

HOTLINE

A PUBLICATION OF THE WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS



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highlights WASA's
mission of
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**JUMP INTO SPRING
WITH THE WASA
COMMUNITY!**
Here's to new growth.

HOTLINE

IN THIS ISSUE OF

SPRING HAS SPRUNG AT WASA

Welcome to the spring edition of the Washington Association of School Administrators' *Hotline*! As we delve into the challenges and achievements of 2024, this issue is brimming with insights and updates that highlight the resilience and dedication of our educational community.

In this edition, we begin with a candid message from WASA President Mike Villarreal and an introduction message about AI from WASA Executive Director, Joel Aune. We explore key elements of WASA's mission, including leadership with Laurie Dent and educational equity with Linda McKay.

Some highlights of this publication include insights on Lake Stevens' equity mission, Kim Fry's discussion on navigating AI, and the celebration of the inaugural Purple Star School District Award recipients. Plus, we introduce new team members Shawn Batstone and Tim Garchow.

From legislative updates to personal reflections on educational leadership, and from staff spotlights to introductions of our President-elect candidates, *Hotline* is designed to keep you informed, engaged, and inspired.

As we continue to navigate the twists and turns of educational leadership, let this edition of *Hotline* serve as your resource and companion in fostering a more equitable and effective educational landscape.

Thank you to Mike Villarreal, Joel Aune, Laurie Dent, Linda McKay, Dan Steele, Ken Collins, Andy Wolf, Kim Fry, Mike Nelson, Tim Garchow, Shawn Batstone, Shawna Kiliz, Ryan Hickerson, Heather Chard, and Bella Troiani for your contributions to this issue of *Hotline*.

Do you have an idea for our next *Hotline* issue?
Send an email to Bella Troiani at itroiani@wasa-oly.org.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

This is an exciting yet intense time of year for football fans, as college athletes pursue their dreams of being drafted by an NFL team. Teams are making moves — releasing, trading, and positioning themselves for another season with hopes of reaching the big stage.

I'm reminded of a powerful story involving former Seattle Seahawks kicker Steven Hauschka. In the 2013 season, the Seahawks paid Hauschka \$715,000 to do one job — kick the ball through the uprights. That year, he made an impressive 33 of 35 field goal attempts over 16 games, ranking 2nd in accuracy in the NFL.

Hauschka's success continued into the 2014 playoffs as the Seahawks battled toward the Super Bowl. But it was the NFC Championship game against the San Francisco 49ers that provided an unforgettable leadership moment. With the game tight, Head Coach Pete Carroll called on Hauschka to attempt a 53-yard field goal that could pull the Seahawks within one point. As Hauschka took the field, he noticed the wind markers indicating a strong crosswind. Despite being paid handsomely as a kicker to simply follow instructions, Hauschka knew attempting this kick wasn't the right call. He approached Carroll and stated, "We shouldn't kick this."

In that intense, defining moment, Carroll could have disregarded his kicker's input and let him kick the ball anyway. Instead, he called a timeout and listened. The Seahawks didn't attempt the long field goal. Instead, Russell Wilson soon threw a 35-yard touchdown to take the lead, which they never relinquished on their way to the NFC Championship.

This story resonates with me because it highlights the power of leadership and active listening, even in pressure-packed environments. Carroll checked his ego, sought out a different perspective, and trusted the judgment of someone witnessing a specific situation up close.

As educational leaders, we are facing our own intense challenges with financial difficulties impacting many districts. This is precisely when we need to exemplify humble leadership — seeking out diverse viewpoints, empowering others' ideas, and truly listening to those closest to the issues. Our strength comes from this openness and collaboration. With WASA's 1,300 members across Washington, we have an opportunity to guide school systems by listening to the insights of those around us proposing solutions.

As John Cantwell stated, "A great leader understands that true wisdom and strength come from humility and listening...empowering others to contribute ideas fully, and actively listening to those they lead. True leadership serves a greater purpose, bringing people together with compassion and open minds and ears."

During even the most stressful, high-pressure times, humble leadership paired with active listening will guide us toward wiser choices.

Like Coach Carroll, we must pause our instincts and genuinely absorb different perspectives that may illuminate new paths forward. Exercising humility and priming our ears is a sign of remarkable strength — demonstrating a growth mindset and fostering trust among teams invested in finding successful solutions together.

Best of luck as you LISTEN to your players!



Mike Villarreal is WASA President and Superintendent of Hoquiam School District.

The AI Revolution EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES WITH WASA'S SUPPORT



Over the past nine months, the explosion of Generative AI has been presenting both opportunities and challenges for educators and school district leaders.

The potential to significantly personalize the learning experience for students along with enhanced accessibility for all students, may ultimately be a game-changer. AI also presents exciting opportunities to increase operational efficiencies, as well as a more proficient and sophisticated use of data to inform instruction and improve student performance. And finally, integrating AI in education prepares students for a future where digital literacy and AI familiarity are indispensable, equipping them with essential skills for life after high school.

At the same time, AI is presenting challenges

to school district leaders. Questions concerning academic integrity, as well as ethical considerations including privacy and data security are top of mind. As with any change, ensuring all students have access to AI tools and resources poses a challenge, highlighting the digital divide between different communities and socio-economic backgrounds.

These opportunities and challenges underscore the complex landscape of AI in education, demanding a balanced approach to leverage benefits while addressing potential drawbacks.

At WASA, we have been preparing since last fall to support you in the work of learning and leveraging the power of AI in your schools—to meet students where they are and where they need to be at the time of graduation, consider changes to the instructional delivery system, and improve teaching. We also intend to support you in utilizing AI to increase system efficiencies on the operational side of your school district.

Kim Fry, whose title was changed to *Assistant Executive Director of Learning Innovation and AI* shortly after January 1, is on point for this important work (see Kim's piece on page 14). This move will ensure WASA is positioned to provide support and leadership in your work to bring AI into your school districts. We aim to be at the forefront, learning and visioning alongside you.

AI will be prominent in the future of education. We look forward to working with WASA members to ensure **you** are leading this work, and **not being led** by AI. We hope you will take advantage of the resources WASA, and our valued partners will make available to you in the months to come.

Respectfully,

G. Joel Aune
WASA Executive Director

WASA 2023–24 Goals and Action Steps

WASA's goals and actions are deeply grounded in the Association's mission and fundamental principles of Leadership, Trust, and Advocacy. The formulation of these objectives and corresponding initiatives is significantly shaped by WASA's embraced Educational Equity Statement. Executive Director Joel Aune and his team exert dedicated efforts to execute each of these objectives consistently throughout the year.

Leadership

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

Action A: Design and deliver professional learning for all component members, supporting both individual leadership and systems-level improvement to ensure equity and excellence for each student.

Action B: Develop pathways for all district-level positions that attract leaders who reflect the diversity of our student populations.

Action C: Leverage the expertise within each administrator through collaboration with one another and our educational partners to address complex educational challenges.

Trust

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

Action A: Build and expand relationships with and among WASA members and other stakeholders to develop and sustain ethical, visionary leadership for public schools and the students in them.

Action B: From a position of equity, communicate and engage through words, actions, and deliverables to build a unified voice among members, partner organizations, and the general public regarding the value of public education and a system where all students can learn and achieve their educational goals and aspirations.

Action C: Provide service, support, and leadership for WASA members, state agencies, educational organizations, and other stakeholders to elevate the sense of belonging for all students and eradicate opportunity and achievement gaps that are a result of systemic inequities in our schools.

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.

Action A: Provide leadership and support for ongoing relationships and engagement with legislators and other policymakers to influence legislation and education policy that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure opportunities for each student to achieve successful outcomes.

Action B: In a unified and compelling voice, advance and influence budget and policy positions that support the provision of consistent, equitable, and ample resources to all school districts that will ensure fair treatment, equitable access, and opportunity for each student to achieve successful outcomes.

Action C: Actively influence federal policy to positively impact each student.

Have you read the latest WASA News?

WASA News is published monthly, providing our members with the newest information and resources for school administrators, central office leaders, principals, and superintendents. Learn more about the organization, along with helpful links and trainings that could benefit you and your district! Read this month's WASA News to learn more about:

- WASA President-elect Candidate Videos
- Hear from Summer Conference Keynote, Lori Hayes
- Management Reviews
- Honorary Awards and Scholarships
- New Evaluation Deadline for Principals and Assistant Principals

Interested in receiving WASA's monthly newsletter delivered directly to your inbox? Email itroiani@wasa-oly.org to join our mailing list.

APRIL 2024

The WASA News is a monthly publication that provides key information to you in a concise, quick-read format. We hope you find WASA News to be an efficient way to keep abreast of new information, emerging issues, and timely resources. Be reminded that previous issues of the WASA News can be found on our [website](#).

"I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept."
—Angela Davis

Friends and Colleagues,

Prior to the end of the 2024 Legislative Session, we had already begun contemplating WASA's Legislative priorities for 2025. We have been working with the Legislation and Finance Committee, as well as the WASA Board, to accelerate the process for finalizing WASA's priorities. In fact, the Board took action to formally approve the WASA Legislative Platform just yesterday.

Why have we accelerated the process and timing of this work? We believe the time to start messaging and advocating for K–12 education is now. The period between sessions presents a prime opportunity to connect with legislators early and often. Consider inviting them to engage with your school board, leadership team, or students to express gratitude for their efforts and to showcase the exemplary work happening in your schools. Establishing and nurturing these relationships is a strategic process that pays off when approached proactively, well before the legislative frenzy begins. This year, an election year, offers an even greater chance to engage with legislators, who may be more inclined to respond to your outreach efforts.

Most, if not all, districts are wrestling with financial challenges as the legislature continues to fall short of their duty to amply fund schools. The problem is systemic, and further exacerbated by a lack of commitment to the state's paramount duty. The system, along with a pattern of under-funding, has led to severe consequences for many school districts, including budget cuts, layoffs, and program reductions. No one knows this better than you.

Tomorrow, WASA members will receive our 2025 Legislative Platform as the first step in its rollout. This document will provide the basis for some talking points as you engage with legislators and begin advocating for your school district.

We urge you to dedicate time this spring to either build or strengthen connections with your local legislators. Laying groundwork in this area now, will be invaluable as we eye the 2025 Legislative Session. The collective voice of WASA members is a powerful force for our schools and students, but it is most effective when we begin our advocacy efforts early.

WASA 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:

- Promoting community and legislative support for education.
- Providing member services.
- Offering growth opportunities for leaders.

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.

In this issue of Hotline, Superintendent Laurie Dent highlights the first pillar of WASA's Mission Statement—Leadership.

Over the past 27 years, I've had the privilege of witnessing our students achieve remarkable milestones. From graduation ceremonies to robotics competitions, from state-level athletic events to the simple joy of learning to read, each accomplishment has been a testament to their resilience and dedication. These are the moments that remind me of how essential leaders are to a student's journey. Every action we take, every decision we make, and every word of encouragement we offer holds the power to profoundly shape a student's future.

As champions for public education, the demands placed on educational leaders are constantly evolving, requiring adaptability, innovation, and a visionary mindset. Not only are we entrusted with the responsibility of shaping the future, but we're also expected to create an environment where everyone can thrive and grow. This means thinking differently, acting decisively, and leading with empathy and understanding. It's about

forging a path forward that not only meets the needs of today but also prepares us for the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow.

Leading for the future goes beyond mere organizational change and it's certainly more than the latest trend. It's about inspiring vision, empowering others, and leaving a lasting impact on the lives of students and communities. It's about forging a path forward that not only meets the needs of today but also prepares us for the opportunities and adventures of tomorrow. Equally imperative is confronting systemic inequities head-on and advocating tirelessly to ensure that every student, regardless of background or circumstance, enjoys equitable access to high-quality education and indispensable support to thrive.

For me, leading for the future involves building even stronger partnerships with community stakeholders, business leaders, and policymakers to tackle complex challenges and mobilize resources for student success. Additionally, prioritizing the professional development and well-being of our

educators highlights their impact on a school community—individuals whom I deeply respect and value. By investing in their ongoing training, mentorship, and support, we not only enhance their effectiveness but also foster a culture of collaboration, innovation, and lifelong learning within our educational sphere.

When I think of leading for the future, I'm grateful for the visionary leadership demonstrated by WASA, along with their unwavering commitment to fostering equity and excellence in education. Through collaborative efforts, we have the opportunity to craft educational experiences that empower students to unleash their inherent potential and make impactful contributions to society.



Laurie Dent is Superintendent of the Sumner-Bonney Lake School District and Washington State's 2024 Superintendent of the Year.

BLAST FROM THE PAST Hotline Ten Years Ago



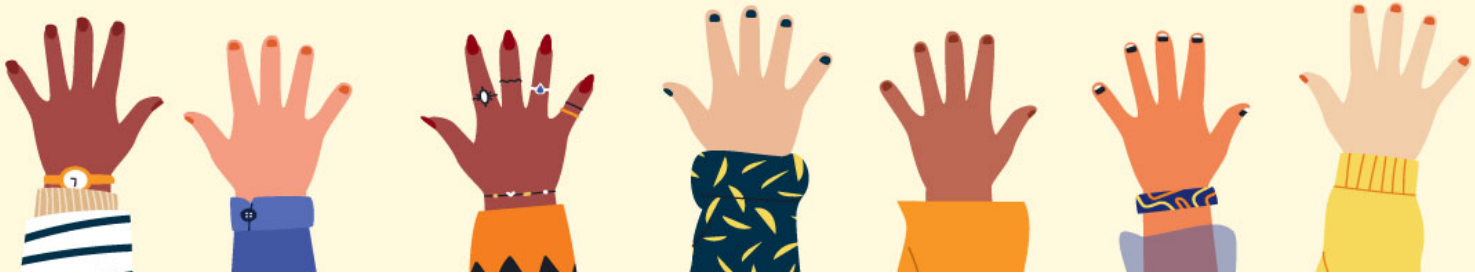
Check out the April 2014 issue of Hotline, which included:

- Executive Director Bill Kiem's report on the Legislature's actions—or lack thereof—in response to the court's directives, with a call for urgent and adequate planning to meet the funding requirements set forth for basic education.
- Mack Armstrong, WASA's Assistant Executive Director for Professional Learning, is set to retire in June 2014.
- WASA's honorary awards are highlighted, recognizing individuals and regions for their contributions to education leadership, student achievement, community leadership, and service to WASA.
- The importance of staying connected with WASA through social media, reading the latest blog posts from WASA's Executive Director, Bill Keim, and participating in discussions and information sharing within the WASA community.

You can view this historical artifact and others on our website. Throughout the year, we will continue to highlight and compare current issues and topics with those of the past.

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY STATEMENT

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.



WASA's *Educational Equity Statement*, adopted by the Board, articulates WASA's commitment to providing leadership while supporting superintendents and school district leaders as they lead for equity. 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.

The statement further defines cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion—all essential elements of educational equity.

In this issue of Hotline, Linda McKay shares her thinking on equity...

Alena Aguilar's perspective on equity, defined as removing predictive success factors based on social groups, deeply resonates with me.

It serves as a gentle reminder of the systemic challenges in our educational systems, where backgrounds and identities often influence opportunities and outcomes. This insight has not only shaped my viewpoint but also inspired my commitment to addressing the crucial issue of equity in education.

Growing up near a reservation and attending school alongside Native American peers, our connections were primarily rooted in shared activities and interests. With the utmost vulnerability, it wasn't until the past five years that I truly embarked on my learning journey to understand the history, culture, traditions, lived experiences, tribal sovereignty, and the disparities they encounter. It's disheartening to acknowledge that many educators, like me, find themselves in a similar position. However, we are all on a journey. A journey that is humbling, enlightening and will never be complete.

As educators, it's important to embrace vulnerability, lean into discomfort, and take thoughtful action to address systemic barriers. Achieving equity in education

presents challenges, including disparities in funding, resources, and opportunities that disproportionately affect marginalized communities. Overcoming these challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving policy reforms, fair resource distribution, culturally responsive teaching methods, and robust community involvement.

However, within these challenges lie significant opportunities. Equity in education nurtures a diverse and inclusive learning environment where every student feels valued, empowered, and motivated to succeed. It encourages the exploration of various perspectives, experiences, and talents, fostering innovation, creativity, and mutual understanding.

For me, equity goes beyond checkboxes of diversity and inclusion. It's about cultivating environments where every individual can thrive, regardless of their background or circumstances. This involves acknowledging and uplifting the strengths and resilience of diverse communities while providing necessary support and resources for every student's holistic development.

Education possesses transformative potential, capable of positively impacting individuals and communities. By committing to continuous learning, fostering empathy and openness in our discussions, and amplifying voices from marginalized backgrounds, we will make strides toward equity in education and a more equitable society.

True equity calls for embracing diversity, nurturing cultural humility, challenging biases, and standing in solidarity with communities of all backgrounds. It's not just a goal but a moral imperative and a pathway to creating inclusive learning environments where every student can flourish.



Linda McKay is a WASA Board member and serves as Deputy Superintendent at ESD 171.



APRIL REMINDERS

Connect with Us

Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#) 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 Heather Chard at hchard@wasa-oly.org if you have questions or need assistance.

UNITED IN ONE VOICE

2024 Legislative Session

The 2024 Legislative Session, the second year of the 68th Biennial Legislature, ended its “short” session on March 7. Over the 60-day sprint, the Legislature introduced a significant number of bills (almost 1,200) and adopted almost 400 bills—indicating an exceptionally productive session, at least in terms of successful legislation. Included among those many bills that were adopted are the three Supplemental Budgets—Operating, Capital, and Transportation.

While there were a large number of education-related bills that were adopted, with a mixed bag of positive and troubling legislation, a major focus was on the Supplemental Operating Budget. Following a discouraging K-12 budget adopted last year, it was hoped that the many missed opportunities would be addressed in 2024. It should be clarified that K-12 did receive a substantial bounty in the 2023-25 Operating Budget; however, of the \$2.9 billion appropriated, less than \$350 million of that total was for discretionary “Policy Level” funding. The remaining \$2.6 billion was for required “Maintenance Level” items. Further, even with a \$2.9 billion influx of funding—out of a total increase of \$5.6 billion—the overall funding for K-12 education as a share of the overall Operating Budget barely moved.

When the 2024 Session began, we immediately realized that K-12 education was, again, going to be an after-thought, especially in the budget game. The education community rallied to elevate K-12 and over the course of the 60-day session, we did see some positive movement. In the end, K-12 education received a paltry \$525 million appropriation; however, this was more than we had anticipated. In fact, the final, adopted budget included more funding for K-12 than was proposed in either of the initial proposals from the House and Senate.

The major investments provided to K-12, while certainly appreciated, were far from what we requested and far from what school districts needed. Special education received \$19.6 million; however, this funding will only increase the current enrollment funding cap from 15.0 percent to 16.0 percent. There was absolutely no discussion about increasing the excess cost multiplier to reduce the \$500 million gap between the funding the state provides and what school districts spend on special education. Funding for Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC) is increased by

\$43.6 million to provide for a \$21 per student increase. MSOC funding was a non-issue when the session started; however, following a major push by school administrators, legislation was quickly introduced and later added to the budget conversation. Unfortunately, \$21 per student does little to cover the dramatic increases in non-staffing costs—and provides even less support to our smallest districts. \$71.8 million was appropriated to enhance the staffing allocation for paraeducators as a part of the Prototypical School Funding Model. The staffing ratio increase is fairly minor; however, we will build on this momentum as we continue to press for increased allocations across the Prototypical School Funding Model. Perhaps the most positive aspect of this funding is that the Legislature chose to fund additional paraeducators, rather than require school districts to provide an untenable salary increase to paraeducators. A final, major increase was for pupil transportation. The Budget provides \$77.7 million to enhance pupil transportation funding. Unfortunately, the bulk of that increase (\$76.9 million) is simply to address a “correction” in funding. While this will help districts, the funding will be used as evidence of the tremendous support legislators provided to K-12 this year, when the funding is actually a REQUIRED “Maintenance Level” increase and legislators should not be taking credit for it. Legislators have been boasting about their support for K-12 education in the Operating Budget; however, as adopted, K-12’s share of the Operating Budget continues to decline. Certainly not a positive note.

Turning the page to the 2024 Supplemental Capital Budget, there WAS a significant and positive increase for school construction. The Small School District Modernization Grant Program received a substantial increase (\$114.8 million) that is expected to fund districts that are currently on the waiting list. Perhaps the most positive component of the Capital Budget is a huge boost in the funding of the Construction Cost Allowance (CCA or cost per square foot). The current funding of \$271 per square foot will increase to \$375 per square foot. This is still far below the actual cost of \$600-700 per square foot needed to fund construction; however, this is the first major increase in CCA in decades. This is another issue we hope to build on the momentum next year, to further enhance CCA or the Student Space Allocation (SSA or square foot per student).

Of course, in addition to the budgets, there was a tremendous amount of education policy bills moving through the process. We played both offense and defense on policy, successfully moving a handful of positive measures, while also helping to block a number of concerning bills. We will provide further details as the bills’ implications become clearer in the coming months. We will also provide full details of all of the education-related bills adopted this year in our annual End of Session Report. The Report will also provide comprehensive details of the Supplemental Operating and Capital Budgets. WASA staff is currently in-process of producing the Report. When completed, it will be e-mailed to all TWIO subscribers and also be archived on the WASA website.

Finally, with the 2024 Session complete, we have already turned the page and are focusing on the 2025 Session. WASA’s Legislation & Finance Committee recommended a Legislative Platform for 2025, which the WASA Board has adopted. We will be providing further details in the coming weeks; however, in short, the 2025 Legislative Platform focuses on Basic Education funding, specifically Special Education, Pupil Transportation, and MSOC. We chose these issues for two main reasons. One, each of these issues will have positive impacts on all 295 districts, which avoids any divisive big-small, urban-rural, east-west conversation. Second, each of these issues are constitutionally required Basic Education programs—and we have documented evidence of continued underfunding.

We are partnering with the nine ESDs and will work in the coming months to bring the other education associations together in a coalition. To be successful, it will be important that we all speak with one voice. To assist in that effort, we will be providing a “tool kit” to school administrators and our partners. Included will be key messages, talking points, fiscal information, and other resources. Be on the lookout for further information soon.

[Read our 2025 Legislative Platform here.](#)



*Dan Steele is
WASA Assistant
Executive Director of
Government Relations.*

WASA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



WASA Board Members during their June meeting in Spokane.

BOARD

President: Mike Villarreal, Hoquiam
President-elect: Bob Maxwell, Pullman
Past President: Michelle Whitney, Pasco
Secretary: Chrys Sweeting, Arlington
Treasurer: Linda McKay, NCESD 171

Region 101: Jake Dingman, Oakesdale
Region 105: Curt Guaglianone, Mount Adams
Region 108: Michelle Kuss-Cybula, Oak Harbor
Region 109: Chrys Sweeting, Arlington
Region 110: Shaun Carey, Enumclaw
Region 111: Laurie Dent, Sumner-Bonney Lake
Region 112: Jeff Snell, Vancouver
Region 113: Patrick Murphy, Olympia
Region 114: Dana Rosenbach, North Mason
Region 123: Jim Jacobs, North Franklin
Region 171: Tracey Edou, Cascade

COMPONENTS

BPAC

Sarah Thornton, Pasco (Chair)
Jill Pratt, Rochester (Chair-elect)

IPAC

Linda McKay, NCESD 171 (Chair)
Denise Daniels, Fife (Chair-elect)
Jenny Rodriguez, Yakima (Past Chair)

Principals

Matt Yarkosky, Bethel (Chair)

Special Education

John Sander, Franklin Pierce (Chair)

Superintendents

Mary Templeton, Washougal (Chair)
Joey Castilleja, Mabton (Chair-elect)
James Everett, Meridian (Past Chair)

WASA's Newly-Elected Board Members

ELECTIONS WILL OCCUR LATER THIS WEEK; ALL ARE UNOPPOSED



BPAC Component Chair-elect:
Chris Gardea, Walla Walla School District



IPAC Component Chair-elect:
Amanda Kraft, Puyallup School District



Principal Component Chair:
Elyse Mengarelli, Glenwood School District



Superintendent Component Chair-elect:
Robert Elizondo, Touchet School District

REGION PRESIDENTS

Region 101: Ben Ferney, Cheney
Region 105: Joey Castilleja, Mabton
Region 108: David Forsythe, NWESD 189
Region 109: Chrys Sweeting, Arlington
Deborah Rumbaugh, Stanwood
Region 110: Susana Reyes, Shoreline
Region 111: Kevin Alfano, Fife
Region 112: Amy Huntley, Ocean Beach
Region 113: Byron Bahr, Rainier
Region 114: Tim Winter, South Kitsap
Region 123: Thaynan Knowlton, Clarkston
Region 171: Tabatha Mires, Waterville

WASA Leaders in Action

WASA BOARD UPDATE

The WASA Board met on April 15 in SEA TAC, the day preceding the 2024 Leaders Workshop, for their regular meeting. President Mike Villarreal presided over the meeting, which included reports from the WASA staff on work occurring in professional learning, member services, and governmental relations. An update on progress toward accomplishment of the association's goals for 2023–24, and a report from Assistant Executive Director of Learning Innovation and AI, Kim Fry, on WASA's work in supporting members in their learning and application of Artificial Intelligence was presented. Executive Director Joel Aune also provided a report on budget planning for next year.

WASA LEADERS

On April 16, leaders from across the state came together for the 2024 WASA Leaders Workshop at SEA TAC. This annual gathering unites WASA Board members and regional leaders to collaborate with the executive team, celebrate the association's achievements, and strategize for the upcoming year.

At this year's event, participants were engaged in activities that raised or reinforced awareness of WASA's mission, goals and priorities, services and support provided members, and progress toward goals established for the current year. WASA leaders were also introduced to incoming President Bob Maxwell's vision for 2024–25. Most of the day was devoted to discussion among leaders in attendance for the purpose of providing Joel Aune and the WASA team with perspective and ideas that will inform WASA priorities for 2024–25.

The workshop culminated with dedicated time for regional leadership teams to begin planning for next year's programs. This workshop is instrumental in setting WASA's strategic direction, reflecting the organization's commitment to supporting superintendents and school district leaders statewide. We extend our gratitude to the WASA leaders for their dedication and forward-thinking approach.



Upcoming Opportunities!

ThoughtExchange

SUPERINTENDENT SESSION

Leaders' Perspectives on AI-Driven Decision-Making

April 24, 2024 | 11 AM PT | 2 PM ET

[Register Now!](#)

ThoughtExchange Superintendent Session: Leaders' Perspectives on AI-Driven Decision-Making

April 24 | 11 AM

women in leadership

Women in Leadership | Superintendents | Early Career and Mentor Academy In-Person Conference

May 4 – 7 | Lake Chelan

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF HOPE

AWSP/WASA Summer Conference

June 23-25, 2024 | Spokane

www.awsp.org/SC

AWSP/WASA Summer Conference

June 23 – 25 | Spokane

In Pursuit of Equitable Outcomes

THE LAKE STEVENS EQUITY JOURNEY

Over my 34 years in the Lake Stevens School District, I have witnessed our small town and learning community more than double in size. Our growth includes a rich and diverse tapestry of adults and young people, and their contributions have helped our community grow increasingly vibrant and alive. During my career, we frequently examined disparities that existed for some student groups, and we launched various initiatives to close achievement gaps; however, while these initiatives helped with awareness, they did not necessarily advance systemic change.

When I became Superintendent in 2021, we as a school system began to pay much closer attention to how our schools were not meeting every student's needs. We did this by examining some of the systems that stood in the way of equitable outcomes for adults and children. We began our commitment by hiring a Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. This was a tricky leadership move, though. We have always stressed that each leader in Lake Stevens is responsible for disrupting barriers to learning. However, the hiring of EDI Director Dr. Monica Meadows has provided us with a consistent leadership voice and a community ally that we did not have. Monica's leadership has been visible in many ways, the most important of which is that she provides a trusting partnership with our growing communities of color and with other community members who are seeking to understand the equity vision that we have as a district and how they fit into that.

Monica and our leadership team knew that it was important to create on-ramps for every person in our system and in our community to see themselves in our equity work. Our leadership team studied Floyd Cobb and John Krownapple's book *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity* to gain a basis for

understanding the components of successful equity work. Additionally, some early key systemic moves we have made to ensure equitable outcomes for each student are listed below. Each of these is displayed prominently in our District's Strategic Plan, called our *Foundation for Excellence*, which we reworked last year to include our equity-driven beliefs and values.

- **Strengthen our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support**—Lake Stevens has been an MTSS district since 2017 but having flexible systems of instruction that are designed to meet each student's academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning needs is critical to ensuring equitable outcomes for all students. We are continuously working to improve our MTSS systems, and we believe strongly that we cannot achieve those equitable outcomes without strong systems
- **District Equity Policy**—To commit to educational equity, we developed our district Equity Policy. This policy established equity belief statements that highlighted our commitment to honor the identities of all of our students and create learning environments in which all are empowered to learn and grow.
- **Systemic Coherence**—Sometimes, leaders fail to clarify to our learning communities how multiple initiatives work together to achieve the desired outcomes. Our district created a Student Learning Theory of Action to illustrate how MTSS, our Equity Policy, and our beliefs around tier-one instruction in Lake Stevens work together to create a culture. As with any culture-building work, our district and building leaders are continuously modeling and growing our own equity voices by leaning

into what are sometimes uncomfortable conversations.

- **Engagement in Cycles of Inquiry with Collaborative Educator Teams**—Uncovering problems of practice can only happen by collecting, sorting, and analyzing data to see what the real challenges of student learning are. These problems always have multiple dimensions to them that require true collaborative work.
- **Student Voice**—A key underpinning of all of our work has been to elevate student voice. In our district, we do very little without gathering and valuing student voices. This effort began with the creation of a Student Advisory Council to the Board of Directors and has included district and building-generated listening sessions designed to gain student perspectives.

We are very early in our efforts to place equity at the center of all the work that we do. This missive arrays just a few key beginning components of that effort. We know that all of you are engaged in the same work and that many districts are further along their equity culture journey. If you are interested in learning more about what we have done and are planning on doing, please do not hesitate to contact us.



Ken Collins serves as Superintendent of the Lake Stevens School District.

New WASA Members

We've welcomed six new members since January 2024.

Our newest class of WASA members joins over 1,600 members from across Washington. Collectively, they represent districts from every corner of the state.

Tracy Franke, Darrington
Bernadette Ray, Tacoma
Scott Rich, Tacoma

Gretchen Maliska, Shelton
Brett Johnson, Cascade
Angela Rolfe, Okanogan



Meet the Staff

EXECUTIVE OFFICE



JOEL AUNE

Executive Director

Joel has been with WASA since 2018. Prior to this, Joel served as Superintendent for 20 years in the Snoqualmie Valley and Colfax School Districts. He also previously served as an elementary principal in the Walla Walla SD and as an assistant principal and teacher in the Cashmere SD, where he began his career in 1983. In 2011, Joel was elected WASA President.



SHAWNA KILIZ

Executive Assistant

Joining the team in 2023, Shawna has more than twenty years of experience providing administrative support to superintendents, principals, and board members within the Washington State education system.



BELLA TROIANI

Communications and Production Support

Bella joined the WASA team in October 2021. Prior to joining WASA, Bella had several years of experience with WSU and Washington State RCW.

ACCOUNTING



EVE JOHNSON

Business & Infrastructure Manager

Eve has capably served at WASA for over 35 years, since joining the staff in 1985.



KALEY VONVOLKLI

Accounting Assistant

Kaley started at WASA in March 2022. Prior to coming to WASA, Kaley worked as an Accounting and Card Servicing Specialist. She graduated with her bachelor's degree in June 2022.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & MEMBERSHIP



MIKE NELSON

Assistant Executive Director

Prior to joining the WASA staff in 2020, Mike served 35 years as a teacher, principal, curriculum and instruction director, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. For the last 21 years, he has served in the Enumclaw SD where he was born and raised—with over 13 of those years as Superintendent. In 2019, he was selected as the Washington State Superintendent of the Year.



KIM FRY

Assistant Executive Director

Kim brings 32 years of experience in education to WASA, most recently 12 years as superintendent of the Rochester School District. During the course of her career, Kim served as a first grade teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent. Kim started at WASA in 2022.



RYAN HICKERSON

Professional Learning Assistant

Ryan joined the WASA staff in August 2023. Ryan earned a Bachelor's degree in Education, after which he proudly served in the U.S. Navy as a Training Program Manager for five years.



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



DAN STEELE

Assistant Executive Director

Dan has served as WASA's Governmental Relations lead since 2011. He has many years of varied legislative experience, including service as the executive director of the Washington Student Lobby, a statewide organization that advocates on behalf of Washington's public university students, and as a legislative assistant with the Washington State Senate. Prior to joining WASA, Dan served the state's locally elected school board members for over 13 years with the WSSDA.



HEATHER CHARD

Administrative Assistant

Heather joined WASA in November 2023, and comes to us most recently from Nisqually Red Wind Casino.

MEMBER SERVICES & ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS



ANDY WOLF

Assistant Executive Director

Andy, who came on board at WASA in 2016, brings more than 30 years of teaching and education leadership experience to his role with WASA. He spent the first 19 years of his career working in various roles with the Wahkiakum School District. For the last 13 years, he served as a principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent in Yelm.



NATALIE PLOTT

Office Assistant

Natalie joined the WASA staff in September 2023. She earned her Associate's Degree in 2014 and worked as a Resource Paraprofessional for six years in the Olympia School District.

WASA LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION SPRING CONFERENCE FOR SMALL SCHOOLS LEADERS

2024 MARCH 18-19 WENATCHEE CONVENTION CENTER



THANK YOU, DIAMOND SPONSORS!

Corporate sponsorship has always been an essential element of WSA'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, 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.

ANDY WOLF REFLECTS

Navigating the Twists and Turns of Educational Leadership

WASA is steadfast in its commitment to the school district leadership community here in Washington State. Standing ready to serve, support, and advocate for 1,600 school district leaders and the students in their care, WASA continuously offers its support, assistance, and advocacy for the members it is our privilege to serve. WASA is built on a foundation of leadership, nurturing competent, ethical, and visionary leaders through **Member Services, Professional Learning, and Advocacy.**

In this issue of *Hotline*, Assistant Executive Director Andy Wolf shares his perspective on Member Services:

Navigating the twists and turns of educational leadership is like steering a canoe through rapids—full of excitement and challenges. Whether blending tech into classrooms, fostering inclusivity, or juggling countless tasks, it's an adventure that demands our best.

That's where the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) steps in, to serve as your trusty paddle in these waters. We're here to boost, support, listen, and guide, ensuring you're never navigating alone.

We understand the journey because we're on it with you. Facing technology challenges, addressing mental health, policy changes or anything in between, WASA's Member Support Services are here for you, offering support every step of the way.

This abbreviated list of services — professional development, policy guidance, contract help, legal defense, strategic advice and so much more — is crafted to keep you confident and prepared for any twists ahead.

At WASA, we're big on building bridges and strengthening connections. Having a partner to share ideas, concerns, or day-to-day wonderings with can be a game-changer. We offer a circle of trust and confidentiality, a place to share and grow together.

We pride ourselves in building meaningful connections, sharing successes, supporting our colleagues, and learning from challenges.

We believe leadership is about sparking change and nurturing a dynamic learning environment. We pride ourselves in building meaningful connections, sharing successes, supporting our colleagues, and learning from challenges.

Educational leadership is a path filled with obstacles but also rich with opportunities to make a lasting impact. With WASA, you have an ally, equipped with the support, guidance, and resources to help you thrive even in the face of adversity. We're here to support all our members, no matter your role in the educational landscape.

Together in collaboration we can move forward with hope, and resilience. As a WASA member, you are part of a professional family committed to creating and enriching learning experiences for all.

Here's to our journey—filled with shared stories, successes, and learnings. In education, we're all in this together, and with WASA, you're never walking the path alone.



Andy Wolf has served as WASA Assistant Executive Director for Member Services since 2016.

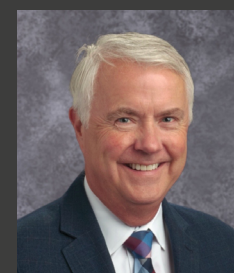
A MESSAGE FROM MIKE NELSON

Invite a Colleague or Staff Member to Join WASA Today!

WASA is an amazing opportunity for Washington's school administrators. Our organization is a turnkey wealth of resources and support for administrators in every stage of their careers. As you know, when you are a member of WASA, you are part of a network of leaders focused on equity, leadership, and advocacy for the schools that ultimately serve our students. It is like having a full-time back office that truly cares about the success of your school systems. I sincerely believe in WASA and those that make up its memberships!

Now is the time to encourage and support others in joining our professional organization. This year our WASA team and Board of Directors scheduled meetings with regional leadership from each of our component and committee chairs. These conversations have been insightful in identifying ways WASA can better support each component area. One piece of the conversation was about increasing membership across all component groups. We encourage you to reach out to leaders from your district who are not currently WASA members to join our great network of leaders.

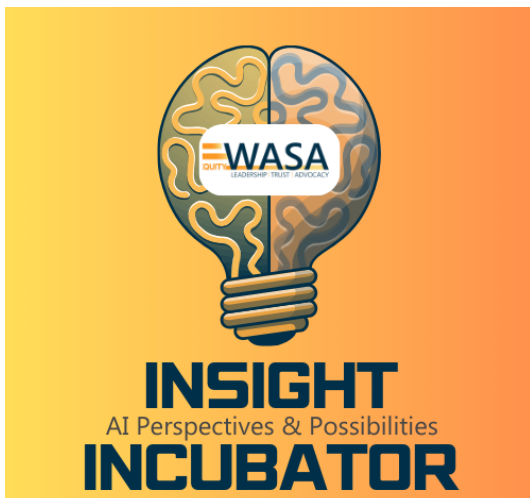
There is no better time than right now to build our WASA membership.



Mike Nelson is WASA Assistant Executive Director of Professional Learning and Membership.

Embracing AI Together

YOUR LEADERSHIP, OUR SUPPORT!



Whether you're an early innovator or a cautious evaluator, educational leaders must swiftly grasp the transformative power of generative artificial intelligence. The rapid adoption of AI by students, staff and businesses in our communities leaves us no choice but to engage, regardless of its complexity or our perceived capacity to lead in this area.

Andrew Ng's assertion that *"AI will have as much impact on our lives as the advent of electricity"* recently reshaped my learning priorities and job title, as WASA aims to shepherd WASA members through this technological revolution. My initial dive into the plethora of online articles about how AI works and the pace at which it's changing, left me feeling intimidated and a bit overwhelmed. That all changed when Andrew's quote came back to my mind, and it dawned on me that I don't need to be an electrician to use and appreciate the important role electricity plays in my life. The same is true for AI. I don't need to have a degree in computer science to learn the benefits and risks of AI, nor to leverage in its use, and neither do you!

Once we acquire a familiarity with generative AI, we can begin applying the systems and change leadership practices that have become the bedrock of our work. However, I believe leaders can best serve students and staff if we resist the temptation to think of AI as an initiative with a set checklist of tasks to be completed.

AI will require more than adopting policies, procedures, and safeguards; implementing professional development plans; and incorporating new student learning standards. The dynamic nature of AI makes it necessary to foster nimble systems.

Ones in which we all leaders become comfortable with experimentation and reliance on one another, and confident in our ability to lead in uncertainty.

The good news is that we've recently learned that we and our systems can adapt quickly. As leaders who've successfully transitioned schools to remote instruction, hybrid, and back to in-person all while implementing frequently changing health requirements, employee MOUs, and parent backlash, we are ideally equipped to lead in the AI age. We learned the necessity of collaboration. Educational leaders meet more than ever before. We accepted that regardless of our tenure we were all learning and needed one another for morale and technical support and creative problem solving. We learned that no matter how hard we worked we could not control COVID. We learned that long standing traditional practices can shift quickly and the repercussions can impact financial and mental health, cultural norms, and public opinion.

We'll need to come to terms that unlike an initiative, leaders won't be able to master AI and then "teach" it to others in our system. Instead, we'll need to empower everyone in our system to share the responsibility for keeping our systems knowledgeable and growing.

I believe the same is true for AI. It will morph, evolve and it's bigger than us. We'll need to come to terms that unlike an initiative, leaders won't be able to master AI and then "teach" it to others in our system. Instead, we'll need to empower everyone in our system to share the responsibility for keeping our systems knowledgeable and growing.

WASA stands as your steadfast partner in navigating AI's uncertainties. We're not just embracing change; we're leading it, learning alongside you rather than positioning ourselves as distant experts.

WASA's commitment is illustrated in the robust internal AI work that is occurring within the association, by renaming my title to accurately reflect that AI is a major responsibility, and through the following focus areas:

- Building foundational knowledge about AI and how to use it by offering online training and access to resources.
- Doing deep learning dives into instructional implications, ethics, and workforce utilization.
- Preparing future online PLCs and thinktank opportunities for WASA members to reimagine and redesigned systems.
- Collaborating with state agencies, including AESD, AWSP, OSPI, WSSDA and WSIPC to provide clear direction and aligned supports.
- Engaging with AASA and non-educational AI experts across the nation.
- Dedicating time at conferences to the topic of AI and infusing the use of AI assistance in current professional development offerings.
- Establishing opportunities to ensure WASA members can share their AI journey, challenges, and successes to assist us all to co-navigate AI's evolving landscape.

WASA is confident in our ability to harness the brilliance and resourcefulness of our collective membership to equip leaders to safely use AI to breakthrough plateaus and meet the individual needs and aspirations of each learner in our system. Like the transformative power of electricity, let us harness AI to illuminate our path to an innovative and inclusive educational future.

Your partner in learning,

Kim Fry



Kim Fry is WASA Assistant Executive Director for Learning Innovation and AI.

CONGRATULATIONS TO The First Recipients of Washington State's Purple Star Awards



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Washington state is home to thousands of military-connected families, including active-duty service members, reserves members, and veterans. To recognize school districts that have incorporated military-friendly practices and demonstrate a commitment to military-connected students and families, the 2023 Legislature created the Purple Star Award Program.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) administer the program jointly. Today, OSPI and WASA are announcing the 2024 Purple Star Award winners.

To receive the award, school districts must successfully address the educational, social, and emotional barriers that students may experience when their parents/guardians are deployed or when relocating and transferring to a different school. School districts must also demonstrate a commitment to military-connected families and students by providing students with the tools and supports needed for success in their education and in their futures—whether they pursue postsecondary education, military involvement, or other careers.

"Every day, thousands of parents, guardians, and family members across Washington protect and strengthen our country by serving in the military," said State Superintendent Chris Reykdal. "We thank these individuals for their service, and we are honored to recognize the school districts across our state that create welcoming and supportive environments for students from military-connected families. Congratulations to these districts for working to support the success of all students!"

There are 12 school districts across Washington that applied for and earned the Purple Star Award in 2024. They will retain the designation for two years.

"We are honored to be partnering with OSPI to recognize the dedication and hard work of the districts awarded the 2024 Purple Star Award," said Joel Aune, Executive Director of WASA. "These districts exemplify a commitment to supporting the unique educational needs of military-connected students in Washington state. By fostering environments that address the unique social, emotional, and academic challenges these students face, the Purple Star Districts are ensuring their students are poised for a successful school experience. We commend these districts for their effort and focus on these students and their families."

The Washington state Purple Star Award is established through House Bill 1346, which became law in July 2023. To be eligible for this distinction, school districts must meet the following requirements:

- The district maintains a dedicated page on its website featuring resources for military families.
- The district has a staff point-of-contact for military families that:

- ♦ Works jointly with the state military family education liaison of the Interstate Compact Council to serve military families;
- ♦ Serves as the primary liaison between military families and the school district;
- ♦ Completes professional development on special considerations for military students and families under relevant state and federal law; and
- ♦ Identifies and informs teachers of military-connected students in their classrooms and the special considerations military families and students should receive under the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

The school district must also provide professional learning opportunities for additional staff on special considerations for military-connected students and families; pass a resolution publicizing the district's support for military-connected students and families; or host a military recognition event that demonstrates a military-friendly culture.

OSPI and WASA congratulate the 2024 recipients of the Purple Star Award:

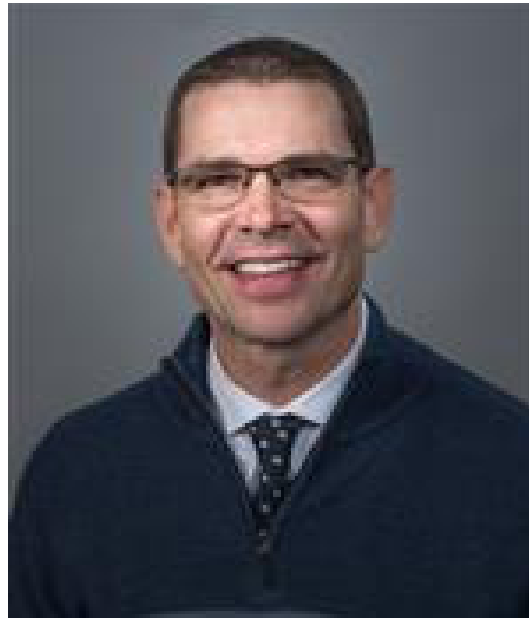
- Bremerton School District
- Central Kitsap School District
- Cheney School District
- Clover Park School District
- Medical Lake School District
- North Mason School District
- North Thurston Public Schools
- Oak Harbor Public Schools
- Peninsula School District
- Steilacoom Historical School District
- Sumner-Bonney Lake School District
- Yelm Community Schools

The application for the 2025 Purple Star Award will open this summer.

Garchow and Batstone Join WASA's Leadership Team



We're thrilled to announce the latest additions to the WASA Leadership Team: Tim Garchow and Shawn Batstone, who will be joining us starting July 1. Their expertise and leadership are expected to effectively advance the work of WASA, particularly in the areas of professional learning and member assistance.



Shawn Batstone comes to us with a wealth of experience, having served as Assistant Superintendent in the Tumwater School District since 2019. Before taking up this role, he dedicated nine years to leading the Hood Canal School District as its superintendent.

Shawn's rich background in leadership further includes a tenure as Director of Teaching and Learning at Yelm Community Schools, along with roles as a principal and assistant principal.

Tim Garchow, most recently the Executive Director at WSSDA, also brings a deep reservoir of leadership and educational experience. Before his tenure at WSSDA, Tim served as superintendent in the Rainier and South Side school districts, and his career also spans roles as a principal, alongside six years of teaching in the Peninsula and Sumner-Bonney Lake school districts.

Please join us in welcoming Shawn and Tim to the WASA team. With their leadership, we are poised to continue and expand upon the exceptional level of support and foundation that Mike Nelson and Andy Wolf have established for WASA members throughout their distinguished careers.

About 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 schoolboard 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 to social studies classrooms and school libraries. The handbook is available online to SIRS members and can be downloaded and distributed to your staff.

KIM FRY REFLECTS Legislative Conference 2024



During the 2024 Legislative Conference, keynote speaker Lisa Braithwaite emphasized the significance of crafting compelling and impactful messages to advocate effectively for public education. She highlighted the common challenges faced when communicating with legislative leaders, such as the need for succinct storytelling supported by data, making emotional connections, and overcoming preconceived notions. Braithwaite urged attendees to focus on their “big why” to create persuasive, emotionally resonant messages that can inspire and move stakeholders

to action. She advocated for the use of vivid stories, analogies, and examples to paint a clear picture of the advocacy goals, emphasizing the importance of emotional engagement for inspiration and persuasion. The address served as a call to action for school district leaders, providing them with practical strategies to elevate their advocacy efforts and make a lasting impact on public education policy.



*Lisa Braithwaite,
keynote speaker*

Additional highlights included three amazing student speakers, WASA's Dan Steele, WSDA's Marissa Rathbone, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chris Reykdal and messages from the Governor and key legislators.



*Kim Fry is Assistant
Executive Director for
Learning Innovation
and AI.*

The Meaning Behind the Logo

The WASA Logo, adopted by the Board in 2021, is a representation of the three foundational pillars of WASA—Leadership, Trust, and Advocacy, along with a commitment to Equity that threads through all we do at WASA.

The color blue represents trustworthiness, maturity, security, and reliability, while gold promotes optimism and hope. The gradient effect shows movement both forward and upward as we envision a future full of possibility for WASA and for you.



WASA's Learning from Leaders Award

HIGHLIGHTING TRANSFORMATIVE WORK

Nominate someone today!

Are you leading, or do you know someone leading innovative work that significantly benefits students? Is it work that others across the state could replicate and learn from?

The call for nominations for the prestigious [WASA Learning from Leaders Award](#) is officially open. For the first time, WASA members have the unique opportunity through this award to bring forward individuals or groups whose transformative efforts in student learning, engagement, safety, diversity, equity, and inclusion are noteworthy.

This award is more than a recognition of excellence in visionary leadership. It underscores the value of sharing knowledge and best practices among WASA members. The Learning from Leaders Award is a wonderful way to highlight a program or best practice for other educational leaders to learn from.

Thanks to the generosity of our founding sponsors—Dennis Ray, Gay Selby, and Gene Sharratt, along with the support of WASA—the award recipient will be presented with a \$5,000 grant to expand their work.

We encourage you to celebrate the marvelous achievements within our leadership community by nominating yourself, or a colleague who exemplifies visionary leadership in education, for this award. Let's come together to acknowledge and propagate the pioneering practices that enrich our educational landscape.

Nominations are now open for the **WASA Learning from Leaders Award**, the **deadline for which is May 1**. Step forward and submit a nomination today!



National Superintendent of the Year® (SOY)

Nominations and applications for the 2025 National Superintendent of the Year will open on May 1, 2024. This program is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active, front-line superintendents. It is not a recognition of service at retirement or a program to reward current state or national leaders. Each candidate for the National Superintendent of the Year Award® must first be named by their state association as the State Superintendent of the Year.

Each State Superintendent of the Year is judged on the following criteria:

- Leadership for Learning—creativity in successfully meeting the needs of students in his or her school system.
- Communication—strength in both personal and organizational communication.
- Professionalism—constant improvement of administrative knowledge and skills while providing professional development opportunities and motivation to others on the education team.
- Community Involvement—active participation in local community activities and understanding of regional, national, and international issues.

The deadline to apply for the 2025 Washington Superintendent of the Year is October 1, 2024. The selected superintendent's application will be submitted to the National Superintendent of the Year®. To submit an application or make a nomination, click [here](#). Questions? Contact [Joel Aune](#) or visit the AASA [website](#) for additional questions.



*This month, WASA Assistant Executive Director, Mike Nelson, covers the book **Unmasking AI** by Joy Buolamwini.*



Buolamwini, founder of the Algorithmic Justice League, writes, "The rising frontier for civil rights will require algorithmic justice. AI should be for the people and by the people, not just the privileged few." Algorithmic justice seeks to prevent

"automated discrimination" and ensure that AI technologies contribute positively to society, rather than reinforcing existing social injustices.

Unmasking AI is a groundbreaking exploration of how Buolamwini's discovery of "the coded gaze" exposes inherent biases in technology and sparks a global movement towards ensuring algorithmic justice and inclusivity in AI development.



Mike Nelson is WASA's Assistant Executive Director of Professional Learning and Membership.

Online Modules for Administrators Government-to-Government Relationships Training Now Available



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The video-based modules for the Administrators Government-to-Government Relationships Training are now available! This fulfills the new state requirement mandate enacted by HB 1426 requiring all renewing administrator certificates on or after July 1, 2023 to complete a five (5)-hour Government-to-Government Relationships Training.

Please register in pdEnroller [here](#).

Directions and links to enroll in the Canvas course are on the Event Page. Registrants must take the course in WAESD's Canvas Account. If you do not have one, you must create a **STUDENT** account and enter the course code when you sign up. Again, links and codes are on the pdEnroller Event Page. You will then enter the course code to be registered and taken to the Course listing in WAESD's Canvas.

There are five (5) individual video module assignments with embedded quizzes. All five (5) need to be completed. If you received module credit(s) from a previous training, please contact the facilitator, [Maxine Alex](#), to receive that credit(s). Suggested completion time is April 26, 2024, to allow the 10 weeks for the recertification process by the June 30, 2024, deadline.

Questions regarding this course and clock hours contact: Maxine Alex at maxine.alex@k12.wa.us

HONORARY AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Nominations and applications are now being accepted for a number of award and scholarship opportunities. Check out these great opportunities below.

PEMCO ROBERT J. HANDY MOST EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATOR AWARDS

A \$10,500 award will be equally divided among the three selected award recipients. The award may be used for personal or professional growth and to support and disseminate information about a successful school or district program. **Deadline: May 1, 2024.**

REGION AWARDS | DEADLINES VARY PER REGION

Note: Region award links are dependent on your region.

Contact the Region President/[Honorary Awards Committee Chair](#) for deadlines in your region.

WASA Student Achievement Leadership Award (one award per region) Recognizes innovative programs that promote access, equity, or social justice for the improvement of student achievement.

Award of Merit (one award per region) Recognizes for promoting access, equity, and social justice for students, as well as making a significant contribution to WASA.

Community Leadership Award Recognizes a non-WASA member for outstanding contributions to education.

WASA Student Leadership Award Recognizes outstanding student leaders who have created or played a significant leadership role in initiatives that promote access, equity, or social justice in their school and community.

Twenty-Year Award (self-nomination)

Retirement Award (self-nomination)

STATE AWARDS | DEADLINE: MAY 1, 2024

Golden Gavel Award The recipient shall be an individual, group, association, or firm that has made an outstanding contribution to public education in the state of Washington.

D.A. Davidson Barbara Martens Legacy Award \$1,000 gift presented to an individual/group who has had a significant impact on Washington's public education.

Service to WASA Award The recipient shall have made contributions at the state level toward the goals of WASA.

WASA Leadership Award Recipient is a WASA Active Member who demonstrates and exemplifies outstanding leadership abilities and who has made significant contributions to the field of education statewide.

NEW THIS YEAR! WASA Learning from Leaders This award shall be given to a WASA member or group for recognition of his/her/their leadership of an exemplary program that others can learn from. \$5,000 award presented to the recipient.

Staff Spotlight

FEATURING RYAN HICKERSON



In this issue, we're proud to spotlight our Professional Learning Assistant, Ryan Hickerson. Ryan joined WASA in August 2023.

Ryan is a dynamic person whose positive energy is positively impacting the culture at WASA and is rippling to each member he meets at conferences!

—Mike Nelson,
WASA Assistant Executive Director,
Professional Learning & Membership

What is your role at WASA?

I am the Professional Learning Assistant.

What does your job entail?

I set up in-person and virtual events, communicate with members regarding the events, and collaborate with sponsors and partner organizations to ensure they have what they need.

What do you like most about your job?

Relationship building. I have met a lot of cool new people.

How has WASA changed since you were hired?

We have added a lot more specific events through lunch and learns that tailor to out members' specific needs.

What is your favorite memory at WASA?

Roadtripping with Kim and Mike for Spring Conference in March. Being stuck in a car for that long encourages bonding.

What were you doing before being hired at WASA?

Electronics technician on F-18s and a training manager in the US Navy.

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

Reading, playing sports, and family hikes. Though the playing sports is on hiatus due to a foot injury.

Best vacation you've been to?

Lake Tenkiller in Oklahoma when I was a kid. It was a family vacation with swimming and fishing and cook outs everyday. I also got to learn to play chess during that trip!

Where's your favorite place in the world?

My grandma's ranch in Wewoka, Oklahoma is my favorite place in the world. I spend a lot of time there as a kid, hunting, fishing, riding horses, and enjoying grandma's good cooking. It's very freeing when I visit there.

Reflect a bit on your professional mentor.

Kim Fry is the Assistant Executive Director of Learning Innovation and AI and my mentor. She approaches everything with humility and is always willing to help. She never seems to tire, and is always full of energy, which has a positive impact on me and the people who surround her. She is a good example of how energy can be a tone-setter. She sets the bar high, which makes work fun.

CONTACT US

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WASA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Mike Villarreal, Hoquiam

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Bob Maxwell, Pullman

PAST PRESIDENT

Michelle Whitney, Pasco

SECRETARY

Chrys Sweeting, Arlington

TREASURER

Linda McKay, NCESD 171



MEETING THE CANDIDATES

2024-25 PRESIDENT-ELECT



Mary Templeton
Superintendent
Washougal School District



Shaun Carey
Superintendent
Enumclaw School District

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Superintendent of Schools | Washougal SD (2018–Present)
- HR Director | Spokane PS (2014–18)
- Professor | WSU, Pacific University (2022–Present)
- Asst. Principal, High School | Spoake PS (2007–14)
- Teacher | Spokane PS, Idaho, California (1992–08)

EDUCATION

- Doctor of Education | WSU
- Master of Education | EWU
- Bachelor of Arts | University of Oregon

WASA SERVICE

- WASA Legislative and Finance Committee, Chair
- WASA Superintendent Component, Chair
- WASA Board Member
- WASA Equity Ad Hoc Advisory Committee
- WASA ESD 112 Regional President
- Active WASA Member

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & RECOGNITION

- AASA Learning 2025 Demonstration School District
- AASA Equity in Action Cohort
- AASA Women in Leadership Consortium
- CoSN Superintendent Collaborative
- AASA Communities of Practice Facilitator
- IDEAL Cohort (Innovative Districts Empowering All Learners): Site Visit Host
- AVID National Superintendent Collaborative
- AASA Learning 2025: Lighthouse Demonstration System
- Washougal SD Award: AWSP Principal of the Year
- WSSDA Board of Distinction: Washougal SD
- Washougal SD Award: ESD 112 Teacher of the Year
- WSPRA State Branding & Marketing Award
- Washougal SD Award: CTE Regional Administrator of the Year

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Superintendent | Enumclaw SD (2020–Present)
- Deputy Superintendent of PK-12 | Franklin Pierce SD (2017–20)
- Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and the Business Office | Franklin Pierce SD (2015–17)
- Director/Exec. Dir. of HR | Franklin Pierce SD (2011–15)
- Principal, Elementary | Franklin Pierce SD (2001–11)
- Teacher | Franklin Pierce SD, Clover Park SD (1994–99)

EDUCATION

- Doctor of Education | WSU
- Administration Credentials | PLU
- Master of Education | City University of Seattle
- Bachelor of Arts | PLU

WASA SERVICE

- Active WASA Member
- WASA Aspiring Superintendent Cohort
- Dr. Doyle E. Winter Selection Committee Member
- Superintendent of the Year Selection Committee Member
- Milliken Leadership Academy Attendee
- WASA Board Member, Region 110

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & RECOGNITION

- Former WSPA Regional Representative and President
- PSESD Superintendent's Advisory Committee Co-chair
- OSPI Superintendent's Roundtable Member
- Office of Professional Practices (OPP) APCAC Member
- NSPRA Superintendents to Watch
- Featured Articles in District Administration Daily Online
- Hanover Research Superintendents Leadership Council Webcast
- *Innovator's Mindset Podcast* with George Couros

April

APRIL 23

ERNN Regional Conference
Hilton Garden Inn Yakima
8 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

APRIL 24

Next Level Leaders
Virtual Meeting #6
10 a.m.

APRIL 25

ERNN Regional Conference
Spokane ESD 101
8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

APRIL 25

Inclusionary Practices Project
Team Accountability Workshopping Session #4
8:30 – 11:40 a.m.

APRIL 25

Aspiring Central Office Leadership Academy
Session #7 | Virtual
9 – 11 a.m.

APRIL 26

Instructional Leadership Academy
Virtual Workshop #6
8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

APRIL 29

Inclusionary Practices Project
District Facilitator Action Planning #6
9 – 10:30 a.m.

May

MAY 4

Women in Leadership In-Person Conference
Campbell's Resort
Lake Chelan, WA

MAY 5

Mentor and Early Career
Superintendent Academy
Campbell's Resort | Lake Chelan, WA
1–4 p.m.

MAY 5–7

Superintendent Conference
Campbell's Resort
Lake Chelan, WA

MAY 7

Inclusionary Practices Project
Professional Learning Seminar #6
8:30 – 10 a.m.

MAY 14

Next Level Leaders
Virtual Meeting #7
10 a.m.

MAY 15

Aspiring Superintendents Academy
Session #10 | Virtual
8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

MAY 16

Instructional Leadership Academy Spring
Conference
Puget Sound Educational Service District
800 Oakesdale Ave SW, Renton, WA 98057

MAY 23

Inclusionary Practices Project
In-Person End of Year Summit | Location TBD
8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

MAY 29

Aspiring Superintendents Academy
Session #11 | Virtual
8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

June

JUNE 12

Aspiring Superintendents Academy
Session #12 | Virtual
8:30 – 11:30 a.m.

JUNE 21

Next Level Leaders
Spokane Convention Center
Spokane, WA

JUNE 22–25

WASA/AWSP Summer Pre-Conference
and Conference 2024
Spokane Convention Center
Spokane, WA

July

JULY 21–22

Incoming Superintendents Conference

JULY 31–AUGUST 2

Integrated MTSS Fest
Washington State University
Pullman, WA

Professional Learning Opportunities

Continue your professional learning and growth with conferences, academies, and workshops from WASA Professional Learning. Find more at wasa-oly.org.

