

A MESSAGE FROM WASA PRESIDENT, MICHELLE WHITNEY

For my last Hotline article, I wanted to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude for the incredible honor and privilege of serving as the President of WASA. I am humbled by the trust and confidence you have placed in me, and I am truly grateful for the opportunity to lead and make an impact on the field of education in our state.

It has been inspiring to collaborate with colleagues leveraging our collective expertise and diverse perspectives to advance the mission and vision of WASA. Together, we helped shape policies, centered equity, advocated for meaningful change, and created transformative opportunities for students, educators, and communities across Washington.

I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all WASA members for your ongoing passion, engagement, and dedication to the field of education. It is through your unwavering commitment and contributions that we have elevated the profession of education and empower every student to reach their full potential.

I look forward to continuing to be a witness to the profound impact of this incredible organization. I am excited about the meaningful work we have accomplished together and look forward to continuing to collaborate, innovate, and champion educational excellence, equity, and success for all.

Michelle Whitney is Superintendent of Pasco SD and WASA President 2022-23. Michelle will continue to serve on the WASA Board as AASA Liaison.



ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL EQUITY: WASA's Commitment to Support School District Leaders



WASA Friends and Colleagues,

WASA has long been a staunch advocate for educational equity. However, we recognize that true equity has yet to be achieved within our schools. In April 2022, the WASA Board made a significant stride by adopting the association's first-ever [Educational Equity Statement](#).

The statement is a public declaration of WASA's commitment to providing support to you, the leaders of our state's schools, as you work to advance educational equity. *Advance educational equity...* what exactly does that mean?

Advancing educational equity is an ongoing pursuit aimed at building an inclusive and equitable education system. This pursuit emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and celebrating diversity, including differences in race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, gender identity, and more. Advancing educational equity involves cultivating a culture where every student feels valued, respected, and supported—an environment where students experience a strong sense of

belonging. Advancing educational equity also involves addressing systemic barriers and disparities that exist within the education system.

*Advance educational equity...*In previous issues of *Hotline*, Yakima Superintendent Trevor Greene shared his perspective of "Cultural Competency," and Yelm Deputy Superintendent Lisa Cadero-Smith reflected on "Diversity." In this issue of *Hotline*, WASA President-elect Mike Villarreal expresses his thoughts on "Equity."

Throughout the past year, the Educational Equity Statement has been the driving force behind WASA's work. The statement has been consistently prominent in our messaging, communications, and work-focus. Our professional learning offerings have been grounded in equity. Last year's legislative priorities were put forward within the context of equity for students and schools.

At its core, WASA is about leadership—leadership for equity and excellence for all students. As school district leaders, it is paramount that your work is anchored in equity—a resolute commitment to equity and excellence for every student.

Looking ahead to next year, I promise you that WASA will continue to champion educational equity. You will witness strong evidence in our messaging, communications, professional learning programming, and legislative advocacy efforts. We will commit to providing vision, leadership, resources, and support as you strive to build cultures of belonging and eradicate gaps that stem from systemic inequities in our schools.

The pursuit of excellence and equity is an ongoing journey that demands persistence, courage, and elegant leadership. It requires an honest look at the data and student voice, prompting genuine inquiries that lead to words and actions that change the system to ensure all students receive the resources and opportunities necessary to achieve their potentials.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Nothing worth having comes easy." Advancing educational equity is hard work, but it is the right work.

Congratulations on all that has been accomplished in your district during the past year. Your leadership matters.

Have a great summer!

G. Villarreal