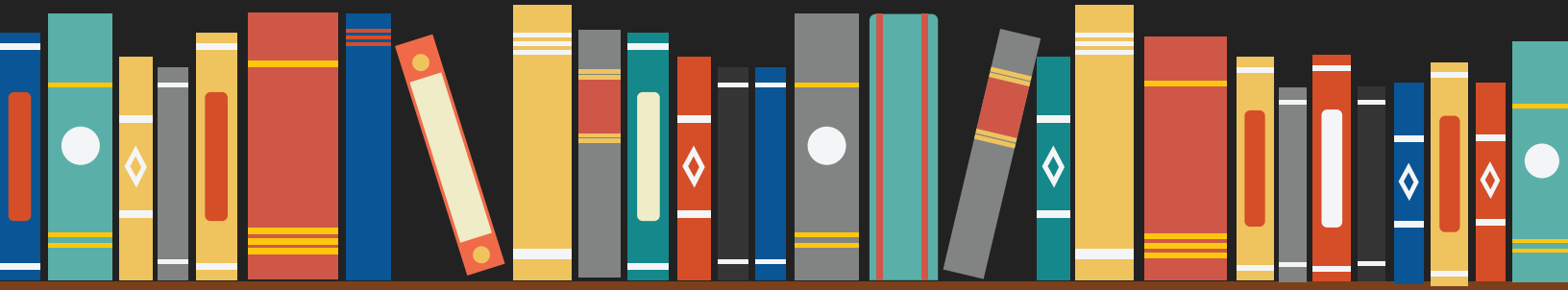


# BOOKENDS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

PRINT NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS | SPRING 2024



2024 Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year  
Heidi Fagerness brings unwavering hope to  
Chehalis Middle School (p. 10).





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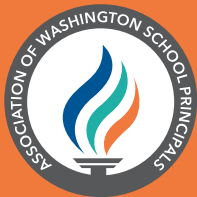
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## Reach Out to Us!

We'd love to know what you think of our print newsletter. We'd especially love to hear from you if you have a story or article to share. Reach out to us!

**Caroline Brumfield**  
AWSP Marketing and Design Director  
caroline@awsp.org

**Julie Woods**  
AWSP Community and Member Relations Coordinator  
julie@awsp.org



## Psst...! Want to Win \$100?

We want to make sure you received this newsletter. (And that you, hopefully, even read it!) Scan this QR code or visit [go.awsp.org/read](https://go.awsp.org/read) to let us know you received it safely. We'll enter you to win a \$100 Amazon gift card!



# We Haven't Forgotten Your Snail Mail Box!

School Leaders,

We hope you are hanging on strong and taking care of your own well-being as we head into this final stretch of the school year.

This is the very first issue of our brand-new print newsletter, *Bookends of School Leadership*. While we put our full digital *Washington Principal* magazine on hiatus this year, we found we still missed our regular print publication of years past. We just have so much to tell our members, and sometimes the best way to reach you is the old-fashioned snail mail way. We know not everyone is able to read each e-newsletter or email we send out, and this publication is one more way of keeping you in the loop "in case you missed it." We'll aim to send it twice per year (to "bookend" the year, so to speak).

*Bookends of School Leadership* highlights just a handful of the great programs, benefits, and professional learning AWSP has to offer. We've also included several highlights from and about AWSP members like you.

This issue in particular is all about hope. We have stories of hope from three outstanding school leaders who write about belonging, partnership, and perseverance.

We also showcase the accomplishments of each of the 2024 Principals and Assistant Principals of the Year. Their leadership is inspiring, to say the least. Our article links to each of their Principal of the Year videos via QR code.

You'll also find a recap of the 2024 legislative session, a legal Q&A corner, information about our upcoming AWSP/WASA Summer Conference in June, and short interviews with our two United States Senate Youth Program winners.

Wrapping up the newsletter is a timely article from our Executive Director, Dr. Scott Seaman. He asks, "What is our definition of post-secondary success?"

After you read through this print newsletter, be sure to subscribe to our blog, pull our emails back into your "focused" folder, follow us on social media, and check out our website. (We're working on a redesign of the homepage this spring!)

And if you're as hope-focused as we are, register for our Summer Conference, taking place June 23-25 in Spokane. (The theme is "Unlocking the Power of Hope." Our keynoters will not disappoint!)

Reach out to us anytime!

Caroline Brumfield  
AWSP Marketing and Design Director



# AWSP & Foundation

## AWSP Welcomes Mishele Barnett to the Team!



AWSP is excited to welcome Mishele Barnett to the AWSP team as the Communications and Digital Media Coordinator.

Mishele is a middle school teacher turned marketing creative whose passion for the betterment of education has no bounds. She loves to use her analytical mindset and aesthetically pleasing flare to create collateral people want to see and use. As an educator, she aspired to create a classroom where all were welcome, seen, and heard, and she applies the same principles to much that she creates today. Mishele has a bachelor's degree from Central Washington University in Middle-Level Humanities Teaching and taught in several districts within the Puget Sound Region.

Mishele is a Washington native and proud of it. You'll typically find her on the beach picking sea glass, amongst the biggest trees in the forest, enjoying endless miles of farm fields and sagebrush, or spending a rainy day inside with her partner, Brent, and a favorite show, book, or video game. She is excited to contribute to the work AWSP is doing and can't wait to be able to continue to support administrators, educators, students, and more through her work at AWSP.

## Retiring? Here's What You Need to Know about Your AWSP Membership



Active membership with AWSP is super important while you are a principal or assistant principal, but did you know that if you change roles or retire, another type of membership with AWSP might be just as important?

We want to make sure you're covered! In Washington state, the statute of limitation is seven years, which means that actions taken during your principalship are subject to litigation for seven years after you have left your position. We offer membership options for those who have moved to a district office or other educational position in their district, as well as a Life-time membership option for those who are retiring. Questions? Email Macy Bruhy at [macy@awsp.org](mailto:macy@awsp.org).

## Reminder: Principal and AP Evaluation Deadline is June 1



As we head into spring and approach the end of the school year,

we want to remind principals and assistant principals that your own evaluation must be wrapped up on or before June 1. This includes your summative conference, scoring, final eval, etc. This is the first year this date has been REQUIRED, per WAC 392-191A-190(8).

This new June 1 deadline marks a significant shift for completing your own evaluations. Be mindful of this date and plan accordingly to ensure your part in a smooth and timely evaluation process. Please make sure you and your supervisor are on the same page with this new requirement. Questions? Email Jack Arend at [jack@awsp.org](mailto:jack@awsp.org).

## Join Us for the Spring Principals' Forum on May 14



Bring the field to AWSP, and we'll bring AWSP to the field. During the virtual forum, we'll listen to your ideas and concerns. Stories and testimonies shared during the forum will be brought to legislators, partner organizations, and other education stakeholders.

We'll have breakout rooms based on hot topics which may include contracts, meeting and conferring, discipline, legislation, and more.

Join us on May 14 from 4-5 p.m. There's no cost to join us, but please register to receive the Forum Zoom link. To register, visit [go.awsp.org/springforum](http://go.awsp.org/springforum).

# Highlights

## AWSL is Gearing Up Student Leadership Programs for the Summer!



The Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL) is your go-to destination to empower students to lead and make positive decisions within their schools, communities, and themselves.

Through life-changing and personalized programs, curriculum, and experiences, AWSL prepares students for success academically and in life. We strive to create opportunities and increase access, so each and every student can develop as leaders, so they can lead themselves, lead others, and become vibrant leaders in their schools and communities.

AWSL has been active across the state, leading school summits, bilingual leadership programs, middle-level regional programs, and personalized programs.

AWSL is gearing up to launch our 14 summer programs for middle-level and high school students at Eastern Washington University, Central Washington University, and the Cispus Learning Center.

The AWSL team is gearing up to lead personalized professional learning and development for schools and districts before the start of the 2024-2025 school

year. The AWSL team can lead school culture and climate, recess, ASB finance and law, and leadership development training for students and adults. Contact the AWSL team to set up your back-to-school trainings.

AWSL continues to be at the forefront of culture, community, and connection through leadership development for students and those who support them. Visit [www.awsleaders.org](http://www.awsleaders.org) to learn more about how AWSL can support your students, school, and community!

## Outdoor Schools WA: School Funding Requests are Now Open



Greetings from Outdoor Schools WA! Outdoor school funding requests for the 2024-25 school year are now open. This funding reimburses your school(s) for attending overnight outdoor education experiences at a variety of sites throughout the state. Request deadline is **April 30**.

For more information and to submit a request, please visit our website at [www.outdoorschoolswa.org](http://www.outdoorschoolswa.org).

## AWSL and AWSP's New "Washington Schools on The Rise" Award: Nominate by May 31



Introducing the "Washington Schools on the Rise" award by AWSL/AWSP! This award celebrates schools where students and adults collaborate to improve culture and amplify student voice. AWSP and its Foundation support these schools with resources and opportunities. These schools foster inclusive and equitable environments. Know a school on the rise? Nominate them today and honor their commitment to excellence in education!

The nomination window runs from April 1 - May 31. Winners will be selected the first week of June and announced during the AWSP luncheon at the annual AWSP/WASA Summer Conference in Spokane on June 24. (Conference runs from June 23-25.)

View recognition criteria and nominate a school at [go.awsp.org/ontherise](http://go.awsp.org/ontherise). ■

# Stories of Hope

The following three stories of hope are excerpts from articles written by outstanding Washington state school leaders.

Find the full stories posted on our blog at [www.awsp.org/blog](http://www.awsp.org/blog).

## Hopes and Dreams: A Story of Belonging

**Shannon Leatherwood**  
Principal, Spanaway Middle School,  
Bethel SD  
*2023 Washington State Secondary  
Principal of the Year*

When someone holds onto their hopes and dreams, they possess powerful encouragement that can help them overcome any obstacle in their way. Having a clear vision of what they want to achieve can provide a person with a sense of purpose to fuel determination and inspire perseverance.



George Washington Carver once said, "Where there is no vision, there is no hope." This highlights the importance of having a clear goal or dream, as it can provide a person with direction and motivation to push through tough obstacles. With hopes and dreams, individuals can transform their lives and reach the unreachable heights they may have once thought impossible. This is a story of a girl who had such dreams.

This little girl grew up in a small town southeast of Tacoma. Despite their young age, the little girl's parents showed an unwavering dedication to providing for their family. They worked tirelessly to fashion a quaint, stable home for their young family, even if it meant sacrificing their own wants and needs. When she became school aged, her family moved into a small home in a nice neighborhood. The example set by her parents instilled within her a strong work ethic and a commitment to succeed in life. The little girl knew nothing came easy, and she began approaching life with a positive attitude, where she made the most of opportunities that came her way.

As the young girl grew up, her parents were determined to provide her and her brother with every opportunity to succeed. They opened doors that were closed for others and constantly talked about hopes and dreams as they emphasized the importance of education. This commitment to success became the little girl's reality, as she grew up believing that success was built upon hopes and dreams, with a deliberate effort to achieve them. Though they had busy schedules, the little girl's parents made their children their priority. Her father spent time with them and taught them the important life lessons that would shape them as they grew up. Her father was not just a typical father, but

a coach, a disciplinarian, and a compassionate man who was always involved in his children's lives. No matter what, he was there for her through the good times and tough times. This helped the little girl overcome obstacles and excel.

Indeed, the little girl learned the importance of family from her father, who grew up with six siblings. Her grandfather had passed away at a young age, leaving her father to take on a significant role in the family at the age of 10. This hardship instilled in her father the importance of being a loving and supportive parent. Despite the challenges, her father's love for her and her brother was strong, and he made sure they were always taken care of. Through her father's example, the little girl understood the value of family and how it forms an essential part of a person's identity. She realized that even in difficult times, the love and support of family can make all the difference.

Still, at first, education was not a priority for the little girl, and she struggled to find her place in school. She did enough to get by and stayed unnoticed by teachers and schools, until 7th grade. Seventh grade became a turning point in her life that helped propel her forward and opened doors she never thought were possible, and it came with the support of a champion in the shape of her father. Because despite

her initial struggles in school, the little girl's father had a commitment to her success that changed everything. He recognized her lack of engagement in school, and he refused to let her settle for mediocrity. She was failing most of her classes because of her lack of commitment to hard work and persistence, but with the help of her father, mother, and teachers, they created a plan to get her back on track. From that point on, the little girl's mindset changed. She began to see how her hopes and dreams were tied to hard work and success. This experience taught the little girl the importance of having a team of people around her who believed in her, even when she didn't believe in herself. With her new-found commitment to education, the little girl began to have a dream of going to college.

As the little girl grew up, she continued to hold onto her dreams of going to college and serving others. Her parents' unwavering support and encouragement gave her the confidence she needed to pursue her ambitions. With her family's support, the little girl began to thrive. She became involved in extracurricular activities and volunteer work in classrooms, which helped her gain valuable skills and gave her a sense of purpose and fulfillment. The little girl became passionate about giving back to others.

As the little girl progressed through school, her parents' lessons on the importance of teamwork took on a new meaning. She began to excel in sports. By the time the little girl was a senior in high school, she already started to develop a love for soccer, but she never

thought it could be her path to college. Her parents, although supportive of her, had no idea how to make college possible, as they were not familiar with the application process. This all changed when a coach recognized her talent and encouraged her to go to college. He worked tirelessly, reaching out to multiple college soccer coaches and arranging for them to come and watch her play. This was the first time the little girl truly believed it might be possible for her dream to become a reality.

The hard work of the little girl's team paid off, and she was offered a college soccer scholarship. This was significant for the little girl and her family, as no one in their extended family had ever gone to college. This scholarship not only gave her the opportunity to pursue her dream of playing soccer, but it also paved the way for her to earn a college degree in education and pursue her dreams of serving others.

Despite her background and initial struggles in school, this little girl learned that success does not have to be determined by wealth or status. Instead, it can be achieved through hard work, dedication, and perseverance—as long as you have a caring team to support you from the sidelines.

I am this little girl...

*This is an excerpt of Shannon's article. Read the rest at [www.awsp.org/blog](http://www.awsp.org/blog) or scan this QR code to access it on your device.*



## And the Greatest of These is Love: Partnering with Parents

**Deborah Henderson**  
Assistant Principal, Frank Wagner Elementary, Monroe SD  
2023 Washington State Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year

### 2018

The walkie crackled, "Sky's mother is in the office." I pushed the button, "Copy. I'll be right down."



I signaled to the teacher I would be back. She continued to watch Sky as he was starting to right the chairs he had thrown. As I walked, I repeated my mantra for hard family meetings: "Be credible, be a partner, show love."

I opened the office door and saw Sky's Mom sitting on the bench, clenching her hands together. She knew from our phone call that he had escalated, again, and we were not going to be able to get him on the bus, but I knew she didn't yet know what escalation really meant - tipped tables, thrown chairs, ripped papers, books, and crayons scattered across the floor. I knew this was going to be hard for her to see and started speaking to her as we walked down the hall. "It's been a hard day, but we have gotten him to de-escalate, and he is working now on cleaning up." We got to the room, and the tears started. She had told me at previous meetings, "I'm a crier," so I expected this. I put my arm around her and told her once again that all kinders are working on different things, and self-regulation was what he was working on. She kept saying, "I just don't know what to do." I explained to her the calm down strategies we were teaching him and gave her the same materials she could use at home. By

**"Success does not have to be determined by wealth or status. Instead, it can be achieved through hard work, dedication, and perseverance—as long as you have a caring team to support you from the sidelines."**

this time, Sky and his teacher had put the room back to how it should be, and he was tired and ready to go home. As she left, she thanked us again and again for helping him and for not giving up and told us she was so happy he was in a place where he was so cared for. “Be credible, be a partner, show love.” We hadn’t solved Sky’s issues, but we had made a small step forward. I said good night to the teacher, told her to get some rest and walked back to my office. I thought about where this mantra came from.

## 2017

Sawyer John chose to come into this world in an unexpected manner. I was at work when I got the text that my sister was in labor. I told myself to stay calm; he was only 3 weeks and 5 days early and it was going to be fine! Her first child took 24 hours to make an appearance; I had time to write up notes for my student teacher and then

“I signaled to the teacher I would be back. She continued to watch Sky as he was starting to right the chairs he had thrown. As I walked, I repeated my mantra for hard family meetings: ‘Be credible, be a partner, show love.’”

I would leave. I got the next text from my brother-in-law letting me know the baby was breech, and they were going into surgery now. I stuffed my computer in my bag, and as I walked through the office, I told my office manager I was leaving for the day. If I weren’t so panicked, I would have laughed at her look of shock at my unusual behavior.

By the time I reached the hospital, Sawyer had made his appearance, and after the NICU nurse forced him to breathe, he was declared healthy. After giving his big brother some time to

meet him, I entered the room and was handed this beautiful baby, with his feet up by his head. After a traumatic birth, we were told to “just let him uncurl on his own time.” He looked like a little kangaroo in a pouch, and I fell in love immediately.

We soon learned this little boy was going to have a pattern of worrying us for no reason. During his in-depth physical that afternoon, his parents were told he might have hip dysplasia, and he might require skull surgery for prematurely fused skull bones. We would need to wait and see. So we waited... and waited...and loved him...and waited...and at his sixth month check up, he was once again given a clean bill of health. A few days later, in true Sawyer fashion, he gave us something else to worry about. A lump suddenly appeared on his neck. His doctor wanted to see him the next morning. After that appointment, I was told the doctor had used her cell phone to call and get him an appointment at Children’s

Hospital at 8:30 the next morning to ensure it was not a cardiovascular involved tumor. As an educator, I hear all the time about waitlists to get into Children’s, but I didn’t say this to my sister. I just said how happy I was that he was going to be seen by the best doctors, and I was sure he would be fine. I, however, woke up several times that night, thinking about worst case possibilities, calculating how much leave I had to use, and just worrying in general. And of course, in true Sawyer fashion, it was not a tumor, but a condition called Torticollis and completely curable through physical therapy. The

next morning started 18 months of physical therapy every Tuesday.

The next 16 months were spent loving this child while trying to encourage him to suffer through increased tum-my time, arguing with him to turn his head a certain way, and him proving how stubborn he could be when he didn’t want to do assigned exercises. He reminded me of me, and I loved this time with him!

At 16 months, Sawyer and his mum taught me one of my most valuable lessons as an educator. It all started with a text from my sister informing me that she was a terrible mother. I asked her what happened and she sent me a screenshot from his fancy daycare of a three page report card that showed Sawyer being behind in all of his milestones. It was put in his cubby with no explanation or conference with his parents. I looked through it and realized it did not have who evaluated him, what assessments were used, and was mostly incorrect. As an educator, I was appalled. As an Aunt, I was enraged. Sawyer had failed “pointing in a purposeful way.” That in itself invalidated the report. Sawyer had been crawling to the nearest adult, signing “Up please,” pointing to move them to get what he wanted for over a month. He had earned the nickname, “tiny dictator.” I tried to point all of this out to his Mum over the next three hours, but she was just too upset to hear why a report card for a 16 month old was ridiculous and that Sawyer was just fine.

Two days later I got another text from her at work. This one was a screenshot of a report from the early childhood center where he received physical therapy.

## 2023...

(Continue on our blog.)

*This is an excerpt of Deborah’s article. Read the rest at [www.awsp.org/blog](http://www.awsp.org/blog) or scan this QR code to access it on your device.*





# Cultivating Hope: It's Never Too Late

**Dr. Dana Stiner, Principal, Pine Tree Elementary, Kent SD**  
2023 Washington State Elementary Principal of the Year

Elementary School was extremely challenging for me. I was a square peg trying to fit into a round hole, and it wasn't working. When I think about those early years, I felt tremendous embarrassment that I would be "found out." I struggled in all basic education skills. I couldn't read or spell basic words, math was impossible, and don't get me started on science. I was a latchkey kid from a broken home in a small rural town. I was different, and I felt it.



I got the message early on that I was different. I vividly remember my 1st grade class performed a play by Beatrix Potter. It seemed like everyone in the class had speaking parts, cool costumes, and fun skits to act out. Not me, I was the fence. That's right, the fence! I wasn't even the gate! At least the gate got to swing open. I was forced to stand still and watch everyone else perform. No reading, no moving, just standing still while my classmates performed to a room of proud parents. This might be a bit dramatic, but it was how I remember it. The following year, in 2nd grade, I was identified as being twice exceptional. I had a learn-

ing disability, and my IQ was above average. At the time, my school had no idea what to do with me, so they put me on a bus and sent me to a different school that had both special education services and a gifted program, making me feel like an even bigger outcast.

When I attended elementary school, there was no differentiation. Teachers didn't pull small groups or reteach concepts that students didn't master. They taught, we received. We sat in rows, no collaboration, no teamwork, no connections, no explanations, no manipulatives, just drill and kill. I fell further and further behind. This is a huge contrast to where I am now. Now, I hold two master's degrees (one in multicultural bilingual education and one in educational leadership) and a doctorate in Educational Leadership. I am the proud principal of a Title I school, and I was named a Washington State Principal of the Year. How did that happen? One word, I was taught the power of hope.

By the time I ended my elementary journey, I had been dismissed from both special education and the gifted program. I wish I could say that I was a proficient student, but I wasn't even close. I was dismissed because having a disability or being identified as "gifted" in middle school was embarrassing. I wouldn't have had classes with my friends. I would have had remediation classes that set me behind in graduation requirements. Worse yet, I might have landed in honors classes, and I would have never passed, and everyone would have found out the truth, I wasn't smart.

As the years progressed, I became good at compensating and figuring out

how to navigate the system. I learned how to take tests, and I asked a lot of questions. As my senior year quickly approached, everyone started talking about plans for college. In my family, there wasn't really another option. If you were successful, you went to college and built yourself a career. There wasn't any other option presented to me. I was petrified. I clearly remember the Saturday that I took my SATs. Sweat dripped down my back as I agonized over each question. "Don't screw this up" played in my mind on repeat. What was even scarier was, what if I passed the SATs, and I had to actually go to college? What would I major in? How would I pass and not let my family down? My stress was palatable.

One year later, I found myself in college studying elementary education. Why? First, I love working with children. Their innocence and imagination inspire me. Second, I couldn't think of a single thing that I was good at, academically. I thought maybe, just maybe, I could teach little kids their letters and numbers and that I could turn that into a career. Then, I attended "Teaching Math to Elementary Learners." It rocked my world. Everything we did was hands-on. We used manipulatives, and we talked about how and why the math worked. I learned more in that elementary math class than I did my entire life. I learned that I could do the math like everyone else, I just needed a different approach. For the first time in my academic life, I became hopeful. ■

*This is an excerpt of Dana's article. Read the rest at [www.awsp.org/blog](http://www.awsp.org/blog) or scan this QR code to access it on your device.*



**"I am the proud principal of a Title I school, and I was named a Washington State Principal of the Year. How did that happen? One word, I was taught the power of hope."**



*Know a principal or an assistant principal who deserves to be honored and recognized? Help us find the next Washington State Principals and Assistant Principals of the Year, as well as our state winners for the National Association of Elementary School Principals and National Association of Secondary School Principals award programs. Our nomination window typically opens in January and closes in April of each year.*

*Learn more at [www.awsp.org/awards](http://www.awsp.org/awards).*



## Meet Our 2024 Washington State

# Principals & Assistant Principals of the Year!

Each year, AWSP recognizes an outstanding elementary and secondary principal as our Washington State Elementary Principal of the Year and Washington State Secondary Principal of the Year. We also recognize a Washington State Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year and a Washington State Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year. The awards provide significant recognition on the state and national level.

Nominations can come from anyone, including district staff, school staff, students, parents, or community members. Nominees then fill out an application to be scored by a review panel. In addition to the state award, the four winners chosen represent our state at the national level. Read on to learn about each of this year's winners!

**Elementary  
Principal**



**Dr. Cathy Sork**  
Camas SD

**Secondary  
Principal**



**Dr. William Jackson**  
Seattle PS

**Elementary  
Asst. Principal**



**Dr. Nick Davies**  
Vancouver PS

**Secondary  
Asst. Principal**



**Heidi Fagerness**  
Chehalis SD



**2024 WASHINGTON STATE  
SECONDARY PRINCIPAL OF  
THE YEAR**

# Dr. William Jackson

**Nathan Hale High School  
Seattle PS**

Dr. William Jackson, principal at Nathan Hale High School in Seattle Public Schools, was named this year's Washington State Secondary Principal of the Year. Jackson will be recognized by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and will compete for the NASSP's National Principal of the Year award. Dr. Jackson has been a school leader for seven years and leads with his strong belief that "honoring the brilliance of [his] students by centering their voice in [the] curricular and school design is the justice-centered approach that leads to high engagement in learning, and strong academic outcomes." He is highly respected in his school, district, and community. He received a record-breaking number of nominations, which included phrases like "transformational leadership", "connector of people", "Loved and admired", and "deserves to be recognized with this great honor." His supervisor, Superintendent of Seattle Public

**2024 WASHINGTON STATE  
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL OF  
THE YEAR**

# Dr. Cathy Sork

**Dorothy Fox Elementary  
Camas SD**

Dr. Cathy Sork, principal at Dorothy Fox Elementary School in the Camas School District, was named the 2024 Washington State Elementary Principal of the Year. Sork will also be recognized nationally by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), with winners from other states as one of NAESP's National Distinguished Principals.

Sork has been principal for seventeen years at Dorothy Fox, with a total of twenty-four years in educational leadership. One of the best parts of her job is she gets "to have relationships with students and help them to grow, laugh, stretch, and move toward a bright future." Colleague and mentee of Sork's, Kristie Wall, believes she "embodies the best of our profession, modeling student-first leadership", and it is clear she is highly thought of by her staff as they gasped in awe as they heard she had won this award.

Next fall, Sork will be honored in Washington, D.C. as part of the National Distinguished Principal of the Year program, sponsored by NAESP in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education. All state winners participate in a series of events and activities over the course of two days, culminating in a formal awards banquet. There is no national winner at the elementary level.





**2024 WASHINGTON STATE  
SECONDARY ASSISTANT  
PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR**

# Heidi Fagerness

**Chehalis Middle School  
Chehalis SD**

Heidi Fagerness, assistant principal at Chehalis Middle School in the Chehalis School District, was named the 2024 Washington State Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year. Fagerness will also be recognized nationally by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAESP), where she will compete with winners from other states for the NAESP’s National Assistant Principal of the Year award, announced in early April.

Fagerness has been an assistant principal for six years, and she shows up every day with the “intention of serving others through my head, hands, and heart.” Chehalis Middle School principal Chris Simpson describes Fagerness as “highly effective in promoting and creating a positive culture at CMS.”

In early April, Fagerness was honored at NAESP’s Trailblazing weekend with winners from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity, and the U.S. Department of State Office of Overseas Schools. ■

Schools, Dr. Brent Jones, affirmed Jackson “has a clear vision of how to systemically build climate for equity, justice, and academic outcomes” and that he leads with humbleness, intentionality, and steadfastness resulting in “bold outcomes.”

Dr. Jackson will be recognized and celebrated in Washington D.C., in October 2024.

**2024 WASHINGTON STATE  
ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT  
PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR**

# Dr. Nick Davies

**Eisenhower and Ogden  
Elementary Schools  
Vancouver PS**

Dr. Nick Davies, assistant principal at both Ogden and Eisenhower Elementary Schools in the Vancouver School District, was named the 2024 Washington State Assistant Principal of the Year. In addition, he will represent Washington as our state’s winner of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) National Outstanding Assistant Principal award. NAESP recognizes one winner from each state every year. Dr. Davies has been an assistant

principal for four years and shows up every day with the purpose of having “a positive impact on people’s lives so that they can become the best they are capable of becoming”, and he shares his educational leadership knowledge with others as a writer of widely published articles. A parent who nominated Dr. Davies described him as “an approachable and humble community leader by encouraging and engaging his staff and students to create a thriving environment for all.” In July, Dr. Davies will attend the NAESP 2024 UNITED Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, where he will be recognized for his achievement.



# UNLOCKING

THE POWER OF



## AWSP/WASA Summer Conference

June 23-25, 2024 | Spokane

[www.awsp.org/SC](http://www.awsp.org/SC)



AWSP and WASA are excited to announce the 42nd Annual AWSP/WASA Summer Conference will be held at the Spokane Convention Center June 23-25. Join us for this incredible opportunity to network and learn with educational leaders from across our state. We'll celebrate the 2023-2024 school year and gain insights and ideas for creating a hope-filled year ahead! Learn more and register at [www.awsp.org/SC](http://www.awsp.org/SC).



### Sunday Opening Keynote



#### Lori Hayes

Lori L. Speaks, LLC  
Building an Army of Leaders

Energy. Energy. Energy. Lori's comedic delivery engages audiences while simultaneously challenging them to transform. Lori has been on the front lines in the education sector for over 25 years. Her education experience includes serving as the Student Activities Coordinator for the West Virginia University Center for Black Culture and Research and most recently as the Student Activities Coordinator for the historical Howard High School. Having a front row seat as the wife of a high school administrator provides a rare vantage point of the inter-workings of a school setting. Rounding out her educational perspective is the role of being a parent of three sons.

### Monday Morning Keynote



#### Dr. Chan Hellman

Professor at the University of Oklahoma and Director of the Hope Research Center

Dr. Chan Hellman has published over 100+ research studies. Chan has presented his work on hope with TEDx and has provided invited talks in Europe, United Kingdom, and the Middle East. Chan's research is focused on hope as a psychological strength helping children and adults overcome trauma and adversity. This research informed the development of the "Hope Centered and Trauma Informed" training program used to promote Hope Centered Organizations. Chan is the co-author of the award-winning book *Hope Rising: How the Science of Hope Can Change Your Life* published by Morgan James.

### Tuesday Closing Keynote



#### Dr. Paul Hernandez

Author, Corwin Press  
Achieving the Dream

Dr. Paul Hernandez is a nationally recognized speaker and leader in college access and success, community outreach, and pedagogy for educators working with underserved students and students at promise. He received his doctorate in Sociology, specializing in education, social inequality, and diversity. He has served as a faculty member, non-profit administrator, and higher education administrator. Prior to earning his degrees, he was engulfed in gang culture and deep poverty. He openly shares his personal story and how his path influenced his work. He has learned ways to empower younger people traveling a similar path. Paul has received numerous awards for his work.

# “Fortunately, Unfortunately”

## A Short 2024 Legislative Session Analogy

**By Roz Thompson,  
Government Relations and  
Advocacy Director, AWSP**

In early March, the legislature adjourned “Sine Die.” My analogy for this short session is based on the book *Fortunately* that I used to read to my own kids.

**Fortunately**, bills to change graduation requirements did not pass!  
**Unfortunately**, these and other bills will return next year.

**Fortunately**, the principal intern grant received more money!  
**Unfortunately**, it was only a small portion of what we asked for and what people need.

**Fortunately**, AWSL got some additional funding for student programs!  
**Unfortunately**, our Seattle area director position did not get funding (but fear not, we have a plan!)

**Fortunately**, there is money for inclusionary practices!  
**Unfortunately**, it is included in the section with restraint and isolation practices, and we don’t yet know what this means.

**Fortunately**, the capital budget provided some much-needed funding for school construction!  
**Unfortunately**, the operating budget fell short of many pieces that districts need to cover the costs of basic education including MSOC, special education, transportation, and staffing costs.

So, it was a mixed bag for sure. Districts are working hard to figure out their budgets for next year. Unfortunately, some districts will have to cut staff, including building administrator positions, and this will make an already difficult job much harder.

Fortunately, the legislature provided some additional funding for K-12 education. Staffing allocations in the prototypical school funding formulas for paraeducators will increase, funding will be provided to increase the enrollment limit from 15% to 16% for students eligible for special education, and MSOC funding will increase by \$21 per student beginning with this current school year. Additional funding was also provided to reimburse schools that participate in the Community Eligibility Provisions program for school meals and to cover some transportation costs.

Besides these major areas of funding, the legislature provided funding for a whole variety of programs including more money for principal interns, funding for AWSL to support work with student advisory groups, 9th-grade success grants, inclusionary practices project, and more.

The capital budget provides some much-needed funding for school construction. Highlights include increasing the construction cost allocation from \$271 to \$375 per square foot, funding for small district modernization grant programs, skill center construction, and energy efficiency improvements.

Fortunately, bills to change graduation requirements did not pass. Conversations will continue during the interim



*Fortunately* is a classic children’s book by Remy Charlip.

about both financial literacy and computer science as well as other content areas that various groups want to see included or updated. We, along with other statewide groups, are encouraging legislators to have a thoughtful process to review all graduation requirements rather than simply adding more.

The restraint and isolation bill did not pass this session, but additional funds were put in the final budget for continued professional development. This, too, will be an ongoing conversation over the next few months.

Some of the bills that did pass will require schools to address fentanyl and other substance use prevention education, create bleeding control kits, notify high school students about dual credit programs and financial assistance, promote inclusive learning standards and instructional materials, and shift the burden of proof from parents to school districts in special education due process hearings.

Scan the code or visit [go.awsp.org/legupdate24](https://go.awsp.org/legupdate24) to read my final legislative update and see all bills that passed.



It is an honor for me to represent you at the Capitol. If you have any questions or comments about our next steps in advocacy or want to get involved in our efforts, please reach out. ■

*Roz joined AWSP in June 2017. She’s a state Danielson Framework specialist who came from Tumwater School District.*





# Legal Corner

**Did you know your membership with AWSP includes professional advice from our executive staff on employment-related issues? Our seasoned staff can help you navigate a thorny issue or offer a helpful second opinion. Our services are always confidential and respectful of all parties involved. Below are a couple of questions frequently asked by school leaders.**

**Q: I was just put on administrative leave. What do I do now?**

A: Being put on leave, sometimes without a given reason, is a scary and stressful situation. Put your membership to work and call the AWSP office at 800.562.6100. Our staff will get some basic information about your situation and put you in contact with one of our directors, and they will assess your situation and walk with you through next steps. If your situation requires legal services, we can get you connected with one of our partnering attorneys and help you utilize financial benefits that are a part of your membership. You don't have to do this alone. Scan this QR code or visit [go.awsp.org/legal](https://go.awsp.org/legal) to learn more.



**Q: We are getting ready to negotiate contracts. Can AWSP help?**

A: Going in to “meet and confer” your contract with the person who evaluates you is not an easy or comfortable task. That’s why AWSP developed a free course in our AWSP Learning Lab, “Principal Contract Guide.” Its goal is to help principal groups, large and small, enter into a mutually beneficial contract agreement with district leadership. The course includes a printable PDF of the Principal Contract Guide, a workbook, and short (two-minute) videos explaining each of the 10 steps laid out in the guide. Use this QR code to access the Principal Contract Guide course, or visit [go.awsp.org/contractguide](https://go.awsp.org/contractguide). Still have questions? Call us! ■



## Have Other Questions?

Don't ever hesitate to call our office. No question is too small, and there isn't a reason you should have to problem-solve alone.

**800.562.6100**



## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE:

# The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP)

Each year, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation sponsors two high school juniors or seniors from each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia to attend the United States Senate Youth Program—an all-expense paid, week-long tour of Washington, DC and to receive a \$10,000 scholarship.

In Washington state, AWSP administers the program. Through the Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL), AWSP sponsors the seven week-long High School

Summer Leadership Camps for student body officers, class officers and other student leaders. A selection process is identified and implemented at each camp session, with two students being selected as finalists for the Senate Youth Program scholarships from each camp. There is also an opportunity to apply online if a student doesn't attend a camp.

Read on to learn more about our 2023-24 winners: **Mahi Malladi**, junior at The Overlake School in Redmond, and **Gianna Frank**, senior at Marysville Pilchuck High School in Marysville.

Pictured: 2023-24 USSYP winners, Mahi Malladi (left) and Gianna Frank.





# Mahi Malladi

*Junior at The Overlake School in Redmond*

## What is a takeaway from your experience as a United States Senate Youth, and how will you use that to become a better, more effective leader?

During Washington Week my question of why our government often takes time to pursue changes was answered. Associate Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan pointed out that what the public desires may not be aligned with the values of our country, and as the week went on I realized that the polarization that we, the public, are drenched in, is even more exacerbated at a national level should conversation be ignored. Pursuing legislation and decisions without understanding each other's reasoning and respective humanity will only foster the divide of an even more fractured America. Regardless of ideology, we have all faced problems in our lives and have sought various solutions to them; we must honor those opinions and continue to ask questions instead of argue.

## How did the Association of Washington School Leaders camp or program help you or contribute to your success as a leader?

For the last three years and even now, I continue to be impressed with the dedication, creativity, and passion of the students involved in AWSL. Their everlasting hope and generosity in bearing the burden of the resistance of their school's administration to ensure future students experience a safer school is admirable and without their support I wouldn't have had the strength to pursue the necessary changes in my city and school. These monthly zoom meetings, though only an hour, always remind me that thought struggles are inevitable in the future, so is our resilience to face them head on with collective support.

## Why would you encourage others to get involved in government and leadership?

One of my takeaways from this week is that our country's leaders don't do the work they do because it's easy—I saw firsthand how difficult it is to maintain the values upon which our country was founded with while remaining accountable to us, the American people. This week cemented my belief that as American people with multi-faceted identities and experiences, we owe it to each other to preserve the integrity of our nation and ensure future generations will live in a safer country whether that be as leaders in your family, city, or even your country at a national level. Difficult work is gratifying work because it takes such courage to alter systemic issues and listen to various perspectives.

# Gianna Frank

*Senior at Marysville Pilchuck High School in Marysville*

## What is a takeaway from your experience as a United States Senate Youth, and how will you use that to become a better, more effective leader?

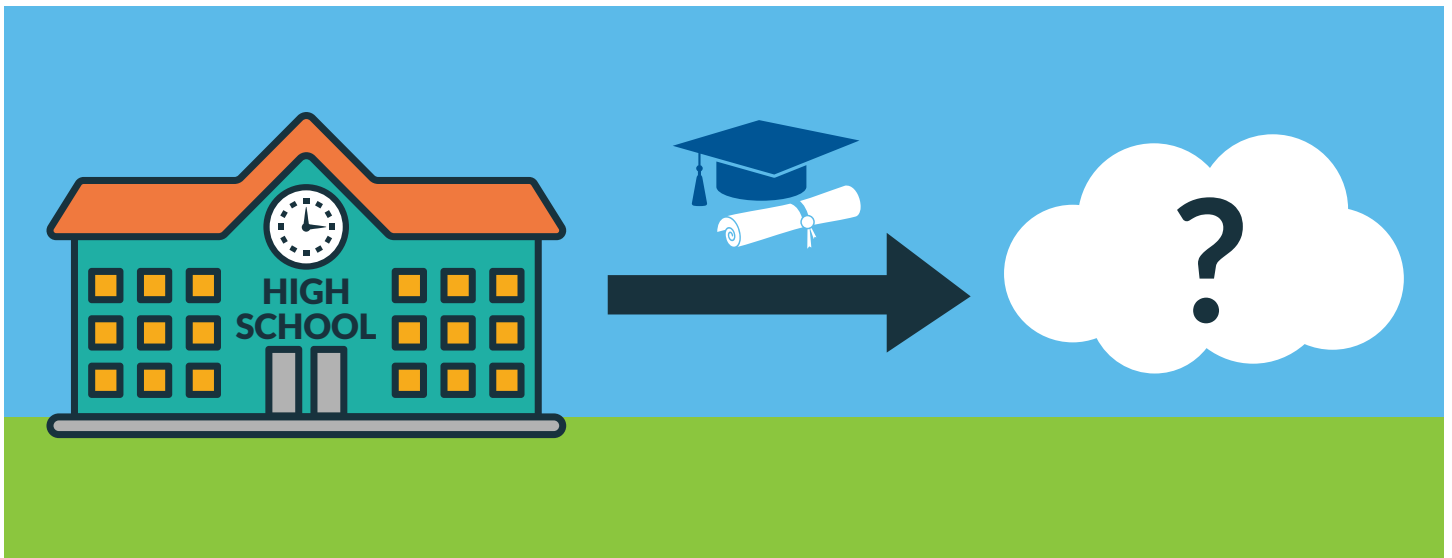
Going into the Senate Youth Program, I was overwhelmed with a sense of impostor syndrome. The word intimidated would not do justice to the situation. In a ballroom full of 102 other students from 49 different states with vast knowledge and background in government, intimidated was an understatement. Even though my demeanor and mindset at the beginning of the week were a little timid, I gradually opened up throughout the week. Slowly, I began to demonstrate who I was and why I belonged with my fellow delegates. I had earned my spot and soon after realizing that, I began to exemplify my true leadership skills. That experience helped me become a more effective leader because I learned the value lesson of you have to doubt yourself to find yourself.

## How did the Association of Washington School Leaders camp or program help you or contribute to your success as a leader?

The AWSL program gave me the platform and the preparation I needed to succeed as a leader. It not only taught me the importance of servant leadership but also taught me that the best leader is not always sometimes the loudest in the room. You have to be methodical and intentional with the interactions and connections you make with people because you may never get that opportunity again. The AWSL camp however is a completely different, life-changing experience. Camp takes you away from the world and allows you to find yourself as a leader and as a person. You grow and learn from amazing leaders and discover what type of leader you want to become that reflects your character.

## Why would you encourage others to get involved in government and leadership?

Government is what makes this country run. Without it, we would have no structure or ideology in which we conduct manners. The innovativeness with which our generation holds is something that will be needed as we develop as a country. Leadership is all around us. It does not matter if you are in management at your job or if you are the leader of the free world, leadership comes with any position of power. For this country to become stronger and more prosperous, we need leaders in the world. ■



# What is Our Definition of Post-Secondary Success?

*Should the definition be limited to the pursuit of additional education alone, or is there more we should consider?*

**By Dr. Scott Seaman,  
Executive Director, AWSP**

I recently attended the second of three convenings at the Gates Foundation with educational partners from every sector you can imagine. From early learning to higher education, various perspectives, organizations, community partners, and agencies were in the room—including students.

Why are we meeting? To urgently address our state's low FAFSA completion rates, decreasing number of students pursuing post-secondary educational opportunities, and how these trend data compare to our state's current and future job market. We are not moving in the right direction as a system. Something must be done, and soon.

## Wrestling with the Data

For years, many diverse perspectives have shaped our K-12 system and the pathways beyond it, from higher education, business and industry, and parents. Many voices, many silos. I'm encouraged by all these voices – and more – coming together to answer some tough questions. Why are fewer students pursuing two- and four-year degrees? Why are fewer students completing the FAFSA? With workforce wages often starting now at \$22 dollars an hour at places like McDonald's, that can seem like a lot of money right out of high school. Why are more students satisfied with that and not choosing to pursue any kind of additional education or training?

As the group of adults wrestled with the data, the trends, and our own reflections on how we ended up in this predicament, the students eloquently shared their perspectives. They spoke about mixed messages on the value of

a college degree, the anxiety of college debt, the complexities of financial aid applications, and a challenging economy forcing families to work multiple jobs to survive.

## What Exactly Does “Post-Secondary Success” Mean?

The group then shifted into a robust conversation about the definition of “post-secondary success.” What exactly does that mean? Is post-secondary success the completion of a four-year degree? Is it a two-year associate degree? Is it some form of certification leading to a skilled job? Is it simply graduating from high school? Should the definition be limited to the pursuit of additional education alone, or is there more we should consider? When one of the students said his definition was “happy, healthy, and hopeful,” the room was thrown into a frenzy. What does that look like on the High School and Beyond Plan? What is that pathway? Can one be happy,

healthy, and hopeful without a college degree and a high-wage job? Our youth are asking that question even though employment forecasts clearly indicate that additional educational pursuits will be necessary.

This problem has no easy solution, but one thing is clear: We need to come to some sort of agreement around the definition of post-secondary success, and it better include the perspective of our students—and be much broader than the completion of a degree or certificate.

## It's about Desired Outcomes

Post-secondary success should be defined as the achievement of desired outcomes following the completion of education beyond high school, such as vocational training, college, or university. These outcomes should be diverse to match the diverse contexts, dreams, and ambitions of our students and may include factors such as:

- **Employment:** Securing a job in a chosen field or industry with opportunities for career advancement and financial stability.
- **Further Education:** Pursuing advanced degrees or certifications to enhance skills, knowledge, and career prospects.
- **Personal Growth:** Developing critical thinking abilities, problem-solving skills, and a lifelong passion for learning.
- **Financial Stability:** Attaining a level of income that allows for financial independence, including the ability to repay student loans and support oneself and potentially others.
- **Contribution to Society:** Making positive contributions to the community, either through professional work, volunteering, or advocacy.
- **Well-being:** Achieving a balance between work, personal life, and mental and physical health.

“We need to come to some sort of agreement around the definition of post-secondary success, and it better include the perspective of our students—and be much broader than the completion of a degree or certificate.”

Post-secondary success is not solely determined by academic achievements but also by holistic development, including interpersonal skills, adaptability, resilience, and the ability to successfully navigate the challenges of the world.

## Looking Ahead to the HSBP...and Beyond

The High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) has been an unfunded mandate in our state for over a decade. And because the mandate came without resources, in most cases, you'll find students engaged in compliance-based participation. As we look to roll out a statewide platform to increase the relevancy and intentionality of the post-secondary planning process, I hope we can expand our definition of post-secondary success.

I hope we can communicate to our students that life's journey will include many pathways full of twists, turns, bumps, roadblocks, and open doors. Most importantly, the more they are equipped with training, credentials, experiences, and education, the more prepared they'll be to navigate life while also being happy, healthy, and hopeful. ■

*Dr. Scott Seaman joined AWSP in the fall of 2013 after serving as the principal at Tumwater High School. Scott became Executive Director in 2018.*



## Find More on Our Blog

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