates, and school news.

#### 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 **Sheila Chard** at [schard@wasa-oly.org](mailto:schard@wasa-oly.org) if you have questions or need assistance.



AWSP/WASA 2022 SUMMER CONFERENCE





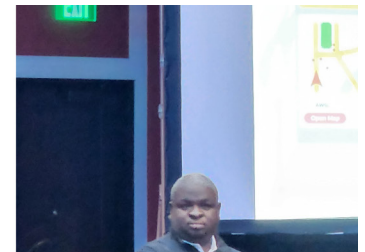
## AWSP/WASA 2022 SUMMER CONFERENCE



## WSLA SUMMER STATEWIDE WORKSHOP

The Washington State Leadership Academy (WSLA) held its Summer Statewide Workshop on Friday, June 24, at the Grand Hotel in Spokane. Teams came together to share progress toward their theory of action with other school district teams around the state. The day was full of collaboration.

WSLA is accepting applications to be a part of the 2022-23 WSLA Academy through August 1 beginning in the fall. If you are interested or would like further information, contact [Sharon Bower](#) or call her at 360.520.6503 for further information.







*President-Elect Candidate*

# MICHAEL GREEN



## DEAR WASA COLLEAGUES

On my office desk sits a Christmas tree ornament—a blown-glass toaster that was given to me last fall by a coworker. It reminds me of the challenge and the craziness we have all been through since March 13, 2020.

Like many of you, I, over the course of the last few years, have endured periodic personal attacks and threat laden vitriol from a contingent of parents and community members who find public schools, school boards, and school leaders to be an easy target for their anger at decisions made far from the local schoolhouse. While some of us have successfully navigated these difficult times, others have left our profession, and still, others have lowered their heads in an attempt to simply avoid the crossfire. These two years have been tough, yet the lessons learned through the tumult have fueled my passion for public service to children within my community and beyond.

And now you ask, what did that toaster ornament have to do with anything? The toaster was from a scene in the 1993 movie *Groundhog Day* (Watch the movie again... you will get the connection). In the movie, Phil,

played by Bill Murray, asked: "What would you do if you were stuck in one place and every day was exactly the same, and nothing that you did mattered?" Public Education is emerging from this pandemic stronger and better precisely because, even though it has felt like we were collectively "stuck in one place," what we have done as leaders have deeply mattered.

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*As leaders, we have held together...We have provided stability and support within our districts. We have held steady in the storm.*

---

As leaders, we have held together...We have provided stability and support within our districts. We have held steady in the storm. We have trusted and supported one another. We have provided leadership and stability in the midst of what has felt like unrelenting stress and continual change couched in the paralyzing sameness of COVID response and mitigation. Throughout it all, my professional and personal backstop has been provided by my WASA

colleagues and the skilled leadership, advocacy, and support found there. In recent weeks, I have heard from many colleagues that the supportive professional connections made over these last few years have been their "silver lining."

Emerging from the pandemic, we have each learned many things and gained many things. My mission, should you elect me, will be to lead in such a way that we enhance the silver lining that we have collectively built across our great state as we focus on providing equitable opportunities for all children to reach new heights of success. I am humbled by this opportunity to serve.

*Michael*



### CONNECT:

As educators, we share a common passion for service. Service to the children in our schools, service to those who lead and teach in our school buildings, and service to our communities. Yet, in our positions, we can find ourselves isolated. The richness of collaboration, collegiality, and connectedness is essential to our own health, the health of WASA, and our individual and shared success. I aim to promote connectedness.

### GROW:

WASA does an excellent job of providing opportunities for professional growth. As president, I will seek to continue the fine work WASA is doing to help provide us with rich professional information and the opportunities for ongoing collaboration that help us each be more effective and successful in our roles.

### SUPPORT:

When asked about my love for the superintendency, I often say that 80 percent of the time I love the work. Then there is that 20 percent of the time...

That is 20 percent when we are under fire. That is 20 percent when we are managing a crisis. That is 20 percent of the time when we are dealing with "dis" challenges (disunity, discordancy, dissention, etc.). It is in the 20 percent that our mettle is tested. I will endeavor to ensure that WASA staff and leadership percent and successfully navigate the 20 percent.

### ADVOCATE:

"Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstone of freedom, democracy, and sustainable human development" (Kofi Annan). Having had experience in small and large systems on both sides of the Cascade curtain,

I recognize the challenges we face across the state. I will endeavor to be a tireless advocate for equity, for each child, for all children, and for public education—in my community, in Olympia, and across Washington State.

### PLAY:

As a recovering first-grade teacher, I must always remember the great impact of fun and play. As adults, having fun is essential to our health, our success, our joy, and our learning. As president, I will seek opportunities for us to encourage fun and play.



*President-Elect Candidate*

# MIKE VILLARREAL



## DEAR WASA COLLEAGUES

I am honored to serve as Superintendent of the Hoquiam School District. From its humble beginnings as a small logging town, the community of Hoquiam has overcome many challenges, always holding fast to its motto: "Rebuilding our proud past with a promising tomorrow." As educators we, too, are builders of promising tomorrows. We are dreamers and creators, and our work makes a difference in the lives of the people we serve. When I was invited to run for WASA President, I said yes because I believe in this work. I believe in promising tomorrows.

*As educators we, too, are builders of promising tomorrows. We are dreamers and creators, and our work makes a difference in the lives of the people we serve.*

My educational journey started before I was even born, with parents who had a dream for their child. My father, a migrant farmworker, and my mother, an immigrant to the United States, believed that education opens doors to opportunity. As I look back over almost 25 years of working in public education, I see the fruition of their dream and how it formed me into the person I am today. I have worked as a paraeducator, teacher, principal, district leader, and superintendent. These experiences have provided opportunities for learning and understanding of what it means to serve as a leader.

These are urgent times, and we find ourselves having to rebuild and start anew. Public education, as we knew it, is forever changed. As we move forward, we must seek to advance systems that promote equity, remove barriers, and provide opportunities for all students to achieve. This important work requires that we cultivate meaningful relationships of trust that foster partnerships and collaboration among

state, community, and school stakeholders. It requires that we expand WASA's outreach to recruit, support, and retain professional administrators who are committed to educational equity, advocate for excellence in student learning, and are representative of the diversity within our state. It requires that we not only believe in a common goal, but that we work together and move forward, supporting each other along the way.

I invite you to join me in this journey of rebuilding, restarting, and creating promising tomorrows. It is exciting work that requires the efforts of each and every one of us!

*Mike*



## MY GOALS

If elected to serve

### ADVANCE:

Advance systems that promote equity through inclusionary practices that remove barriers and provide opportunities for all students to achieve.

### CULTIVATE:

Cultivate meaningful relationships of trust that foster partnerships and collaboration among state, community, and school stakeholders.

### EXPAND:

Expand WASA's outreach to recruit, support, and retain professional administrators who are committed to educational equity, advocate for excellence in student learning, and are representative of the diversity within our state.



★ Remember to ★

# VOTE

Voting opens August 1, 2022



# LESSONS *Learned*

*Two of our WASA colleagues reflect as they enter retirement.*

## *Jim Kowalkowski*

I recently completed my 23rd year of serving as a school district superintendent in our state. As I enter retirement, I find myself reflecting on “lessons learned” over the course of my career:

**Be honest, always!** Being a school district leader is an awesome responsibility. There is incredible pressure to always have the right answers. But sometimes, things don’t work out as we had planned. When you do fall short, own it. Tell the truth to those you serve and let them know what you have learned. I have found that students, staff, parents, school board directors, and community members will appreciate honesty. While there are certainly matters that cannot legally be discussed openly, we must be honest and straightforward.

**Model the behavior you expect from others, always!** Leaders set the example and the tone. If you expect your staff to display caring and professional behavior, you must do the same. If you expect your staff to be on time to work and to give their very best effort every day, then you must model that.

**Insist that everyone in your organization displays kindness to those they serve, always!**

Kindness doesn’t mean that one ignores misbehavior or neglects to take a strong stand against something that is not right. Confronting those things is our duty. But when we do confront, kindness requires that we never attack the dignity and self-worth of others. A wise person once told me, “We often don’t remember what people say to us, but we sure as heck always remember how they made us feel.”

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*Self-care is not selfish,  
it is essential!*

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**When faced with very difficult situations, reach out to your fellow superintendents and mentors, always!** One of the best things about being a superintendent is knowing that your colleagues are always willing to listen and to offer you some of their own “lessons learned.”

**Take good care of yourself, always!** The demands of school district leadership are significant. You owe it to everyone you serve to be the best you can be. Self-care is not selfish, it is essential!

**Be a messenger of hope, always!** This is, by far, the most important leadership lesson that I have learned. When things get very difficult (i.e., educating students during a pandemic, dealing with the tragic loss of a student or staff member, struggling with declining enrollment, etc.) school district leaders have to step up and provide a message of hope to staff, families, communities, and—most importantly—to our students.



*Jim Kowalkowski has served the past 23 years as a superintendent in the Pomeroy and Davenport school districts. In retirement, Jim will continue as Director of the Rural Ed Center, a role he assumed in 2003.*

## *Ron Thiele*

As I approach retirement after 34 years working in public education—with the last nine years as superintendent of the Issaquah Public School District—I find myself being quite reflective about what I have learned. Leading the last two and a half years during the global COVID-19 pandemic has presented many unique challenges, resulting in some lasting changes to public education. As PreK–12 education moves forward, superintendents should be thinking about creating sustainable systems for student academic and social emotional recovery. This work must also fit in the context of increasing budget pressures driven by declining public-school enrollment, along with inflationary impacts on the wages and goods needed to effectively operate a public school system. The experiences of remote learning and hybrid learning will likely increase the need to be more flexible in how we deliver education and integrate the use of technology.

For years, I’ve been working to better prioritize work, so my attention is on what is truly important. In the early years of my superintendent tenure, I simply tried to

attend to everything. While I believe these efforts were appreciated by my community, school board, and staff, as I reflect, it may have resulted in spreading myself too thin, and creating a feeling of frustration and even burnout as I moved into the later years of my time as superintendent. A lesson learned from my experience might be to create an expectation that you can’t be everywhere and do everything, so you have the time and energy to do the important things well. Use your team and school board directors to help provide a district face and voice at events and on issues. Modeling an appropriate balance to your work can result in a healthier organization, good decision making, and retention of good leaders.

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*...create an expectation that  
you can’t be everywhere  
and do everything.*

---

Finally, I believe that taking time to develop a strong partnership among your school board and administrative team will position you well for challenging issues and times.

Take advantage of professional development opportunities for your school board directors. Remember they are typically not professional educators, so finding ways to help them grow and better understand the complex issues of public education will be time well spent. The Issaquah School Board and I have participated in some incredible learning on equity issues over the past several years that have made us all better leaders, provided models for our entire staff, and improved our district. This time spent learning together also helped us develop our relationship and a superintendent/board team that has served us well as we grappled with all sorts of issues. Go to professional conferences and learn alongside your board, this is time well spent.



*Ron Thiele, who is retiring at the end of the 2021–22 school year, has served as Superintendent of the Issaquah School District since 2013.*

## BRIAN TALBOTT REFLECTS

## Where Our Work Will Take Us

I have long believed that schools and school districts are a microcosm of society—locally, nationally, and in many cases, globally. Perhaps this belief has never been as pronounced as has been our path during the past twenty months. While the pandemic took center stage, social justice and school violence were also tipping points within our systems. Exhausting and illuminating are two descriptors I feel have been at the forefront of our focused attention and work during this time. Where do we go from here and what will be our next forced focus? Rather than ponder the pulse of the last two years, I would prefer to take this opportunity to share where I believe our work will take us.

The mental, emotional, physical, and educational well-being of our students and staff have always been at the forefront of our efforts. The pandemic certainly exacerbated the need for additional supports to be put into play

within our school systems and communities at large. Schools and school staff have wrestled with this knowledge for years. Now that it has come to the actionable attention of our elected officials, we are scrambling and competing for needed health specialists.

We will need to press on the student experience as we—ever hopefully—return to a more routine and robust delivery than the last couple years have permitted. Additional safety nets and opportunities will continue to be implemented as to assist those students who have been educationally impacted from the global pandemic.

We will continue to see more retirees and professional exits than the statewide candidate pool will be able to sustain for support staff, instructors, and those in leadership. We cannot merely hope that these positions will be fillable, we must aggressively and enthusiastically

encourage candidates to choose this field as a career.

As educational leaders, regardless of the size or location of our communities, it is incumbent upon each of us to advance our work toward inclusivity, social justice, and equitable outcomes. These are not easy topics or discussions; however, the children, adults, and communities we serve are looking to us for courageous leadership. The right time is now; the right person is you.



*Since 2005, Brian Talbott has served as Superintendent in the White Pass, Nine Mile Falls, and East Valley districts. A WASA Member for over 20 years, he was elected to serve as President in 2020–21.*

## SIRS

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

SIRS is a nonprofit 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 school board 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 for social studies classrooms and school libraries. The handbook is available [online](#) to SIRS members and can be downloaded and distributed to your staff.

## Contact us

**GENERAL INFORMATION**  
360.943.5717 / 800.859.9272

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE**  
360.489.3641

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Bella Troiani, Communications/Production Support  
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Lisa Gehman, Professional Learning/Membership Assistant  
[lgehman@wasa-oly.org](mailto:lgehman@wasa-oly.org)

**MEMBER SUPPORT & ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS**  
360.489.3646

Andy Wolf, Assistant Executive Director | [awolf@wasa-oly.org](mailto:awolf@wasa-oly.org)

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Kaley VonVolkli, Accounting Assistant | [kvonvolkli@wasa-oly.org](mailto:kvonvolkli@wasa-oly.org)

## WASA OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT**  
Aaron Leavell, Bremerton

**PRESIDENT-ELECT**  
Michelle Whitney, Pasco

**PAST PRESIDENT**  
Brian Talbott, East Valley–Spokane

**SECRETARY**  
Jennifer Bethman, Bethel

**TREASURER**  
Linda McKay, NCESD 171





FEATURING ANDY WOLF

# WASA Employee Spotlight



**In this issue, we're proud to spotlight Assistant Executive Director, Member Services & Administrative Operations, Andy Wolf. Andy joined WASA in July 2016.**

"Andy Wolf is one of the most genuinely, authentic people that I have had the privilege of knowing. Andy truly shines as that personal/professional contact who thoughtfully supports WASA members... often during their hardest and darkest times. Andy is the competent and confidential friend/colleague who truly aches with and for others. I very much appreciate his down-to-earth and common-sense approach and demeanor."

Brian Talbott

*What does your job entail at WASA?*

Most of my responsibilities focus on being available to members 24/7 as a confidential sounding-board. I hope to provide light and

hope when they are in their darkest moments. I provide advice and perspective on legal services, contracts, bargaining, COVID-related problems, and board-superintendent relations. I work with new superintendents, arrange for mentors, and get them connected to resources. Much to Joel's consternation, I don't wear a necktie because I want to be approachable (laughs).

*What do you like most about your job?*

I am amazed at the courage and resiliency of our members. When I see and experience people who are ALWAYS willing to help me or their colleagues, I am inspired. I admire these people and how they stand for students.

*How has WASA changed since you were hired?*

Member needs have changed as the demands of their jobs have evolved. I think through our effort to serve members as best as we can, WASA has become more responsive to member needs. We are more adept in our ability to respond with resources in real-time. That is what today's members need, and I think we are meeting that need. Their jobs have changed and so has WASA. We used to focus our support on management-related issues. Now our work and support are more focused upon leadership and students. WASA looks different today—because the people we serve have different needs. I'm proud of that.

*What is your favorite memory at WASA?*

My favorite memories are those of the celebrations—region celebrations and the stories of leaders and students. My very best memory will be how WASA members stood strong and together for kids during COVID.

*What were you doing before being hired at WASA?*

I was superintendent in Yelm.

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

I am kind of always working. Member issues and needs don't follow a typical schedule. I enjoy my family—my wife, kids, and grandkids are tremendous. I also appreciate seeing a project completed. Simple things like mowing the lawn or building something. Grilling for my family also gives me great satisfaction.

*Best vacation ever?*

There are two. 21 days on a motorcycle with my wife, traveling across the northern part of the U.S., which included a couple motorcycle rallies. A few years ago, 30 of my family members went to Hawaii for Christmas. That was a Christmas I will always cherish.

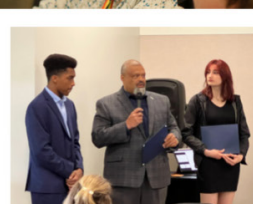
*Where's your favorite place in the world?*

Wherever my wife, Denyelle, is. I also enjoy being on or by the water. "Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay" was written for me (laughs).

*Reflect on an employee who is no longer at WASA...*

All WASA employees past and present have made a positive impact on my life. Three who have really stood out are Marilee Jensen, Bill Kiem, and Helene Paroff. Bill showed me how to understand and use data. His strengths complimented my strengths. I am thankful for Helene. I am sort of a country-bumpkin and she helped me find my words. She is a great listener and asked good questions. Marilee was the face of WASA when I came on board. She is such a great person and the first WASA staff member who greeted me when I walked in the door on my first day.

## MORE REGIONAL AWARDS FUN!



## JULY

**July 24–25**

Incoming Superintendent Conference  
Four Points by Sheraton Seattle Airport South

**July 28–29**

Special Education Pre-Conference  
Four Points by Sheraton Seattle Airport South

## AUGUST

**August 1**

IPP Project Information  
Virtual

**August 2–3**

RULER Training  
Four Points by Sheraton Seattle Airport South

**August 4–5**

MTSS/Integrated Conference  
Virtual

**August 9–10**

WASA PLC at Work  
Virtual

**August 17**

IPP Superintendent Onboarding  
Virtual

**August 31**

IPP New Teams  
Virtual

## SEPTEMBER

**September 1**

Inclusionary Practices Project DTF Support  
*Session 1 of 8*  
Four Points by Sheraton Seattle Airport South

**September 6**

Inclusionary Practices Project Board  
*Webinar 1 of 3*  
5:30–6:30 p.m. | Virtual

**September 9**

Inclusionary Practices Project PDP Support  
*Session 1 of 8*  
8:30–10:30 a.m. | Virtual

**September 14**

Inclusionary Practices Project New Teams  
Members: MTSS and UDL  
*Session 2 of 3*  
8:30–11:30 a.m. | Virtual

## SEPTEMBER (CONTD.)

**September 19**

Mentor Academy  
*Session 1*  
8:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m. | Virtual

**September 19**

Early Career Superintendent Academy  
*Session 1*  
9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m. | Virtual

**September 20**

Inclusionary Practices Project Board  
*Webinar 2 of 3*  
5:30–6:30 p.m. | Virtual

**September 21**

PLC At Work Workshop Cohort 1  
Virtual

**September 23**

Instructional Leadership Regional Leaders  
Virtual

**September 27**

PLC Board Meeting Cohort 2  
Virtual

**September 29**

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

## OCTOBER

**October 2–3**

WASA Fall Conference  
Four Points by Sheraton Seattle Airport South  
*Conference details and website coming!*

**October 4**

PLC Workshop Cohort 2  
Virtual

**October 5**

Inclusionary Practices Project New Teams  
Members: MTSS and UDL  
*Session 3 of 3*  
8:30–11:30 a.m. | Virtual

**October 11**

Inclusionary Practices Project Board  
*Webinar 3 of 3*  
5:30–6:30 p.m. | Virtual

**October 11**

PLC Workshop Cohort 1  
Virtual

**October 12**

PLC Workshop Cohort 2  
Virtual

## OCTOBER (CONTD.)

**October 13**

Instructional Leadership Statewide Fall Conference  
*Details to come*

**October 14**

Inclusionary Practices Project DTF Support  
*Session 2 of 8*  
8:30 a.m.–12 p.m. | Virtual

**October 17**

Mentor Academy  
*Session 2*  
8:30–10:30 a.m. | Virtual

**October 17**

Early Career Superintendent Academy  
*Session 2*  
9:30–11:30 a.m. | Virtual

**October 18**

SIRS  
8:30–9:30 a.m. | Virtual

**October 18–19**

PLC Workshop Cohort 2  
Virtual

**October 20**

Aspiring Superintendent Academy  
8:30–11:30 a.m. | Virtual  
<https://wasa-oly.org/ASA>

**October 21**

Instructional Leadership Regional Leaders  
Virtual

**October 25**

Regional Equity Workshop  
*ESD 101*  
8:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

**October 26**

Regional Equity Workshop  
*ESD 189*  
8:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

**October 27**

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

**October 28**

Regional Equity Workshop  
*ESD 112*  
8:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

**October 28**

PLC Workshop Cohort 2

**October 28–29**

WALAS Conference

# Professional Learning Opportunities

Continue your professional learning and growth with conferences, academies, and workshops from WASA Professional Learning. Find more at [wasa-oly.org](https://wasa-oly.org).

