Happy New Year!

I trust the holidays afforded you some opportunity to relax and enjoy time with family and friends. By now, I suspect you are fully re-engaged in your work—providing vision, encouragement, and leadership to advance student learning in your school districts. This is a busy, but productive time of year as staff hit their full stride in schools and classrooms, while district leadership begins planning in earnest for 2020–21.

Please be reminded of the Communications Toolkit available on the WASA website. This resource includes ideas on communications related to budget and bargaining. If you’ve not already done so, now is a great time to ramp up efforts to inform and educate your community on the budget. We believe this investment, on the front end, can pay dividends when it comes time to make difficult budget decisions, engage in collective bargaining, or both. There are over 150 school districts with levy or bond measures on the February ballot. With some deliberate thinking, your communications related to budget might very well compliment your plan to build staff and community support for your levy proposition.

And to those with measures on the February ballot, we wish you the very best as your campaign efforts shift into high gear over the next five–six weeks.

Here’s hoping 2020 brings both professional accomplishment and a high degree of personal satisfaction for you.

Best Regards,

Joel

PLANNING FOR RIF

School districts with severe 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.
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The 2020 Legislature convened its “short” session on January 13. As the session begins, we strongly encourage school administrators to engage in the legislative process. WASA is prepared to provide you with the tools and resources necessary to effectively advocate, including our comprehensive weekly legislative newsletter This Week in Olympia (TWIO) and our more easily digestible Legislative Podcast. Additionally, WASA’s annual Session Guide and Advocacy Toolkit will be available in the coming weeks. WASA’s 2020 Legislative Platform, adopted last fall, is available on the WASA website and will provide a guide regarding the issues which WASA will be advocating on behalf of our collective members. All school administrators are encouraged to continue building relationships with your local legislators, and advocating for your students and schools. It will surely be difficult to successfully achieve our goals in the 2020 Session, given the State’s fiscal constraints and current political dynamics; however, we will have NO opportunity to succeed if educators are not engaged in the fight.

PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR LUNCHTIME RULES

Last month, OSPI filed proposed rules related to school meal times and lunch durations. If adopted, the rules would amend WAC 392-157-125 to establish a minimum seated lunchtime of 20 minutes for all students and provide that recess be scheduled before lunch in elementary schools.

OSPI has established an extended comment period for the review and formal response to the proposal. There will be four public hearings across the State to receive oral comments on April 3 in Olympia, April 10 in Vancouver, April 16 in Spokane, and April 17 in Yakima.

More information regarding the proposed rules, including the hearing locations and times, and how to submit written comments will be forthcoming from OSPI.

AASA CORNER

- **AASA Leadership Network:** AASA’s Leadership Network Engagement Lifecycle serves superintendents and other district leaders as they PREPARE, CERTIFY, LEARN, INNOVATE, AND COLLABORATE. [Click](#) for information.

- **AASA National Conference:** February 13–15, 2020, San Diego, California. [Click](#) to register.

- **AASA Northwest Reception:** February 14, 2020, Marriott Marquis San Diego Marina, Torrey Pines Room, 5–7 p.m.

SCHOOL DAY DEFINITION

WASA’s 2020 Legislative Platform includes a series of very expensive requests, including the enhancement of school staffing allocations, expected to cost at least $5 billion. It is unrealistic to expect the 2020 Legislature to fully implement all of our requests; however, administrators have an opportunity to educate legislators about school district needs and build momentum for action in the 2021 Session.

WASA will be advocating for one issue that would have NO impact on State funding: specifically defining teacher duties and expectations. Through hard bargaining the last two years, teachers across the State have received significant salary increases—providing them with competitive, market-level salaries. Even with historic raises, local unions continue to bargain for additional pay for work that is not “extra,” but a part of a teacher’s professional duties. WASA will strongly urge the Legislature to clearly define the minimum professional duties and expectations for teachers, and not leave this to collective bargaining.

The statutory definition we seek must explicitly state the professional responsibilities, time, and effort required to provide the State’s program of basic education exceeds the required number of instructional hours and includes such things as: preparing, planning, and coordinating instruction; collaboration with other teachers or staff; meeting with parents; and evaluating student learning. Supplemental contracts would still be allowed; however, additional compensation would have to be tied to defined extra time or responsibilities that are uniquely associated with a specific assignment above and beyond the tasks of all other teachers.