

JANUARY 2024



NEWS

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](#).



"Offense may sell tickets, but defense wins championships."

—Paul "Bear" Bryant

WASA Friends,

Next Monday the 2024 legislative session will get underway. This is a "short session", just 60 days in length. Nevertheless, legislators will be considering matters related to funding and policy that will hold significance for schools. WASA's **Legislative Platform** outlines our priorities—our stated needs that have both policy and funding implications.

In working closely with Dan Steele the past six years, I've learned a great deal about WASA's efforts to influence K–12 policy for the betterment of this state's schools and the students in them. While legislative advocacy is seen by most as pressing for what is needed, Dan reminds us that it is equally about heading off policy that would be counterproductive, or even detrimental to K–12 education.

As WASA members step up legislative advocacy efforts in the next 60 days, it is important to recognize the interplay between offense and defense in our work. The trajectory of education will be shaped by both what we secure for schools (offense), and what we fend off this session (defense).

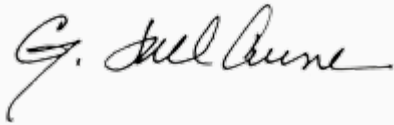
Defensive Advocacy is how we protect public education. It involves vigilance against policies that may undermine the core principles of effective education. As champions of public education, our role in this context is to articulate the potential pitfalls and consequences of poorly conceived legislation. We must stand firmly united in these instances, ensuring that policies align with the best interests of students, educators, and the community-at-large.

On the other hand, **Offensive Advocacy** represents our proactive stance in shaping policies that drive positive change. It involves engaging policymakers so that we can advance WASA's priorities into legislative outcomes that best serve schools. By playing good offense, we achieve changes in resource allocation and policy that improve schools and outcomes for students.

To win this legislative session, we must employ a combination of good offense and good defense. Dan Steele reminds us that short sessions typically yield budget movement of limited significance. In this context however, legislators are often inclined to focus on policy. Some of that policy will serve to advance public education, while other policy will inhibit or even be harmful to public education. In addition to executing our offensive game plan, let's also be sure to play great defense during the upcoming legislative session.

Thank you in advance, for the time and energy you will devote to legislative advocacy during the next two months. Press for the legislative priorities AND watch for developments that may be counterproductive to K–12 education. We must strongly assert our voice when policy emerges that is detrimental to the students in our schools. Remember, the decisions made by lawmakers during this time will likely have a profound impact on your work and the students you serve for many years to come.

Best regards,



G. Joel Aune
WASA Executive Director

UPCOMING WASA EVENTS



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: Powerful Leadership: The Role of Trust, Self-efficacy, and Feedback
Virtual
January 12 | 8:30–11:30 a.m.



Legislative Conference & Day on the Hill
South Puget Sound Community College
January 28 & 29



ERNN Virtual Conference: Developing Your Bargaining Strategy
Virtual
February 6 | 9–10:30 a.m.
SAVE THE DATE!



WASA Spring Conference for Small School Leaders
Wenatchee
March 18–19
REGISTRATION OPENS JANUARY 9TH!

REMINDERS





Connect with Us

Be sure to follow us on **Facebook**, **Instagram**, and **Twitter** for information on upcoming conferences and workshops, legislative news and updates, and

school news.

Update Your Profile

If you haven't already, please help us keep our membership directory up to date by taking a moment to upload your photo to your WASA member profile page. Contact

Heather Chard at hchard@wasa-oly.org if you have questions or need assistance.



2024–25 WASA President-Elect Candidate Nominations

WASA Past President Michelle Whitney is seeking nominees for the 2024–25 WASA President-elect. Nominees must presently serve as a superintendent on the west side of Washington state. Candidate nominations can be made by regions, components, individuals, or self-nomination. The deadline to submit a nomination is January 12, 2024.

The campaign will include information in the WASA Hotline, WASA News, WASA website, introductory videos, candidate brochures emailed to all WASA members, and candidate speeches given during the WASA Honorary Awards Luncheon at the 2024 WASA/AWSP Summer Conference. Questions and nominations may be forwarded to **Michelle Whitney**, Superintendent, Pasco School District, or **Joel Aune**.

Purple Star Recognition—Application Now Available

Washington state was recently approved for Purple Star designation. The Purple Star program is designed to recognize school districts that support military-connected children and families. OSPI has asked WASA to design and execute implementation of the Purple Star recognition program here in Washington. To learn more, visit our website: <http://wasa-oly.org/PurpleStar>.



Apply now! Applications for the 2023–24 school year are being accepted through February 16, 2024.



WALAS Becomes WASA's Newest Affiliate

During its latest meeting, the WASA Board granted formal affiliation approval to the Washington Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (WALAS).

According to WASA bylaws, the association is permitted to affiliate with other state or national professional organizations that share common interests or concerns. The bylaws state, "It is recognized that other organizations may exist with similar purposes and goals. Positive relationships should exist between and among such organizations to aid and assist each in achieving common goals. WASA may affiliate or ally with or accept affiliations or alliances with other state or national professional organizations which share mutual interest and/or concerns." With this approval, WALAS becomes the

17th formal **affiliate of WASA**. We extend a warm welcome to our WALAS colleagues and friends as we formalize this affiliation!

WASA Management Reviews

Be reminded WASA offers a Management Review service to members. The WASA Management Review process has been refined through the completion of over 130 reviews in several states and at the college and ESD levels. The overall objective of a review is to provide expert assessment of all aspects of school district management—the results are designed to be both an in-depth analysis of what is, and a blueprint for what can be. Management Reviews are conducted by review teams of recognized, expert practitioners in consultation with school district administration. Contact **Andy Wolf** for more information on the WASA Management Review service.

Are Your CBAs Current with the Law?

As you begin to prepare for another bargaining cycle, it is considered best practice to have current CBAs reviewed by legal counsel. Much has changed over the past few years, and there may be portions of your current CBAs that are not current with the law or contain problematic language.

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is Accepting Applications for the School-Based Behavioral Health Peer Support Services Grant

The DOH is awarding up to three **12-month grants** with up to \$65,000 for behavioral health peer support services projects in Washington schools. The projects should focus on communities and populations that have received limited health care opportunities or have not been served due to past policy decisions.

Applicants may be:

- A community-based non-profit organization.
- Public school entities like a school, school district, or Educational Service District, including charter and locally or federally operated tribal schools.
- A health care organization sponsoring a school-based health center.

Projects must serve a school with a high proportion of students (60 percent or more) from a historically under-served community or population. Applications are due by 11:59 PM Pacific Standard Time on February 16, 2024. For more information and to apply, visit their **WA Portal page**.



On Monday, January 8, the Legislature convenes its second year of the 68th Biennial Session. The Legislature adopts two-year budgets in odd-numbered sessions, while legislators in second-year sessions typically have a heavy focus on policy issues, and only make necessary, usually minor, adjustments to the budgets. During the upcoming “short” session, limited to 60 days, legislators will delve into a multitude of policy bills; however, there are also many budgetary requests on the table. Those budget requests will occupy a lot of time and attention, even if many of them are not adopted.

Many of the budget requests come from K–12 education to address previous unfulfilled requests. For example, special education remains underfunded, even though it is clearly a required basic education program, which legally must be fully funded. The same goes for pupil transportation—another underfunded basic education item. Other K–12 requests ask for support to address emerging issues—such as the dramatic, unanticipated insurance rate increases, which have impacted most districts and are causing budgetary woes.

Superintendent Reykdal and Governor Inslee have requested fairly modest increases for K–12—\$273.9 million and \$141.4 million, respectively. (NOTE: These are Policy Level requests; total requested increases, including required Maintenance Level requests are: \$561.2 million and \$808.6 million, respectively.) It is also important to know that more than half of each request is for compensation issues, including controversial paraeducator salary increases. School administrators understand the need for paraeducators and are generally supportive of higher wages; however, both the Superintendent’s and the Governor’s requests would likely cause major bargaining confrontations this spring, as other labor groups seek “Me, too” increases. WASA’s perspective is that enhancing classified staff and/or paraeducator staff allocations as a part of the Prototypical School Funding Model would be a better and more workable option.

For full details of the budget requests from Superintendent Reykdal and Governor Inslee, see **WASA’s TWIO Special Edition—December 15, 2023**.

As noted above, policy discussions will be a major focus in the 2024 Session. In addition to more than 1,200 bills, resolutions, and memorials already in play from the 2023 Session, hundreds of new bills will be introduced. In fact, more than 400 new pieces of legislation have been “pre-filed” before the session has even convened. A substantial number of the “old” and new bills directly or indirectly impact K–12 education.

Given the ongoing challenges in our public schools, it is incumbent on all school administrators to be fully engaged with your local legislators. If legislators expand the budget, their focus will be on numerous issues other than K–12 education—unless they hear from you. Often. And with or without budget increases, there will be a host of K–12 policy bills—both positive and negative—that need to be addressed. Legislators need to hear “your story” and understand your needs. If you do not advocate for your students, your staff, and your district, who will? You are the education “experts” and legislators need to hear from you, lest they be left to their own devices and make uninformed decisions for you.

Remember, advocacy does not have to be hard, intimidating, or time-consuming. To support your advocacy efforts, WASA will continue to provide resources and assistance, including our [2024 Legislative Platform](#) and the [2024 School Funding Coalition Priorities](#). As session begins, be sure to follow WASA’s weekly legislative newsletter ([TWIO](#)) and [podcast](#). (NOTE: WASA’s Annual Session Guide for 2024 will be released soon.)

RESOURCES



This month’s featured resources include:

- [The 10 Most Significant Education Studies of 2023](#) | Edutopia
- [8 Essential Qualities of Successful Leaders](#) | hbr.org
- [Bringing AI to School—Tips for Leaders](#)
- [Restorative Practices Research Brief](#) | Hanover Research

Resources for Martin Luther King Jr. Day:

- [The Best of Our Resources](#) | Southern Poverty Law Center
- [Teaching About Martin Luther King Jr.](#) | Civil Rights Teaching

Resources for Black History Month:

- [Resources for Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#) | Edutopia
- [Black History Month Resource Guide for Educators](#) | Center for Racial Justice in Education
- [Classroom Resources for Black History Month](#) | PBS



SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

This month's Sponsor Spotlight features WASA's Diamond-level sponsor—**McKinstry**. We are grateful for their unwavering support of our members and programs! Click their link to learn more about them. View all of our amazing Diamond-level sponsors [on our website](#).

McKinstry

AASA CORNER

THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

- **NCE Registration:** ASE registration is now open to National Conference on Education 2024.



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