

A MESSAGE FROM WASA PRESIDENT, MICHELLE WHITNEY

Recently, I had the opportunity to spend two days with WASA leaders from across the state. I was struck by how incredibly lucky I am to call myself part of the WASA team. A group of people representative of all of you, who are doing amazing work to influence the lives of the youth in the communities where you live EVEN in the face of extraordinary complexity. Tension, polarization, and toxicity are themes you don't have to look very hard to find. But in the space, I shared with my colleagues, I found something different. I found lighthouses.

Steve Pemberton in the book *The Lighthouse Effect* describes stories of people just like you. People who not only change the lives of others but change the world. He talks about the lighthouse as a symbol of the influence you have in the lives of those around you. He describes the lighthouse as "the tallest structure in the sea; set amid the alternating peaceful and turbulent environment, the lighthouse is noble, selfless, and steady. It requires no recognition and seeks no reward. The lighthouse does not judge or ask how the traveler has come to be in danger; after all, it finds itself in the same storm. The light house has but one mission: guide the journey of the traveler."

In the same way, human lighthouses are steadfast, humble, and unwavering in illuminating the pathway toward hope and optimism. They somehow light the path toward possible in seemingly impossible situations.

So, while I recognize you seek no recognition or reward, you deserve it. In case no one has told you lately, thank you for guiding the journey for those around you finding safety in the midst of the storm. You are valued beyond measure because you lead even when it is hard. You lead in finding optimism, courage, and hope. It is an honor to be a witness to your journey.

Together, we are WASA.

Michelle Whitney
WASA President



A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Putting Words into Action



WASA Friends and
Colleagues,

Nearly one year ago, on April 18, the WASA Board adopted an [Educational Equity Statement](#). The

statement leads with: "*Aligned with its mission and beliefs, WASA is committed to leading, serving, and supporting current and aspiring leaders to create systems and equitable learning environments where each and every student can learn and achieve their educational goals and aspirations.*"

In reading this issue of *WASA Hotline*, I urge you to view it through the lens of our Educational Equity Statement. Is there evidence of WASA's work and commitment to supporting school district leaders in their efforts to advance educational equity? Are there exemplars from the field that provide clarity for what this work looks like?

Our journey as an association is similar to yours as a school district leader. While we have not fully "arrived" within the context of educational equity, I believe the evidence supports our commitment and progress toward supporting and resourcing WASA members in their work to advance educational equity. In looking to 2023–24, we will continue to challenge ourselves as an association to reach for the ideals articulated in our statements of mission and educational equity.

Our Educational Equity Statement closes with: "*Therefore, WASA believes that Educational Equity, for each and every student, will be attained when barriers are removed throughout the system, ensuring equal access and opportunity for students to achieve successful outcomes. WASA will commit to providing vision, leadership, and support to district leaders as they take action to eradicate gaps that are a result of systemic inequities in our schools. This statement will inform WASA's decision-*

making and future actions as it exerts its voice and influence in the areas of leadership, trust, and advocacy."

Like you, we have already begun planning for next year. As the end of the current school year comes closer and we shift our focus to 2023–24, WASA will continue to challenge ourselves to provide support and leadership that assists all of you in the effort to build systems where all students experience a strong sense of belonging—where all can learn and achieve their educational goals and aspirations.

Keep leading and pressing for excellence and equity. Your persistence has, and will make a difference for the students under your care.

Best Regards,