

WASA NEWS

December 2020—Edition 1



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Finding Your Voice—The Importance of Legislative Advocacy**
December 4, Zoom
12–1 p.m.
Click [here](#) to register.
- **Women in Leadership Mini Conference**
December 7, Zoom
8:30 a.m.–12 p.m.
Click [here](#) to register.
- **WASA/OSPI Special Education Conference**
Five Sessions—
Session 5 of 5, Zoom
December 10, 8:30–11 a.m.
Click [here](#) to register.
- **How Using Data & Technology can Help School Leaders Navigate these Uncharted Times**
December 8,
Complimentary Zoom
8:30–9:30 a.m.
Click [here](#) to register.

ERNN BASIC BARGAINING VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

The workshop is a great opportunity for district negotiators to acquire a basic level of understanding about bargaining strategies and techniques. It is designed for first time members of your district bargaining team or anyone wanting to refresh their bargaining skills before going to the table in 2021.

The workshop will be delivered through a four-part series, every Wednesday in February, 8:30–9:30 a.m. Registration opens December 11.

“Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.”

-John Wooden

WASA Friends,

I hope your Thanksgiving holiday was enjoyable and restful. At a time of year when American families traditionally come together to be with one another, the 2020 holiday season will certainly be a different experience. The pandemic, which required us to deviate from long-held family traditions on Thanksgiving, will dictate our planning for the Christmas and New Year holidays as well.

Like many of you, Dory and I made the decision to forgo the traditional large gatherings that our family has celebrated for decades. While this was not our preferred course of action, safety and responsibility prevailed. We also had choices—to wallow in self-pity and gloom, or make the best of the situation. This was an easy decision for us, and we will continue to look for ways to “make the best of the way things turn out” through the holiday season.

I must admit that Zooming with my 83-year-old parents for Thanksgiving dessert was not the same as being with them last Thursday. But the joy on their faces, seeing their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren on the Zoom, was reassuring to me. While it was not what any of us wanted, they/we made the best of it. And each of us gained a special appreciation for what we have taken for granted all these years.

As school district leaders, you have been modeling Coach Wooden’s words since the early days of the pandemic; looking for opportunity amidst challenge, steadying those with whom you work, and providing a consistent message of hope. That is what leaders do: model positivity and encourage others to make the best of the situation. Granted, this is easier said than done—especially amidst a worldwide pandemic. But if you don’t model, lead, and encourage, who will?

I know many of you are tired. But let me remind you that your leadership has been vital to holding the system together and moving it forward over the past nine months. You have answered the call to lead. You have made a substantial difference for your schools, staff, and students. And with a vaccine now on the horizon, there is some light at the end of the tunnel for the first time in months.

Keep on leading. Keep on encouraging. Keep on making *“the best of the way things turn out.”* Your leadership has been extraordinary, and our schools could not be in better hands.

Respectfully,

WASA Office Holiday Schedule

The WASA office will be closed for the holidays beginning December 24, 2020, and will reopen on Monday, January 4, 2021.

REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF)

School districts with budget challenges that may require a Reduction in Force (RIF) are encouraged to begin laying appropriate groundwork in the coming weeks. This can be a delicate balance, as districts inform staff and community of worst-case scenarios, while being sensitive to the anxiety and disruption this messaging may produce throughout the system and community. In planning for the worst, while hoping for the best, districts where RIF is a possibility should initiate proactive action and begin reviewing related policy and collective bargaining language, engage with union leadership, finalize a budget development process, and build a communication strategy for the short and long term.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- **Racial Justice:** For information and resources, click the [link](#) on the WASA website. The following resources were recently uploaded:
 - [No, Elementary Students Are Not Too Young to Talk About Race](#) (ASCD Express)
 - [How to Talk “Taboo” Topics with Young Students](#) (ASCD Express)
- **Pandemic:** For information and resources, click the [link](#) on the WASA website. The following resources were recently uploaded:
 - [Best Practices in Virtual Assessments](#) (Hanover)
 - [Virtual Professional Learning Communities](#) (Hanover)
- **Other:**
 - [Getting the F Out](#) (Getting Smart)
 - [Distance Learning ‘Has Been OK, I Guess’: Students Share About This Year’s Experiences](#) (Education Week Teacher)
 - [The Mastery vs. Seat-Time Debate Takes Center Stage Under Remote Learning](#) (Education Week)
 - **Monthly Superintendents Leadership Council:** Hanover Research will be reconvening a Superintendents Panel for a live Q & A on Wednesday, December 9, at 8 p.m. EST, to discuss equity challenges amidst different reopening scenarios. WASA and MASA co-host this monthly event, which includes a superintendent from Washington State as one of the panelists. Click [here](#) to register.

AASA CORNER

- [AASA National Conference on Education](#)—February 18 & 19, 2021.
- [AASA: A New Education Vision for a New Administration](#)
- [AASA Professional Liability Plan and Legal Support Coverage](#)
- [AASA Resources on COVID-19](#)

ENGAGE WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

The 2020 elections have been certified, the last quarterly revenue forecast has been issued by the Economic & Revenue Forecast Council, and Governor Inslee is set to release his 2021–23 Operating Budget request soon. All the pieces are being put in place for the stretch run before the 2021 Legislative Session begins; they convene on January 11 for the 105-day budget-writing session.

The November revenue forecast was much more positive than earlier forecasts; however, there is still substantial uncertainty about the state of the budget. Currently, there is a \$3.3 billion budget shortfall—which could essentially be zeroed out by using all of the state’s reserves. This assumes: no further economic fallout from the continuing spread of COVID-19; legislators will empty the state’s bank account; and legislators will not create or expand any programs. These aren’t bets with good odds. Given the current circumstances, budget reductions are still expected—and K-12 will not be exempt from the axe.

We strongly encourage you to continue to engage with your local legislators—now and throughout the session—telling them “your story” and reminding them of your schools’ needs. WASA will continue to provide resources and assistance, including our [2021 Legislative Platform](#), the [School Funding Coalition priorities](#), and accompanying [talking points](#). After the session begins, be sure to follow WASA’s legislative newsletter ([TWIO](#)) and [podcast](#).

QUICK LINK

- [Requirements for Sexual Health Education](#) (OSPI)

SIRS SALARY SURVEY

SIRS annually compiles and publishes a salary-and-benefits report of Washington’s school employees in three parts: 1) administrators, 2) classified personnel, and 3) teachers. In 2020–21, SIRS introduced an additional longitudinal report presenting Washington State school employee salary information for the past ten years. Through the self-reporting SIRS survey, the quality of data will help facilitate valuable trend analysis for any district. The longitudinal tool is presented in an easy-to-use Microsoft Excel workbook and utilizes pivot charts and slicing tools to better visualize trends and comparisons among comparable districts.

The 2020–21 SIRS Salary Survey forms were sent to districts on October 22. The deadline to return surveys was extended to December 5. The final data report will be made available January 11, 2021. All SIRS district members will receive access to the full report. Participating non-member SIRS districts receive a pdf copy.