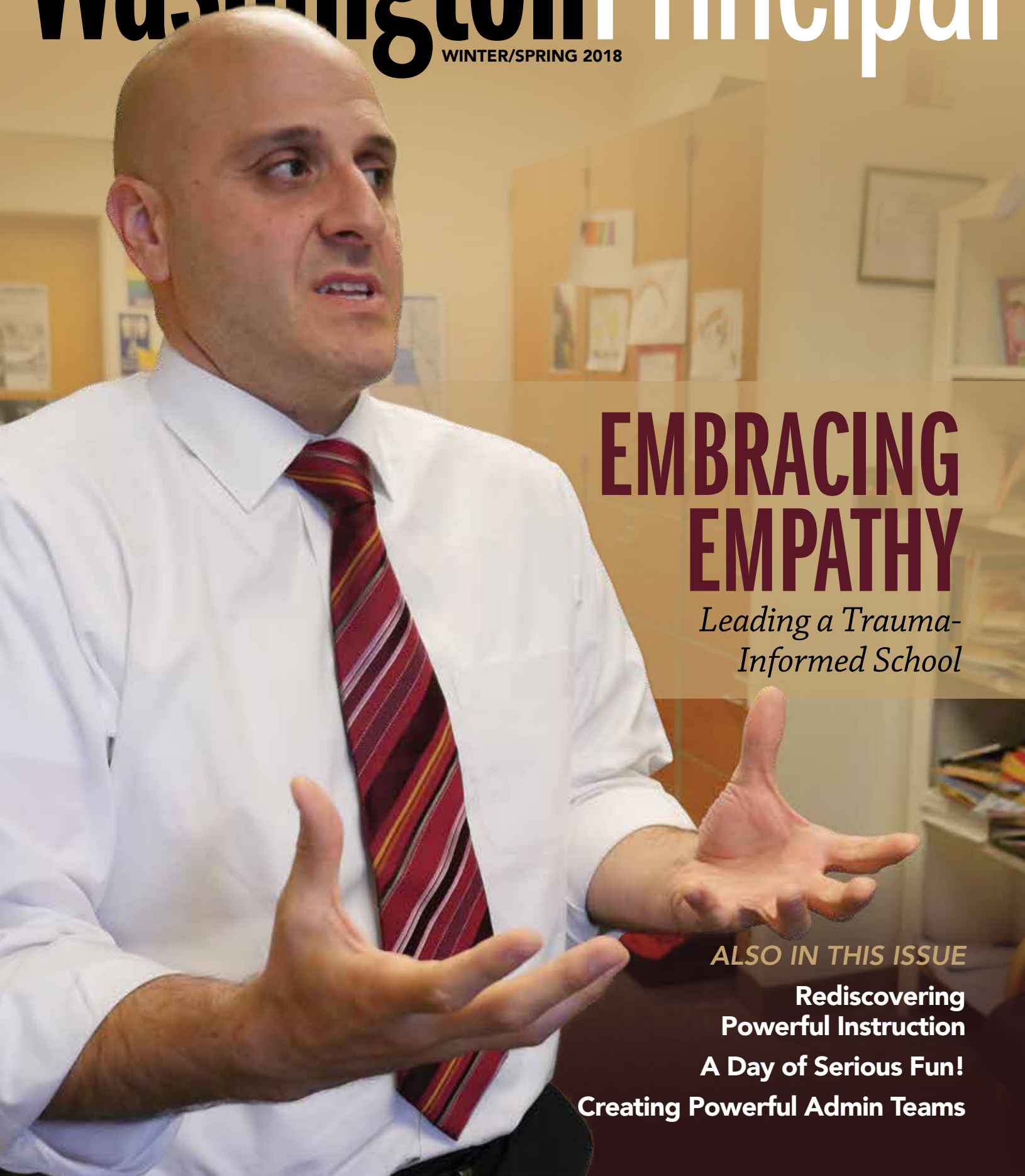


# Washington Principal

ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

WINTER/SPRING 2018



## EMBRACING EMPATHY

*Leading a Trauma-  
Informed School*

**ALSO IN THIS ISSUE**

**Rediscovering  
Powerful Instruction**

**A Day of Serious Fun!**

**Creating Powerful Admin Teams**

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## COVER STORY

# EMBRACING EMPATHY

*Leading a Trauma-  
Informed School*



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**Cover photo:** Highland Park Elementary Principal Chris Cronas.

*Photo by: Vince Perez*



## WashingtonPrincipal

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National Association of Elementary School Principals  
 National Association of Secondary School Principals

# Students Lead the Way

**David Morrill**

*Communications Director*

**As we go to press** with this edition of *Washington Principal*, a national day of protest against gun violence dominates the headlines. The student survivors of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High attack were the force behind the “March for Our Lives” event on March 24. AWSP and AWSL have advocated for decades to increase the power of student voice and focus on developing the leadership skills students need to address real-world challenges, just like the leadership the students behind the “March for Our Lives” campaign displayed.

The sad reality is, school shootings are an all-too common part of our society. If you’re looking for a school safety article, we don’t offer one in this issue (although you might want to check out the last issue for an article from Sandy Hook Promise). However, many articles in this edition touch on topics supporting safe schools. While guns are a big part of the discussion right now, many students experience trauma in other ways, directly impacting their ability to learn.

For all the prosperity in our state, our mental health programs haven’t been adequately funded. In this issue, you’ll find articles addressing mental health: one on adult teen homelessness, and our cover story features a school taking trauma head-on. Relationships, mental health, student voice and belonging — all those things matter as much or more than any security protocol.

On a much lighter note, spring transitions are here. We’re remodeling our downstairs to increase the size of our video studio and bring you some more great new content. Rick Stacy, who has served as our financial services and IT coordinator for over 25 years, retires at the end of April. His replacement, Alli Jorgenson, is training with him right now. Starting July 1, we’ll have a permanent, full-time director based out of eastern Washington to better support the east side of the state. We’re also preparing for our biggest transition as Gary Kipp prepares to hand the reigns over to Scott Seaman at the end of June.

I’ll wrap up with some wise words from Gary, who typically ends our Monday morning meetings with a phrase we all need to keep in mind, “Let’s be safe out there.” ■



*David Morrill is the AWSP Communications Director. He serves as Managing Editor for Washington Principal.*

# Changing With the Times

**Kelley Boyd**

*Principal, Coulee City Elementary,  
Coulee-Hartline School District*



Changing with the times...

In education, we hear the “changing with the times” phrase a lot, along with several variations of the same sentiment. The world and the world of education have and will continue to change. I don’t believe anyone young or old could deny these “changing times” have been heavily influenced by technology. The progression of technology makes significant changes to the way educators teach and the way students learn. New software, websites, and programs are often advertised to us and claim to improve our test scores, provide remediation, deliver differentiation and challenge students. When I was still teaching in the classroom, technology provided a wide array of advantages to my rural students and developed my own productivity as an educator. Technology can save us time, technology can facilitate our own learning, and technology can give us additional outlets to communicate.

## ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Nevertheless, one of the barriers to effectively using the tool of technology for any of these purposes is knowing exactly which tools to use and when. Listening to amazing principals through AWSP events and breakout sessions at the 2017 Summer Conference, I saw principals utilizing technology tools to engage with their parents and communities. That is exactly where I decided to focus this school year. How could I effectively increase my engagement

“... all you need is a phone and a social media account and you can start sharing and interacting with your community in ways many of us couldn’t imagine when we started teaching.”

with the community and families, and how could technology tools help?

I read a few years back teenagers were making a mass exodus from Facebook because it became too popular with their parents, and from talking to some of the teenage students in my high school, I believe this might be somewhat true. So while the teenagers in my community don’t use Facebook as much, their parents and our community members do. They use it A LOT! My school has its own Facebook page, but we hadn’t used it much to actually engage the families. Most of our posts were reminders on early release days, or reminders of no school on a holiday. This year, we tried something different and strived for more engagement.

## POSITIVE RESPONSES

We started broadcasting real-time events happening in our school day using Facebook Live. When we want to celebrate something, lots of working parents can’t be there in person, so we start a Facebook Live stream for them to either watch live or watch later. Parents are watching and responding. This past month, we kicked off a read at home initiative which invited parents to send us selfies of themselves reading with

their children. We posted the selfies on our Facebook page. Additionally, staff have read “bedtime” stories that were broadcast live in the evenings for families to watch with their children.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive and very simple for us to do. The interaction doesn’t need to be every day, and we didn’t create any special events just for sharing, but giving the inside scoop into our school started many positive conversations and feedback. In my own community, Facebook is the social media platform being used by the majority, but Facebook isn’t the only platform to reach your audience. Whether it’s Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, or Snapchat, all you need is a phone and a social media account and you can start sharing and interacting with your community in ways many of us couldn’t imagine when we started teaching.

Find us on Facebook: Coulee City Elementary. ■



*Kelley Boyd is principal of Coulee City Elementary and is serving as AWSP president for the 2017-18 school year.*

Welcome, James Layman!

James Layman joined the AWSL staff in August 2017 as a programming specialist and Eastern Washington Support. James has been involved in student leadership with AWSL since the summer of 2001, having attended Mt. Baker Leadership Camp and serving as a Junior Counselor at Mt. Triumph Leadership for three summers. James currently serves as co-director of Mission Peak Leadership Camp and is a senior counselor at Mt. Triumph and Chewelah Peak Leadership Camps. A graduate of Central Valley High School, James attended Eastern Washington University with focuses in Music Education, Psychology and African-American History. He has taught band and marching band throughout the Spokane area at Gonzaga Prep, St. Aloysius, St. Charles, All Saints Catholic Schools and Mt. Spokane High School. James lives in Spokane where he enjoys hanging with family and friends. Welcome, James!



James Layman



2018 AWSP/WASA Summer Conference Registration and Housing is Live!

Registration for the 2018 AWSP/WASA Summer Conference has launched! Get ready for another fantastic conference designed for principals, assistant principals, superintendents, administrative interns and other district-level administrators. The conference theme is "Leadership: Equity in Action." You must register to gain access to the housing reservation system. **Please note this is a non-Hoopfest year.** Housing reservations will be monitored closely to ensure that only registrants have made reservations in the conference room blocks. Learn more and register at [www.awsp.org/SC18](http://www.awsp.org/SC18).

Welcome, Alli Jorgenson!



Alli Jorgenson

Alli Jorgenson joined AWSP in January 2018 as the director of finance. She graduated from Olympia High School and received her bachelor's in accounting from Saint Martin's University. Alli is also close to finishing her master's in the Science of Accounting program at Golden Gate University. In her free time she likes spending time with family and friends, riding her horse Charlie, hiking, fishing and being out on the water. Welcome, Alli!

WASA's Doyle E. Winter Scholarship for Administrators

WASA is seeking nominations for the Dr. Doyle E. Winter Scholarship for Administrative Leadership in Education.

Designed to assist talented and committed educational administrators as they enhance those skills and abilities needed to serve as educational leaders in the field of public education, the \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a school administrator who is presently in or will begin a doctoral program in education. Apply today at [www.wasa-oly.org](http://www.wasa-oly.org). Applications are due April 25.



AWSP Partners with FINAO because "Failure Is Not An Option"



AWSP is proud to announce that we've recently partnered with FINAO Educa-

tion, who shares our mission of supporting principals and the students they serve. FINAO offers goal-setting tools that foster academic achievement and self improvement. Curious how FINAO can help build culture and give you actionable data around student involvement and engagement across all aspects of your school? Visit <https://www.finaoeducation.com>. (Psst...Know who else partners with FINAO? Former Seattle Seahawk Richard Sherman! Check out our interview with Richard on the difference administrators like you make in the lives of students on the AWSP YouTube channel.)





Tami Skillingstad

## AP of the Year: Tami Skillingstad

Congratulations to Tami Skillingstad, the 2018 Assistant Principal of the Year! Tami has been at Westwood Middle in Cheney PS for five years as assistant principal and athletic director. She has a passion for building leaders and involving them

in relevant activities that support school improvement goals. Her colleagues describe her as creative and innovative in designing solutions for middle school issues, such as the development of public service announcements about the importance of attendance that go out over the School Messenger System.

AWSP presented the award to Tami at her school on Feb. 1. The Washington State Assistant Principal of the Year honor alternates yearly between a middle level principal (selected by the Association of Washington Middle Level Principals) and a high school principal (selected by the Washington Association of Secondary School Principals).



Courtney Margolin

## Margolin New USA World Education Forum State Ambassador

The WEF-USA is pleased to announce that Courtney Margolin has volunteered to be the WEF-USA State Ambassador for Washington. Courtney began her career in

Evergreen Public Schools, serving

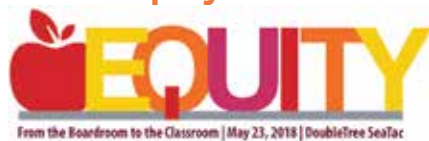
as a middle school English and history teacher for 10 years. She has done extensive work at the state level where she supported the creation and implementation of state assessments, served as an English Fellow, and is currently a member of the AWSP Vice Principals' Council. Courtney's administrative career began in the Longview School District. She is currently in her second year as the vice principal of Union Ridge Elementary in Ridgefield. Courtney is passionate about education and students. Congratulations, Courtney!

## Register for the 2018 Equity Conference

Registration is now open for this year's Equity Conference, taking place

Wednesday, May 23 at

the DoubleTree Hotel in SeaTac. Sponsored by AWSP, WASA and WSSDA, the Equity Conference is designed for leadership teams from districts, ESDs and state agencies. Learn more and register at [www.wasa-oly.org](http://www.wasa-oly.org).



## Peachjar

### **Send Parents School and Community Information Digitally**

With the majority of parents of school-age children being from the Gen-X and Millennial generations, it's becoming increasingly important to reach parents digitally. Enter Peachjar, a service that allows schools to deliver digital flyers to parents with important information about afterschool and school-related activities. Parents view district-approved flyers via email or on the school website. Peachjar aims to save schools and districts time and money, while also giving parents access to opportunities for their children that they might not have otherwise heard about.

The Peachjar website lists the following benefits:

- Ensure parents receive important school and community information
- Reduce administrative burden and leverage Peachjar's digital flyer template library
- Communicate with parents in their preferred channel
- Track parent engagement with metrics

Learn more at [www.peachjar.com](http://www.peachjar.com).

# ASK A PRINCIPAL

We asked our members,  
“Do you have a saying or motto  
that keeps you on track?”

Here are some of the great responses we received:

“By my light switch and door as a reminder of why I am in this position: ‘What have you done today to positively impact student learning?’”

**Samantha Griggs**  
Principal, Riverside  
Elementary, Riverside SD



“Never forget that for some students you may be the first/best example of what a responsible, caring adult should look like.”

**Dave Chappell**  
Principal, Bates Technical High School,  
Tacoma PS

“No significant learning occurs without first a significant relationship.”

**Kayla Helleson**  
School Counselor and Administrative Intern,  
Manson Elementary, Manson SD

“If you want to go fast go alone... If you want to go far go with someone.”

**Chris Chelin**  
Principal, Kamiakin High,  
Kennewick SD

“‘How can we get to yes?’ When approached with an idea, it may pose interesting challenges. I enjoy working with others to find ways to overcome the barriers and be able to say ‘Yes we can!’”

**Lisa Dallas**  
Principal, Adna Elementary, Adna SD

“This year we are committed to providing two messages to everyone in order to answer the questions, who is Davis and what are we about? This year I purchased a t-shirt for every staff member that stated ‘We Are Davis’ with a heart that shares what we are about. This has been our motto this year as staff, students, parents and community members work together to promote student learning. We are about learning and developing character.”



**Mark Ferraro**  
Interim Principal, Davis Elementary,  
College Place PS

“Principals are like mail carriers. Regardless of the conditions, we have to deliver no matter the conditions or environment. Our students always come first!”

**Carlos Gonzalez**  
Assistant Principal, McFarland Middle, Othello SD

“‘Always choose joy!’ In the good times and the bad, we have the power to choose our attitude and actions. When we choose joy we instinctively look for the good and move forward from that perspective.”

**Karen A. Reid**  
Emeritus Member

“WWGKD? or What would Gary Kipp do?”

**Donna Hudson**  
Principal, Greywolf  
Elementary, Sequim SD



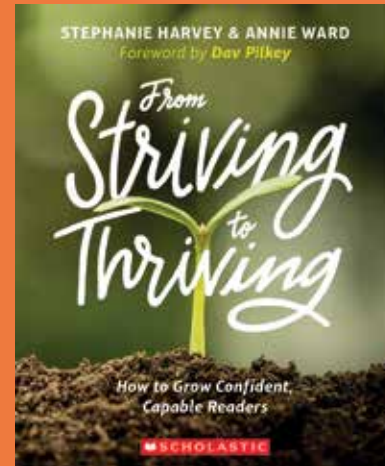




**STAFF SPOTLIGHT:**  
**Kim Marquette**

Meet Kim Marquette, our assistant to the executive director, meeting and event planner, and unofficial office mom. No job is too big or too small! Whether taking care of our staff or our members, every interaction with her is a good one. Thanks for all you do for our members, our events, and our staff!

# RECOMMENDED READING



## **From Striving to Thriving** How to Grow Confident, Capable Readers

AWSP is partnering with Scholastic to bring you book recommendations related to school leadership and education. Here's your first recommendation: "From Striving to Thriving: How to Grow Confident, Capable Readers."

Literacy experts Stephanie Harvey, president of Stephanie Harvey Consulting, and Annie Ward, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction for the Mamaroneck Union Free School District in Westchester County, New York, demonstrate how to effectively assess and support striving readers so that they can become thriving readers. K-8 educators will learn how to use detailed, formative assessments to craft targeted, personalized instruction that enables students to find books that they love and engage in voluminous reading. This professional resource incorporates ready-to-go lessons, practices, and action steps as well as research that will help educators gain an understanding of the reading process, use strength-based performance data, and implement knowledge of high-quality instruction. The book also comes with an extensive online resource bank with downloadable assessments, "Top Ten" guides to share with parents and administrators, and video clips of reading conferences and book talks. Learn more and order at [www.scholastic.com/teachers](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers).

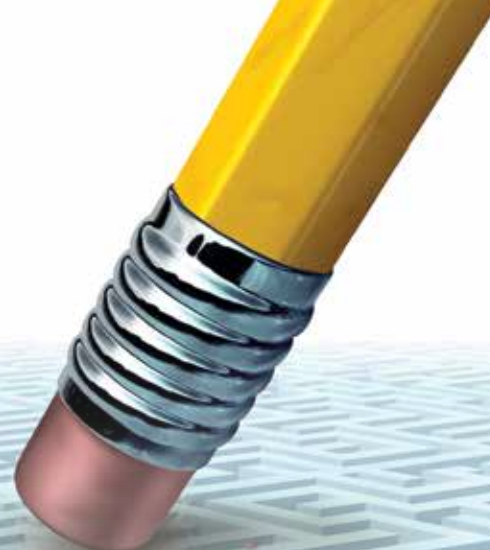
# Did you know...?

Over 5.9 million school-age children (ages 3-17) in the U.S. are not attending school, according to a recent study by the American Community Survey, based on U.S. Census Bureau data and reported by World Education Forum; [www.wefusa.net](http://www.wefusa.net).

Although Washington state does not have the highest percentage, we are 43rd in the list of 52 with 11% of total school-age population not attending school in 2016.

# There Must Be An Easier Way!

## GETTING KIDS THE SUPPORTS THEY NEED



**Rick Anderson**

*Communities In Schools of Washington (CISWA)*

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Improving Instruction, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap*

It's well-known many principals spend the majority of their time on a relatively small percentage of kids. In most cases, what lands students in the principal's office is a mix of academic and behavior issues. Nonacademic needs are often at the root of these issues. Accessing the supports these students need usually entails a maze-like journey of unfamiliar laws, agencies, and community organizations far outside the educational realm. All too often, this journey is an exercise in futility, causing frustration for the student, the family or guardian, and the school.

Increasingly, education leaders are reaching out to individual community partners for help. This can be a highly rewarding experience, but also a time consuming one, as the problems kids face don't fit into a one-size-fits-all



“Accessing the supports these students need usually entails a maze-like journey of unfamiliar laws, agencies, and community organizations far outside the educational realm.”

package. The school leader often has to learn a new set of rules, new governmental agencies, and a new set of community organizations for each student who comes through the door.

In 2016, the Legislature directed OSPI to develop a protocol to integrate academic and nonacademic supports for students as part of a broader strategy to close the education opportunity gap. The Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol (WISSP) was published in October, 2017. The WISSP is essentially a system marrying school academic supports with community

nonacademic supports. Its guiding light is an educational vision where teachers teach, students learn, and community supports allow both to occur unimpeded.

*Communities In Schools of Washington (CISWA)* has been delivering services through this system for over 25 years in Washington state and 40 years nationally. Last year, CISWA provided services to nearly 74,000 students using its evidence-based model. CISWA currently operates in 27 school districts through the work of our 14 local affiliates across the state. Our affiliates provide whole

“ For the principal, this means the maze-like journey is transformed into a toolbox of clearly defined pathways.”

school supports referred to as Tier 1 supports, available to all students, and Tier 2 and 3 supports for “case-managed” individual students. The key to this service delivery model is a network of community partners organized by our school based site coordinator. For the principal, this means the maze-like journey is transformed into a toolbox of clearly defined pathways. Our affiliates are always refining the network and identifying new partners to meet emerging needs of the school and the students, in partnership with school leaders.

Our Tier 1 supports complement the efforts of school leaders to create a safe and positive learning environment. Delivered in partnership with school leaders, these supports can cover a wide range of activities from school attendance initiatives, college readiness events, to back-to-school gatherings for all new students and their parents.

Our Tier 2 and 3 case managed wrap around supports are provided by our school based site coordinators. School staff refer students to our site coordinators who work with them to identify barriers, connect needed supports, monitor progress and track outcomes. Site coordinators work in close partnership with school administrators and staff to ensure alignment with school efforts.

### 3 WAYS PRINCIPALS CAN USE CASE-MANAGEMENT

There are three ways principals can use CISWA’s resources in their schools:

#### 1.Improving Student Outcomes

Based on a school’s goals, case-management is used to improve attendance, behavior, coursework, graduation rates, and college-career readiness for students facing significant non-academic barriers to academic success.

#### 2.Addressing Disproportionalities in Student Populations

Case-management is also used to provide support on issues facing specific student populations such as those facing poverty, homelessness, limited English skills, foster care, incarceration as well as other risk factors.

#### 3.Responding to RCW Requirements

Finally, case-management is used to meet certain requirements in the RCW. For example, it provides an individualized reengagement plan for suspended or expelled students (RCW 28A.600.022), academic and/or nonacademic supports to students failing a statewide ELA or mathematics assessment (RCW 28A.655.061), and a customized plan to address chronic absenteeism for students referred to a community truancy board RCW (28A.225.020).

### WHAT PRINCIPALS SAY ABOUT CIS AND INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS

“At our school, students come to us with a vast array of needs. Communities In Schools helps us identify and deliver the repertoire of interventions needed much more quickly and effectively than we could do on our own.”

#### **Brian Teppner**

*Principal, McKnight Middle School  
Renton School District*

“CIS provides both Tier 1 and case managed Tier 2 and 3 supports in our elementary school. I see the benefits to our kids or hear about

them from our teaching staff every single day.”

#### **Lisa McNamara**

*Principal, Sunrise Elementary  
Puyallup School District*

### THE FUTURE OF INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS

The WISSP is now part of state law as one of several core strategies for closing the education opportunity gap. Given the heightened state and federal emphasis on district accountability for student outcomes, school leaders should evaluate whether or not a system for integrating academic and nonacademic support is more effective and efficient than current practices. Legislation has been introduced in both 2017 and the current legislative session to expand funding for integrated student supports.

*Communities In Schools* of Washington recently established a goal of providing access to Integrated Student Supports (ISS) to 75 percent of the state’s K-12 population in the next 10 years. We continue to partner with community organizations and local efforts to focus community resources to support school goals and ensure more students received all the supports they need. To meet this goal, we are expanding our professional development capacity, community partnership model and data systems to rapidly deploy ISS into new communities. To learn more about our work and others across the state, please contact us. ■

#### LINKS:

Washington Integrated Student Supports Protocol (WISSP)  
[k12.wa.us/CISL/ISS/default.aspx](http://k12.wa.us/CISL/ISS/default.aspx)

Communities In Schools of Washington  
[ciswa.org](http://ciswa.org)





# PRINCIPAL MENTORSHIP FOSTERING SUCCESS

## Ron Sisson

Director of Principal Support and  
Elementary Programs, AWSP

As the 2006 school year drew to a close, I remember sitting across the table from my superintendent, Dr. Jim Koval, reflecting on my second year as a principal. He asked me what I thought the differences were between my first and second years. I paused and told him in year one, I survived but felt run over a variety of different ways. I'd been hit by the cranky parent car, the headstrong teacher car and the spirited child car many times over. Often, I didn't see them coming, only realizing what happened after the collision.

In year two, I actually saw the cars coming, I just wasn't sure how to get out of the way.

He chuckled, the conversation turned to experience and developing the principal's "sixth sense."

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Managing Resources

Twelve years later, I still reflect on that moment and so appreciate Jim's mentorship. He guided and supported me as an early career principal. He was wise enough to know rookie principals are hired with a basic skill set, and that skill set needs refining. Enter my second mentor, Paula Quinn. With the patience of a saint, Paula mentored five (yes, FIVE) new principals in our district that year. She was methodical, knowledgeable and precise in her work. She took the time to know what each of us needed in order to succeed and delivered an entire year's support to a group of novices.

I've been fortunate enough to spend the last 14 months at AWSP really examining the critical roles a mentor plays in the success of an early career educator. In our state, we have the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program through OSPI,

“Principals need a sounding board and a coach. They need an encourager and someone who can let them know when they're about to make an 'oops.'”

which provides targeted support for early career teachers. As a principal, I was never interested in hiring a new teacher who was not interested in mentoring, and I ensured new teachers were wrapped in support from day one. New teachers come through the door with a base skillset, and I believed my job was to accelerate their practice by pairing them with a seasoned, skilled mentor who could guide and coach them through their early years. This

relationship often lasted well beyond any formal mentoring program.

But what about principals? Many of us moved into the principalship because someone saw in us a set of skills and characteristics they believed in. But any principal will tell you, those basic skills are not always the ones needed most to excel. They need to be refined, processed and reflected upon.

Principals need a sounding board and a coach. They need an encourager and someone who can let them know when they're about to make an "oops." When I think about my relationship with Paula, I realize her coaching and mentoring made the bumps in the road a little smaller and the ditches I drove into a little shallower. And when I was ready to pack it in and hand the keys off to someone else, my mentor was the light at the end of the tunnel who pushed, cheered and provided resources.

I didn't realize until many years later the critical part of making mentoring successful was the mindset of my superintendent. A successful principal mentoring relationship must have three components: a willing mentee, a skillful mentor, and superintendent who understands the dynamic of that paired relationship. The superintendent is a make-or-break piece of the puzzle. They provide the resources for mentoring to occur (release time, stipends, non-evaluative conversations, etc.) and set the tone and attitude around what mentoring truly is. Through a growth-minded system, a superintendent has the ability select the competent mentor, focus the skill and ensure the mentee has the conditions to maximize the mentorship.

Principaling (yes, that's a word) is a difficult and complex job. It consists of highs and lows and can be very isolated work. We know the data tells us only one in four principals is

“ A true mentor can be the influence slowing principal churn by ensuring new principals are supported.”

still in their job after five years. The churn is tremendous and is costly for a district. Think about the cost of recruiting, hiring and onboarding a principal. Think about the impact on students, staff and instruction when a principal leaves a building. A true mentor can be the influence slowing principal churn by ensuring new principals are supported.

At AWSP, we are proud of the work we've done to begin a more formalized principal mentoring program in our state, but there's plenty more work to be done. Our friends at OSPI are advocating for funding in the Legislature. We've

begun to partner with universities and ESDs to spread the word around mentoring and its impact on our system. The conversation must continue with seasoned principals and new principals alike as we talk about the benefits of mentoring.

We need to continue engaging our central office decision-makers about the benefits of mentoring support and increasing access to mentors for principals in the early stages of their career. When superintendents, principal mentors and mentees partner to refine principal practice, everyone in the system benefits, from the district office to the students we all serve.

Successful principals create more success for our children, our staff and our communities. Keep the conversations alive and your eyes open — you might be the one who makes a difference. ■

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# Rediscovering Powerful Instruction

# Pulling Back the Curtain on Transformational Schools



## Taj Jensen

Principal, Mann  
Elementary, Tacoma PS

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Planning with Data, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, Closing the Gap*

**H**ow do you transform a school measured by student growth and success?

I have always believed “educational reform” is somewhat of pendulum swinging from one extreme to the other, really not staying in one place too long. There are two main concerns or impacts with this pendulum to school reform.

First, if you truly take away all the bells and whistles, educational shifts (extreme movements of the pendulum) are typically the same approach, wrapped up differently with new names, and usually producing the same results. This means the same old approaches are implemented

with the promise of doing something different. This is the definition of insanity: Doing the same thing over and over but hoping for a different result. Just because you give an approach new wrapping and use of text heavy vocabulary, it doesn’t change the product. The fact is, at the foundational level, the approach (instruction, programs or belief) remains the same, still netting the same result.

The second issue or concern is the focus or trend never stays “current” long enough to grab hold. As an institution, there is a belief a “silver bullet” will fix all your school’s/ district’s academic growth issues. This rapid turnaround and belief new programs will be the fix only creates a

“ If we do not begin to shift our focus by increasing teacher capacity around pedagogy and content knowledge, everything else is for not.”

false sense of hope and reality. It also deviates and diminishes the impact a teacher and their instruction has on a student’s academic growth. For some reason, we forget the number one indicator of student growth and achievement is teacher effectiveness, NOT the newest and “greatest” program. So schools and districts



abandon programs or approaches simply because it did not yield the results promised. However, if you look deeper, the issue is not the program or approach, it is the instruction coupled with the program/approach yielding it powerless (there is one approach most districts have thrown out, but that's for a different time).

## WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

As a school administrator who has lead the charge of transforming several urban and rural schools, I have seen trends come and go. Teachers and their craft are being replaced by programs. Some believe if we implement these programs, we will see a drastic increase in test scores. However, the costly reality of this belief or approach (relying, trusting and investing in the new-fangled “game changers” for school transformation) is we continue to tear away at the core of teaching — teachers teach kids, programs do not — they only serve as a vehicle. Vehicles are powerless without a competent driver [teacher].

If we do not begin to shift our focus by increasing teacher capacity around pedagogy and content knowledge, everything else is for not. The focus must be instruction and not curriculum, materials, or any other slew of resources at our disposal. Don't get me wrong, there are some highly useful products available to support instruction and assessment; however, they have zero impact or effect if we do not have purposeful, intentional and powerful instruction taking place in the classroom.

Think of all the money schools and districts spend on computer-based programs in order to become a technology-based school. Technology has a role in schools, but it cannot overshadow the importance placed on instruction. If you spend more on programs than you do on increasing/growing teacher capacity, where have you placed your focus and priority?

This shift in focus does send an unintentional message to your staff and colleagues. As the leader within the building, you need to know how to find balance in maintaining the focus on instruction while still placing impactful tools and resources in the capable hands of staffs. Be careful: Once you have found the balance, the inadvertent mishap is teachers who do not have a strong pedagogical approach or depth of content begin to rely on the resources or materials given to them, thus removing the intentionality and purpose of their use. This, in turn, diminishes the impact.



“Have you grown instructionally and continue to be the lead learner on instructional effectiveness? Do you know the effect size of teacher clarity, reciprocal teaching or corrective and immediate feedback?”

Consider that last paragraph. Take a minute to reflect on your own instructional knowledge and relevance in today's instructional setting. Do you continue to view instruction through the lens in which you were taught and the one you used in your own classroom? Have you grown instructionally and continue to be the lead learner on instructional effectiveness? Do you know the effect size of teacher clarity, reciprocal teaching or corrective and immediate feedback? If not, I challenge you to immerse yourself in building your own capacity around effective instructional strategies versus instructional materials and programs. You need to know their impact and when or when not to support certain instructional strategies (and with whom). This leads to more intention and purpose when working with your staff. It places the focus on increasing the intentionality in their instruction versus intentionally using the curriculum or program.

## POWERFUL INSTRUCTION VS. POWERFUL PROGRAMS

This shift in knowledge and focus, if leveraged correctly, allows you to begin the process of transforming your school to one based on the powerful instruction (academic growth) you have to offer students versus the programs you may have to offer. This shift is an entirely different conversation around building reliance, perseverance and driven students based on self-discipline versus just compliance. It is a shift in thinking for some and can be a tough

sale, especially to communities and schools with a misconception around the impact effective instruction (and what that even is) has on academic growth and achievement versus the impact a program can make. In the end, if you stay the course, the data will tell the story.

In closing, forget the fluff, the products and the all the vendor booths at your next conference. Instead, find ways to increase your instructional knowledge and how to apply that knowledge. Get out of your building, watch amazing teachers do supernatural work. Do not stop there — talk with them, learn their craft, begin shifting the focus from programs and approaches to intentional and purposeful instruction driven by a desired outcome.

After all, good instruction never goes out of style. ■

# GROWING AN OUTDOOR EDUCATION COOPERATIVE

*A middle school, a university, a conservation agency and a government agency all walk into a watershed...*



## Lance Potter, Ph.D., J.D.

Educational Leadership Program  
Director, Eastern Washington University

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Improving Instruction, Managing Resources,  
Engaging the Community, Aligning  
Curriculum*

Sometimes, neat things begin with a simple conversation. That's how Cheney Middle School's (CMS) unique outdoor education cooperative began. This cooperative unites seventh-grade students and their teachers with preservice teacher education majors at Eastern Washington University; a local conservancy organization, The Lands Council; and Partners for Fish and Wildlife, the private lands program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Through this cooperative effort, 300 seventh-graders learned about human impact on watersheds and what they can do to protect and improve their local ecosystem over the last two years. In addition, they collectively planted close to 2,500 native trees and shrubs on private lands in order to create animal habitat, restore riparian areas and improve water quality.

In the fall of 2015, Eli Holm was a new assistant principal and athletic

director at CMS. He recently moved from Federal Way Public Schools, where students were engaged in outdoor science education with the Mt. Rainier Institute. One crisp fall day at a cross-country meet, he struck up a conversation with a couple of parents and quickly found a shared interest in outdoor education. One of those parents, more specifically, the author of this article, happened to be a professor of education at Eastern Washington University. I sought out another professor of education at EWU, Dr. Kathryn Baldwin. She was interested in getting field experience for her preservice teachers so they could become trained in, and advocates for, outdoor science education.

## THE PARTNERSHIP

The trick, however, was finding a partner. After several months and failed attempts, we finally stumbled onto The Lands Council. Kat Hall, conservation and education director for The Lands Council, had a federal

(EPA) grant administered through the state (Ecology) and was looking for a local school in the Latah Creek/Hangman Creek watershed to partner with in riparian restoration work. She already had cooperative agreements in place with two private landowners in the Cheney School District.

A partnership was born!

Ms. Hall and the Lands Council work in partnership with Partners for Fish and Wildlife's Brian Walker, who works out of nearby Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge.

## THE PLANTING

Holding an education session at the middle school to learn about threats to the watershed was the program's first step. The middle school teachers worked to create a cross-curricular unit for the students. Hall trained the college students in the use of Enviroscope models before bringing them to CMS. The college students taught groups of seventh-graders during their life science class using

the models to demonstrate how pollutants enter the ecosystem.

Taking the middle school students out to the site was the next step. Here, Walker and his crew were hard at work preparing the planting areas by machine-digging holes and erecting exclosures, which are areas created to exclude unwanted animals, to protect the young trees and shrubs from wildlife. Partners for Fish and Wildlife also provided the plants and shovels. The plan was to take the middle schoolers out on two different days, half on one Friday and half the next. Unfortunately, on the first day a windstorm blew in and Holm had to postpone the trip, so the next Friday all 150 students went to the sites together.

After receiving initial training by Ms. Hall and Mr. Walker, the preservice teachers each supervised a small group of students. In fact, the kids planted every tree or shrub on site, close to 1,000 in all! Happy, muddy students returned to school beaming about their accomplishments and time outdoors.

The next year, Fish and Wildlife brought more trees and shrubs. Mr. Walker is enthusiastic about the cooperative arrangement.

“Partnering with EWU, CMS, and The Lands Council allowed these restoration projects to greatly expand the planned riparian planting component,” said Walker. “We were able to expand from a total of a half-acre of planting to more than three acres, increase the number of planted trees and shrubs from 500 to nearly 2,500, and do it all while educating students and restoring native wetlands.”

In addition, over the first winter, almost every tree or shrub survived.

## WATER SAMPLING

In the spring, the students headed back out to the planting site with half going on one day and half on another

day. While the planting area was dry in the fall, the spring brought water everywhere in wetlands created by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service adjacent to the planting areas! The task for the day was to sample water quality. Again, Ms. Hall trained the preservice teachers, who in turn worked with small groups of students.

“Happy, muddy students returned to school beaming about their accomplishments and time outdoors.”

The students tested the water for pH, nitrates, dissolved oxygen, and clarity. For another test of water quality, the students sampled the water for macroinvertebrates and identified a number of species. Students took great delight seeing how many creepy crawlies were already living in the water. This spring, a new group of seventh-graders will return to the site and test the water again and compare to last year’s findings.

Dr. Baldwin is also pleased with the partnership, saying “This project benefits our preservice teachers with a practical experience teaching natural resources in an authentic context with actual students! They get to plan lessons and get feedback from the middle school students to inform their teaching in the future,” she said.

“I think with this experience, more preservice teachers will feel confident to teach students about natural resources and get students outside to learn in context.”

## COMMUNITY NIGHT

The final phase of the project included a community night at the middle school. One of the goals of the Lands Council is community outreach and education. Under the guidance of CMS teachers, all the students worked on projects relating to the

environment and created a visual display to show what they learned. Then, parents, family members and the community were invited to CMS to see the displays and listen to the students present their research.

Presentations varied from tri-fold poster board displays to videos, to a live performance! The evening was a great success and a fitting conclusion to an exciting new endeavor. Assistant Principal Holm is positive about the total experience for his students and teachers.

“Cheney Middle School students and staff greatly benefited from the partnership. Our students are learning from experts in the field and preservice teachers are provided an opportunity to see what it looks like to teach outside the four walls of the classroom,” he said. “We are preparing future teachers, environmental stewards, and engaged citizens.”

## TAKEAWAYS

The hope for all partners is to create a sustainable relationship, lasting for many years, to benefit middle school students, preservice teachers, the local environment and the community.

This year’s seventh graders already planted their trees and are eager to get back out into the field in the spring. What’s next for CMS?

Mr. Holm’s long-term goal is for each grade to have its own ongoing outdoor science education experience.

Ms. Hall’s remarks might summarize things best: “When a local non-profit, a university, a federal agency, and a middle school join forces to help restore degraded watersheds and provide youth with outdoor environmental education, everyone wins.” ■



# ONE SCHOOL'S **S M O R G A S B O R D** APPROACH TO TEACHER PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

## Four strategies to increase teacher efficacy and agency

### Tammy Larsen

Principal, First Creek Middle School,  
Tacoma PS

#### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, Closing the Gap*

**C**reating a school culture where every student experiences common practices through common language, regardless of which of the six classrooms they might be in during their middle school day, was goal number one when we started school improvement work at First Creek Middle School on the Eastside of Tacoma. We knew improving learning and achievement for our students would come from aligning and strengthening instruction schoolwide. We also knew this wouldn't happen from just one training, program or approach.

Here are a few things we did to address school wide teacher professional growth:

### 1. KNOWING WHERE TO START

Schoolwide improvement is big work. When so many issues need to be addressed, how do you determine where to even begin? It was evident from the start; we needed to bring in school-wide common practices and common language as our first step. We determined some practices and programs all teachers needed training in initially. Specifically, training in programs to address school-wide expectations and social emotional learning. This all-staff training

approach was our first work in school-wide implementation. It was a good start resulting in an over 60 percent reduction of out-of-school suspensions from year one to year two.

“We knew improving learning and achievement for our students would come from aligning and strengthening instruction schoolwide. We also knew this wouldn't happen from just one training, program or approach.”

After creating common systems for safety and social emotional learning, we knew the next step had to be overall instructional improvement. We met and surveyed teachers to ask, “What do you need?” Two common needs were frequently requested. Teachers wanted more tools in their toolbox to engage students and they wanted choice in what professional learning they got and how they got it.

Both of these requests helped us provide meaningful professional

learning that sticks with our teachers. We can't just expect teachers to change how they've taught for years without providing them new or improved ways to engage students in deep learning. We also can't expect experienced to have the same needs as first year teachers, or even teachers who have a few years of experience, but in very different school populations.

### 2. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

My staff will tell you I regularly provide them with articles and share books that motivate me, but I also hope they would tell you I know they are very busy people and may not always have time to read everything that resonates with me. I'm an avid home cook and host, and my philosophy about professional reading is like a food buffet or smorgasbord I would host at home. Just like I might host a buffet of all sorts of delicious food and try providing plenty of options to allow everyone to find something they might like to eat. I think of professional reading being my school learning buffet. I'll put out all types of articles and books and staff can choose what resonates or excites them. We wanted to provide the buffet or smorgasbord approach to professional learning for our staff.

With this idea in mind, we approached our planning for professional development a little differently. After our district shared a helpful graphic (see below) designating the three types of professional learning (training, professional development, and professional learning), we decided to lay out our plan aligned to those three types. We created a plan with some offerings intended for all, some for specific contents/purposes, and some by choice. Professional learning options proven to impact student learning the most are embedded into our school day through release time or during late start days, as much as possible. Most of our First Creek Middle School (FCMS) “trainings” occur after school with pay, but by contract are optional for teachers to participate in.

the likelihood of increasing teacher agency grows. There is nothing more disappointing than sending a school team to a great conference and seeing no evidence of implementation back in the classroom. Since we’ve been more intentional about the types of PD we offer and attempt to differentiate by making it more like a buffet or smorgasbord, we have seen greater school-wide implementation of specific strategies and practices starting to grow.

#### 4. KEEPING IT LOCAL

After a few years of contracting with outside trainers and consultants, we surveyed our staff. We found they preferred learning from their peers and with their peers. We started recruiting and hiring credible instructional coaches (one literacy and one math/science coach) who

buffet of offerings, we’ve also seen an increase in teacher agency and efficacy from classroom to classroom. Clearly, this has the opportunity for long-lasting, sustainable impact and has significantly changed the adult culture of collaboration in our building as well.

#### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

My response to anyone who asks, “Well, is it working?” is typically “Not fast enough.” Although test scores show some unprecedented student growth, our proficiency is still only making small incremental gains since the three years of starting our PD plan. When I allow myself to really reflect and take in what I see in classrooms across our building, I can see the elevated teaching and learning at First Creek. Students now consistently have the opportunity to experience common language and common systems in every class, allowing teachers to maximize learning time and students to access more engaging and rigorous learning. Students see teachers working together as learners through studio lessons, and that helps them see firsthand we can and all want to do better by them.

Promoting a professional learning culture in our school to better meet the needs of our teachers has improved access to learning for students. It’s a direct result of:

- Making professional development and learning a priority for all teachers from the start.
- Finding ways to differentiate PD options for teachers by giving them choice.
- Growing our own in-building experts to learn with and from.

Those are the three key ingredients you can use in your school’s recipe for success. ■

Sample of FCMS Professional Growth Opportunities		
FCMS Trainings	FCMS Professional Development	FCMS Professional Learning
<i>“How do I use...?”</i>	<i>“What does this look like in my practice?”</i>	<i>“How do I impact Student Learning?”</i>
iReady	CHAMPS	Weekly Content PLCs
Office 365	RULER	Monthly Data Teams
Imagine Learning	GLAD	School leadership Team
Technology training	AVID	Quarterly Content Studio Labs
Accessing Optional Hours	Cooperative Learning	Semesters GLAD Studios
Content curriculum trainings	Conscious Classroom	Monthly Peer Learning Walks
New teacher training	Number Talks	Quarterly Peer observation release time
New to FCMS training	Formative Assessment	Monthly Co-Teaching PLCs
	Differentiation	Monthly Book Studies
	Rigor & Engagement	
	Culturally Responsive Teaching	
	Weekly articles	

#### 3. GIVING CHOICE MATTERS

We think when teachers have time along with some amount of choice in how much and what type of professional development they get,

teachers respect and want to work with. The past two years, we’ve been very intentional to also try to keep it local by growing our own experts through a trainer of trainers approach whenever possible. By developing our own teacher leaders to be part of the



# A HOME FOR TORI

*Finding Resources to Help Adult Homeless Teens*

## Lorraine Hirakawa

Assistant Principal, Puyallup HS,  
Puyallup SD

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Ensuring School Safety, Engaging  
Communities

**T**here are kids that change you; kids who touch your life in ways that shape who you become. When I first met Tori, a returning fifth-year senior, I didn't know she would be one of those kids. Tori taught me how to be persistent. She taught me about tenacity. She taught me about what homelessness looks like for our kids.

When my principal encouraged Tori to come back for one more semester of school to get her high school diploma, she was living with a co-worker from a local fast-food restaurant. But in October, that co-worker returned

“Tori taught me how to be persistent. She taught me about tenacity. She taught me about what homelessness looks like for our kids.”

home, and Tori couldn't keep her apartment. She couch-surfed for a few weeks and lived in a borrowed car for four days before she finally came in to her counselor to explain why she had been absent and asked for help. Unlike many of our homeless students, Tori was 18.

Her counselor and I teamed up to find housing. Working with our district McKinney-Vento liaison, we tried to access many of our typical routes for resources, which were dead ends

due to Tori's age. She was an adult in the eyes of the agencies and not eligible for resources for teens. It was an adventure in frustration. We spent hours on the phone, mostly on hold, only to find out that a program wouldn't apply to Tori. It was going to be the end of the month before Tori could get an appointment with ACCESS Point for 4 Housing, the coordinated entry program in Pierce County. Progress was incredibly slow. I would call one agency and be



told no, only to call back, speak to someone else, and be given access to another program, another agency, another doorway into potential housing.

Finally, the REACH Center in Tacoma let us know ACCESS Point 4 Housing was at the center once a week and could get Tori an appointment. Working through ACCESS Point, Tori could qualify for “diversion,” a program to help pay her deposit and first/last month rent when she found a place to rent. However, that was a Catch-22. Tori couldn’t find a place

“ I wish I could say Tori’s story is unique, but it isn’t. With this experience, I am better navigating systems in my community for resources, and Tori turned me into an advocate for better systems for our homeless teens.”

that (a) she could afford or (b) would rent to an 18-year-old on her own. We were now on two weeks of Tori sleeping in a car.

In the meantime, I contacted every politician I could think of to discuss the problem for homeless adult-teens in our public schools, and while I got responses from several saying they understood the seriousness of the situation, there didn’t appear to be much willingness to change the system. Through Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland’s office, our McKinney-Vento liaison was authorized to give Tori a few nights at a local motel. In the end, my

friendships in the community found a family that would rent a room to her, and Tori finished her diploma in November. She’s now in community college.

I wish I could say Tori’s story is unique, but it isn’t. With this experience, I am better navigating systems in my community for resources, and Tori turned me into an advocate for better systems for our homeless teens. ■

**Here are some quick tips for helping homeless youth:**

- Compile a list of resources for both counselors and administrators of community resource providers. Many school nurses may have access to resources. A good place to start: <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/homelessness/office-of-youth-homelessness/>
- Know your McKinney-Vento liaison. Actively participate in your district’s establishment of their system for providing resources.
- Learn what the process is for getting access to emergency housing in your district and your county. Go beyond city resources. Know your county connections.
- Build relationships with agencies early. Make personal connections, but know many agencies have high turnover rates and employees change quickly.
- Don’t give up. Ask questions about alternatives, ask about other agencies. Call back, the next person you talk to may have another alternative.
- Help the student tell their story. Telling a compelling story can help gain access.
- Say “thank you.”



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# Student Voice: High School Leaders Share Insights with Ready WA

*Editor's Note: This article was originally published on Ready Washington's Medium page on December 18, 2017. Ready Washington is a coalition of organizations supporting college and career ready goals and standards for every K-12 student in Washington state. See all Ready Washington blog posts on their Medium page: <https://medium.com/@ReadyWA>.*

## Ingrid Stegemoeller

Communications Manager, Partnership for Learning

At Cascade High School in Everett, students have access to a wide variety of courses and career guidance to help them chart their futures, according to Joe, a junior at the school. “Every student should be able to find what sparks their interest,” he said. But the most powerful way to support students on their educational journeys is through strong relationships with teachers.

Joe and three other Washington high school students — Asher, a senior at Shorecrest High School, Sophia, a sophomore at Sumner High School, and Dominic, a junior at Kent-Meridian High School — all underscored the critical importance of student-teacher relationships in a wide-ranging discussion at a recent Ready Washington coalition meeting.

The coalition invited the four students, who are board members with the Association of Washington Student Leaders (a division of the Association of Washington School Principals), to share insights about their experiences in the education system.

The students discussed what works well for them in school, including access to classes and academic support from teachers, to what they wish was part of their educational journeys, including more classes focused on the arts and practical skills like budgeting, to stronger



Ingrid with AWSL students Dominic, Joe, Sophia, and Asher.

“The students discussed what works well for them in school, including access to classes and academic support from teachers, to what they wish was part of their educational journeys ...”

relationships with teachers that enable students to share challenges they're experiencing outside of the classroom.

Asher encouraged teachers to be transparent with students about their purpose. “Explain your why,” he said. Asher shared that he began excelling in school in ninth grade, when his teachers helped him learn how to believe in himself.

All four students have plans to pursue four-year degrees after high school, and they shared their inspirations for these dreams.

Sophia grew up in a college-going culture, including family members who are lawyers. She's known she wanted to pursue law school since she was young.

Joe figured out he wanted to go to college when he was in fifth grade and his school toured different Washington college campuses on a school field trip. “Seeing the options was illuminating,” he said.

Learning self-accountability in middle school set Dominic on his college-going path, which includes pursuing an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma.

The students also shared their thoughts about new graduation requirements and bell schedules, the challenges of balancing school work, extra-curricular activities, and home life, as well as financial challenges that can come along with pursuing advanced coursework such as the IB and Running Start programs.

When answering a question about the best way to communicate with students, the panelists all noted that personal, one-on-one connections are the best, whether with a teacher or a mentoring program.

Ready Washington would like to thank Asher, Dominic, Joe, and Sophia for sharing their insights with the coalition. We also want to thank AWSL and AWSP for introducing us to these fantastic student leaders. ■

# Are You a **GAME- CHANGER** on Curriculum Implementation?



Principals should have a working knowledge of and be active participants in course content

## **David Hammond, Ed.D.**

*Former principal now serving as assistant superintendent of elementary education in the Bethel School District in Spanaway, WA.*

*Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the November 2017 issue of Principal Leadership.*

**A**s the principal of a large, comprehensive high school for seven years, one of my frustrations was how my teachers and building staff were supported—or not supported—when we implemented new curriculum.

I always found that the district conducted a thorough and exhaustive adoption process to ensure we chose curriculum that would support the needs of our students, but it failed to supply principals with the tools and training to support the ongoing implementation. And, in most cases, it failed to garner principal input

## **PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

*Improving Instruction, Aligning Curriculum*

during the implementation planning process.

As I moved from my role as the principal at Curtis High School to the assistant superintendent of elementary schools in the Bethel School District in Washington

*Continued on page 24*



state, I kept at my core the belief that principal leadership was the single most important characteristic for high-performing schools. At the district level, my goal was to ensure that all principals had the skills and attributes to make sound decisions for their building and, most important, to preserve the authority principals needed to excel in their responsibilities. To that end, I set out to create a principal-involved structure within the district to support the implementation of new curriculum.

The support for new curriculum was a timely undertaking in Bethel because, like most districts around the country, we needed to respond to the shift to Common Core State Standards. Our current English-language arts and math curricula were woefully inadequate, so we set out on an ambitious journey to adopt two new curricula in two years. In order for this to be successful, we needed to guarantee that district-level resources were perfectly in line with the needs of the building.

“ Unfortunately, getting principals the training sessions they needed was problematic because we found that publishing companies did not offer resources for administrators.”

### CURRICULUM KNOWLEDGE

First, we wanted to ensure that principals had a working knowledge of the curriculum and were given training to help them understand the teachers' role in delivering it to their students. Principals need to understand the content and instructional philosophy behind a curriculum because they are the ones designing professional development for their building staff. They must also understand a curriculum's pacing to effectively schedule the school day.

Unfortunately, getting principals the training sessions they needed was problematic because we found that publishing companies did not offer resources for administrators. Their focus was solely on the teachers delivering the content. In an effort to involve principals in the layout of the curriculum, our teaching and learning department identified key teacher trainings for principals to attend. Those trainings were

used to build knowledge of the curriculum to guide principals in their support of teachers. For some districts, principals gaining a working knowledge of the curriculum and learning how teachers delivered the curriculum to their students was enough. In Bethel, this merely served as a starting point for the work our principals would be doing during implementation.

Next, we redesigned an existing structure for principal professional learning communities (PLCs). We felt that principals learn useful instructional leadership and instructional strategies when given the opportunity to converse with their colleagues about instruction. This new model supports supervision and evaluation with a collaborative, constructivist, and decentralized approach in which self-analysis, reflection, peer observation, and feedback are encouraged. The ongoing conversations principals had with relation to the new ELA and math curriculum helped them build content knowledge and instructional practices vital to a successful implementation.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING DEPARTMENT

Next, and arguably most important, were the systems of support for teachers developed in concert with the district's Teaching and Learning Department. An ongoing collaboration between Teaching and Learning and the principals helped to focus our efforts. Instead of 17 buildings trying to support new curricula in isolation, we created a mechanism for principals to continually share the results of their efforts so that Teaching and Learning could respond to the



needs of the principals in real time. This mechanism brought together a core group of principals to meet with the Teaching and Learning Department monthly throughout the year. Principals on this committee included representatives from each of the four principal PLCs. This design supported a communications structure that involved all principals. The result was principal-supported teacher PLCs with a common focus on lesson design, reverse planning, data to inform instruction, and the instructional needs of students.

“An ongoing collaboration between Teaching and Learning and the principals helped to focus our efforts.”

During the first few months of our Eureka Math implementation, we saw how principals supported and worked with teacher PLCs. Great Minds, the publisher for Eureka, offered a battery of training designed to help support teachers as they navigated this new Common Core-aligned math curriculum. We committed to sending principals alongside teachers to receive this valuable training. As a result, principals were able to gain valuable information about one of the cornerstones of Eureka Math—lesson preparation and customization.

The information gleaned from teacher PLCs prepared principals to expect and encourage teachers to customize lessons to fit the needs of their students, as well as work with time constraints and other building-specific circumstances. The three-step study process for lesson preparation and customization became a priority support structure for all Bethel principals. This process was instrumental for building knowledge and capacity for Bethel

## MAKING IT WORK

### Keys to Successful Curriculum Implementation

Principals should have:

- Working knowledge of the content and instructional design of the new curriculum
- An ability to provide organizational feedback and drive professional development to meet the needs of their teachers and students
- Access to peer collaboration, incorporating feedback and reflection
- The ability to use their knowledge of the content to support families and other stakeholders as the community transitions

teachers to customize lessons while preserving the focus, coherence, and rigor built into the curriculum. Our ability to understand and offer ongoing organizational support from day one for this important aspect of the curriculum was one of many examples of how the principal can have a lasting positive impact on the implementation of a new curriculum.

### PARENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Finally, another area we often neglect after we formally adopt a new curriculum is the initial and ongoing communication with the school board, parents, and the community. Principals in Bethel communicated with families and stakeholders throughout the district, not only during the first few months of implementation, but throughout the first year and beyond. Parents don't just want to know what the curriculum is; they wish to have the resources and knowledge to help their children perform well. To that end, principals have waged an ongoing campaign of information and resources for parents to help their children with the new curriculum at home. Great Minds offers a multitude of resources ranging from parent tip sheets to more in-depth homework helpers that provide step-by-step explanations of how to work through problems. Our principals appreciated these resources because the tools were already developed and tightly aligned to what is happening in the

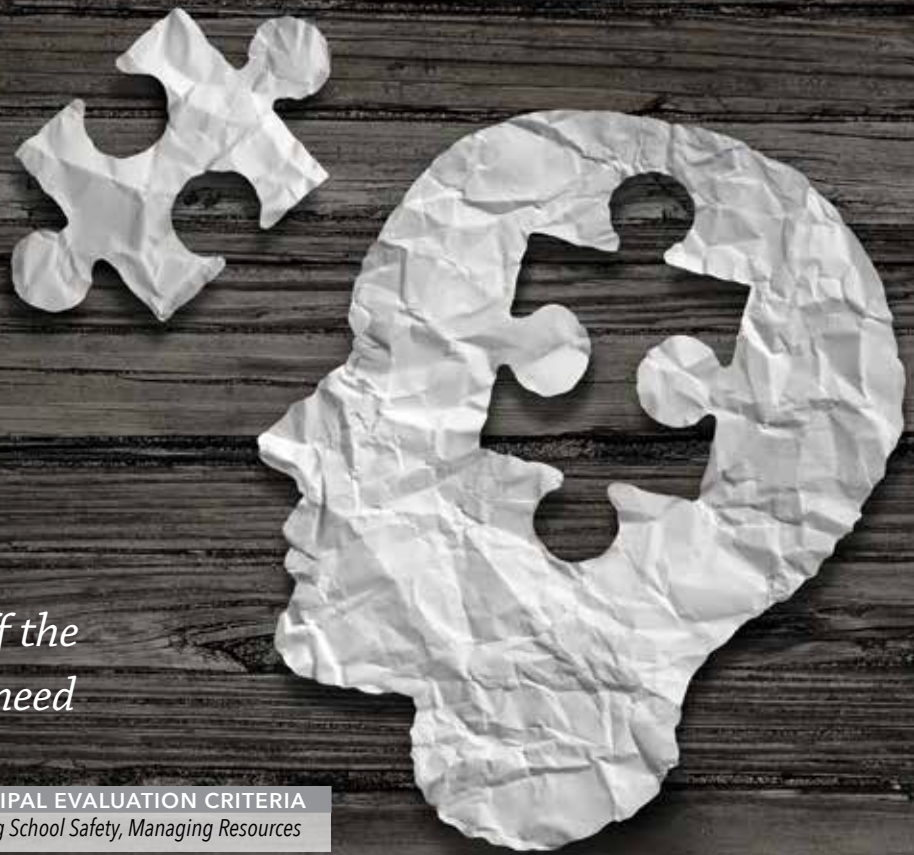
classroom. These tools, as well as the Great Minds website, are used when principals meet with parents throughout the school year.

“Parents don't just want to know what the curriculum is; they wish to have the resources and knowledge to help their children perform well.”

When I travel to districts to discuss curriculum implementation or speak at institutes designed to help administrators support new adoptions, the general theme I hear from principals is the same. The principal's role in the implementation of new curriculum lacks leadership, input, and authority. Decisions are made at the district level and then communicated as a list of “must-dos” at the building level. This lack of principal involvement will ultimately result in a failed implementation or, at best, an implementation that underutilizes a new curriculum specifically designed to increase student achievement. ■



# TIME TO FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS



*Getting our students and staff the mental health resources they need*

**Roz Thompson**

Government Relations & Advocacy  
Director, AWSP

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA  
*Ensuring School Safety, Managing Resources*

**T**his fall, I heard many stories from principals about their difficulty helping students with mental health issues. Because of the severity and variety of our students' needs, increasing support for mental health in schools is prominently featured on our 2018 legislative platform. We can't get to student learning until we fix some of the personal problems our students face.

State Rep. Pat Sullivan, D-Covington, told our Advocacy Committee in October Washington state is 49th in the nation for mental health funding. Schools face challenges because our communities face challenges. Staffing shortages in critical positions and areas of our state hurt our ability to get help for students. Funding shortages for resources to support students hurts as well.

However, we are taking steps to coordinate systems of support for students and their families. The conversation about supporting

**“** We can't get to student learning until we fix some of the personal problems our students face.”

children's mental health needs is receiving a lot of attention this legislative session. In this issue of Washington Principal, OSPI's Dr. Mona Johnson provides an update on recent legislation addressing mental health needs in schools.

I attended a Children's Mental Health Work Group work session in December and connected with Dr. Johnson and others working on significant ways to help our students. Besides the pilot project she describes happening in two of our ESDs, there is also a group planning a Washington Mental Health Summit at the University of Washington on May 8.

I met with the summit's planning group at the end of January. They are particularly interested in connecting

with principals. This team is made up of people from the University of Washington, Seattle Children's Hospital, the SMART Center (School Mental Health Research and Training), DSHS, SeaKing Public Health, OSPI, ESDs, and more. One of their goals is to help provide curriculum and training around mental health to schools.

This group knows principals lead instruction in their schools and they believe we are a key player in leading conversations around mental health. Stay tuned for more information about further training and resources. If you are interested in getting involved with this effort, let me know. ■

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit the Washington Mental Health Summit website at:  
[wamhsummit.org](http://wamhsummit.org)

The event in May is open to anyone who wants to attend. To register for this event, head to:  
[wamhsummit.org/may-summit](http://wamhsummit.org/may-summit)



# BETTER TOGETHER

*Partnering to support student mental health and wellness*

## **Mona Johnson**

*Student Support Director, OSPI*

### **PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

*Ensuring School Safety, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities*

In 2016, the Children's Mental Health Workgroup formed as a result of Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2439, which relates to increasing access to adequate and appropriate mental health services for children. The workgroup identified barriers to accessing mental health services and delivered a report to the Legislature.

Increasing student access to mental health care in K-12 schools was the workgroup's primary recommendation; E2SHB 1713 (2017) passed as a result. This established a formal agreement between the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Health Care Authority (HCA) to implement Section six of E2SHB 1713. Specifically, OSPI was charged with developing a pilot project to study the effectiveness of a lead staff person at two competitively selected ESDs to coordinate system-wide activities supporting the State Medicaid Plan and the delivery of mental/behavioral health services to Medicaid eligible students in schools.

Capitol Region ESD 113 and NorthEast ESD 101 were selected in late September 2017 as the pilot sites for this innovative and ground-breaking work. The intended outcome will be twofold: (1) for the pilot sites to increase access to care for students in need of mental/behavioral health supports; and (2) to further



“ The workgroup identified barriers to accessing mental health services and delivered a report to the Legislature.”

investigate the benefits of having a dedicated staff person in two ESD regions available to work with local K-12 school districts to coordinate mental/behavioral health service delivery through activities supporting the State Medicaid Plan.

In partnership with the HCA, OSPI continues to provide technical

assistance to ESDs to support allowable activity within the State Medicaid Plan for the expansion of services to Medicaid eligible students and related Medicaid billing procedures. Additionally, in June 2019, OSPI will be responsible for submitting a case study to the governor and Legislature about the outcomes and of this regional service coordination model and how easy it is to replicate.

For more information on this project, please contact Camille Goldy at [camille.goldy@k12.wa.us](mailto:camille.goldy@k12.wa.us) or Mona Johnson at [mona.johnson@k12.wa.us](mailto:mona.johnson@k12.wa.us), or call 360.725.6050. ■

### **OSPI MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:**

Children's Mental Health Workgroup Findings:  
[bit.ly/2GlbIV4](https://bit.ly/2GlbIV4)

OSPI Youth Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention:  
[k12.wa.us/safetycenter/YouthSuicide/SuicidePrevention.aspx](https://k12.wa.us/safetycenter/YouthSuicide/SuicidePrevention.aspx)

OSPI Child and Adolescent Mental Health:  
[k12.wa.us/mentalhealthandschools/default.aspx](https://k12.wa.us/mentalhealthandschools/default.aspx)

# EMBRACING EMPATHY

## *Leading a Trauma-Informed School*

**Chris Cronas**

*Principal, Highland Park Elementary,  
Seattle PS*

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Planning with Data, Engaging Communities,  
Closing the Gap.*

**H**ighland Park Elementary is an amazing school – filled with rich diversity, it is representative of a community proud of its culture and roots. When arriving at my school four years ago, it was clear I had committed staff and teachers working incredibly hard to meet the needs of our students. Being one of the most diverse school communities in the entire state, it is humbling to think of the collective experience our students' families bring to our school every day.

The population, however, is also highly vulnerable. Many students present with challenging behaviors, which had not been managed using a school-wide plan implemented with fidelity. The staff had received little professional development around the neuroscience of toxic stress and the effects of adverse childhood experiences. There was a fundamental lack of understanding about the necessity for a cohesive, building-wide plan for both academics and behavior, as well as limited understanding about exactly how the effects of trauma can impact student learning.

The school was low-performing and infamous for challenging, acting-out behaviors. We had every imaginable behavior across all grade levels throughout the school day. Several staff were regularly assaulted and the administrators were running ragged, trying to put out fires. Really good teachers could barely manage. They were tired and the climate was negatively impacting our already low staff retention rate.

We needed to reframe our perspective on student learning and support. We realized we could do this by learning more about the science





Highland Park staff welcome students with high-fives.

behind student behavior. So, over time, we developed Tier I universal supports addressing not only our academic needs, but our behavioral needs as well. We brought in national experts to introduce staff to the effects of trauma on the brain. Chris Daikos, with Continua Consulting, and David Lewis, both leaders in the field who developed evidenced-based frameworks for teaching and learning through a trauma-informed lens, presented their research to staff and offered guidance and perspective on the behavioral challenges we

*Continued on page 30*





Continued from page 29

encountered, coupled with practical solutions for intervention.

By developing tiered systems of support using evidence-based academic and behavioral intervention systems, we promoted a community that is now far better informed on approaching student learning through a trauma-informed lens. We continue to grow and learn every day and have seen extraordinary improvements to student behavior, staff retention and improved culture and climate. We are finally seeing the academic gains as well.

The following list is not comprehensive, but provides a starting point for a conceptual understanding of the framework schools need in order to approach teaching and learning through a trauma-informed lens.

## ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

Understanding the effects of childhood trauma is paramount to understanding the function of any given behavior. We need to help teachers and staff understand students' needs from the most basic levels. To do that, we must provide intentional professional development around the neuroscience of trauma, the research behind the ACEs study, and encourage curiosity



Principal Cronas with some smiling students.

about behavior, intellectualizing it rather than simply framing it within the context of discipline. Consider reintroducing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and explore how behavior fits neatly into the framework. Give concrete examples of how task-avoidant behavior can look like defiance, but is in fact a student acting-out an unmet need. Help your staff think about behavior differently so they can approach it through a problem-solving lens, just like the way they tackle academic problems.

## FUNCTION OF BEHAVIOR

We rarely approach general education classroom management and student behavioral intervention through a special education lens. But why? Special educators use effective, data-driven, evidenced-based tools. Utilizing the expertise of your school psychologist or special education teacher can provide insight into

“ We need to help teachers and staff understand students' needs from the most basic levels.”

behavioral interventions few others in your building can. If you have a challenging student who needs Tier II or Tier III support, consider asking your special education teacher to complete a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) or practical behavioral assessment to inform your behavior planning (with parent permission, of course). In this case, the use of a FBA is not to inform a special education evaluation process — the opposite, in fact. By creating plans with the focus of a special educator, we can avoid a special education referral altogether.

## TIER I UNIVERSAL SUPPORTS

The premise for all Tier I support relies on building-wide mutually agreed upon expectations. Trauma-informed practice recognizes the necessity for common language in classrooms, hallways and common areas to provide a more predictable environment for students. There is comfort in consistency. Universal supports include using PBIS, systems for celebration, common classroom behavioral expectations



Chris Cronas shares a story with Gov. Inslee.

and mindfulness practice. Packaged together, students see and hear the same message from all adults: You are important and we commit to working together to support you.

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING & LEARNING

We must ensure students have voice, feel like they belong and have allies in the school who believe in them. Their sense of belonging and the relationship with their classroom teacher is vitally important to their success. The school's focus on high expectations and creating a sense of belonging supports the notion that all students can learn, regardless of the impact that ACEs have had on them. Remember, the brain's plasticity is remarkable and even the most challenging behaviors can change with evidence-based approaches and methodical attention to planning and detail.

## SUCCESS FOSTERED THROUGH UNDERSTANDING & PLANNING

I'll never forget a former student we served who's since moved on to middle school. Both the victim and perpetrator of sexual abuse as a child and witness to sexual assault, he was diagnosed with a behavioral disability early in life, following his parent's loss of custodial rights. He was a tough kid — a runner who would say horrible things to staff using some spectacularly colorful language, challenging every direction given to him and limiting compliance to only the one or two adults with whom he developed a relationship. He was assigned to a foster family that showed him unending compassion combined with clear and consistent boundaries.

The summer following his fifth-grade promotion, he ran away from his foster home. Twice. Each time, he ran to the same place: back to school.



Chris Cronos leads an assembly focusing on mindfulness.

Although his story is extreme, it's not unique. The fact he ran to us after running away from home says a lot about the trust we developed with him over time and the impact our systems had on his success. His ACEs were met with professional knowledge, empathy and evidenced-based practices.

This work is exceptionally difficult and the investment takes time, but we know we can meet the needs of our most challenging students. If we approach our work with compassion and educate ourselves with the latest research, we can profoundly impact opportunity gaps across systems and foster success for all students. ■

# NETWORK

Connect with your peers in NPC18's ContinueOn, a designated area for unstructured time to reflect, network, and share ideas. Cultivate your professional community!

REGISTER TODAY!  
[PRINCIPALSCONFERENCE.ORG/REGISTER](http://PRINCIPALSCONFERENCE.ORG/REGISTER)





# POWERFUL

## Administrative Partnership Practices

### EVERETT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

#### David Jones

Principal, Cedar Wood Elementary, Everett PS

#### Kristin Dickert

Assistant Principal, Mill Creek Elementary, Everett PS

#### Daniel Natividad

Assistant Principal, Cedar Wood Elementary, Everett PS



AWSP's Leadership Continuum for principal professional learning guides leaders through their entire career as a school principal.

The health of the school's administrative team relationships directly impacts the school's effectiveness. Roles, norms, and levels of communication must be created and frequently revisited to assure all team members contribute efficiently.

Principals need to think of every assistant principal as a *Principal-in-Training*. Each principal is responsible for effectively mentoring other members on their administrative team. Successfully addressing each of our state's eight criteria

that make up the foundation for principal evaluation requires a high-functioning administrative team at each school.

Here are five key elements in a healthy, effective school administrative team:

1. Assistant principals need the working **trust** of their principal.
- **Trust** they will be given challenging, important work, and supported even as they struggle. APs should not be assigned work that is all routine, or all difficult. APs should have a key role in

planning and implementing the School Improvement Plan, professional development plan, staff meeting agendas, and academic interventions.

- **Trust** their professional well-being is cared for, their actions will be supported, and their good work will be shared with others outside of the school.
- **Trust** they will receive honest feedback and support to address weaknesses, since these weaknesses are public to the entire school community.



- **Trust** their actions will not be micro-managed by the principal, as this leads to second guessing. It is far better for an AP to draft a plan and run it by the principal for feedback than to have every task explicitly dictated.
- When asked, principals need to reply, “Check with our assistant principal. That is his/her area of responsibility and expertise.” This communicates high **trust** to all.

Rate the level of **trust** present in your current administrative team:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aspiring	<input type="checkbox"/> Launching
<input type="checkbox"/> Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastering

**2. Administrative teams function best with **supportive structures** in place.**

- **Daily check in**, first thing, to communicate emerging issues and the day’s schedule.
- **Weekly strategy meeting:**
  - Build on your relationship, but spend 90% on leadership goals and tasks.
  - Keep this time high priority, with a closed door and no interruptions.
  - Continually work toward alignment and coherence with the School Improvement Plan, District Strategic Plan, Instructional Goals and the professional growth of staff.
- A formal time in the summer to establish the **AP’s professional growth goals** and to identify opportunities for growth. Calendar monthly follow-up meetings focusing only on the AP’s goals and growth.
- Create and publish a **division of responsibilities**. Revisit and rebalance this list as needed throughout the year. Be sure your office staff knows how/where to refer requests on



From Left to Right: Kristin Dickert, Assistant Principal, Mill Creek Elementary; Daniel Natividad, Assistant Principal, Cedar Wood Elementary; David Jones, Principal, Cedar Wood Elementary. All from Everett Public Schools.

the administration. APs split between two sites should only be responsible for one third of the staff supervision at either site.

- Implement a **shared spreadsheet** to record and track discipline issues, since more than one administrator may end up dealing with the same student or family over time.

Rate the level of **supportive structures** present in your current administrative team:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aspiring	<input type="checkbox"/> Launching
<input type="checkbox"/> Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastering

- 3. Principals need to include their assistant principals in **everything**, especially if the AP is split between two buildings. This includes conversations with the custodian, the Reading Specialist, the PTA Executive Board and when planning staff/leadership team/parent meetings. The team needs to conduct and debrief several observation cycles together, and not just at the start of the year. Principals should CC or BCC their AP on emails, since this is where an AP truly learns how a building’s culture and philosophy is put into practice as issues emerge.**

Rate the level of **inclusion** present in your current administrative team:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aspiring	<input type="checkbox"/> Launching
<input type="checkbox"/> Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastering

- 4. Two key items for assistant principals:**
- A. When assigned to a new building, assistant principals must quickly **learn the culture** of the building**
- The school’s culture is communicated by what is and what is not displayed on the walls.
  - It is communicated by what the staff talks about, and doesn’t talk about.
  - It is evident in the staff, student and family handbooks.
  - It is discovered through the small conversations in the building.
  - It is evident by noting who is doing the work, and who is given responsibility. How flat is the pyramid?
- B. Assistant principals new to a building need to identify and make use of a **like-role mentor**,**

*Continued on page 34*

in addition to their principal. Establish a relationship with someone you trust, who is doing the same work, who you can call to say, “This just happened to me. I am dealing with \_\_\_\_\_. My principal just told me I have to \_\_\_\_\_.” Having someone outside of your building who can offer an objective prospective and serve as a mentor is a key to effective integration.

Rate the AP’s **cultural awareness** and **external support** in the current assignment:

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Aspiring</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Launching</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Building</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mastering</b>

5. How can a principal set a new AP up for success? When a building is assigned a new assistant principal, the staff will ask, “Who is this person, and how does this person impact my work?”

- The principal should always speak of the administration as a team, and use both person’s names. For example, “As Melissa and I planned today’s staff meeting ...” This sets the AP up for success and establishes position and knowledge legitimacy, while building trust.
- Give the new AP key speaking assignments at large and small meetings.
- Be available to teach and to consult. There are scores of new systems for new administrators to learn, from the steps for hiring to submitting a work order to

“The principal should always speak of the administration as a team, and use both person’s names. For example, ‘As Melissa and I planned today’s staff meeting ...’”

“Be a mentor as well as a supervisor. To learn to lead, humans must wade in and make mistakes and then reflect with a trusted partner.”

managing the school budget and approving purchase orders. Make time to explain and demonstrate these systems as they arise.

- Delegate! This can be difficult when the ultimate responsibility still rests with the principal. It is not an easy skill to master. Ask your AP how he/she is coping, and what they want to work on next. Be a mentor as well as a supervisor. To learn to lead, humans must wade in and make mistakes and then reflect with a trusted partner. This is what we are asking of our students in our classrooms, and is the only way a new AP can gain confidence and prepare for the principalship.
- Be open to new perspectives. A new pair of eyes brings attention to old, ineffective routines and opportunities a principal might otherwise miss. Listen, and seriously consider new ways of thinking and doing.
- Share your processing as you work through a problem. Think out loud, even when you are not certain of what you may decide. This is SO helpful to a developing administrator, and generally leads to a more successful solution.
- Remember a new AP impacts the office systems, too. Set up scheduled meetings with you, the AP, the office manager and others to focus on questions or uncertainties this change created. For example, can the AP give work to the office manager, or does that person only work for the principal? Who schedules appointments?
- Make time for the AP to shadow you in key roles, such as pre- and post-observation conferences. This sends a message to the staff

you are invested in a successful partnership with common expectations. This is one way we can model what we expect teachers to replicate within their grade level and department teams.

- Share the administration’s face time with the public, the PTA and other groups. The community will take the principal’s lead on how to include the AP in the work of the school.
- Be human. Talk about what you learn, and the way you handle the mistakes you make as you lead the school.

Rate the Principal’s intentional support for the AP’s integration and success:

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Aspiring</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Launching</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Building</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mastering</b>

“Healthy, effective school administrative teams do not exist by accident. They require strategic planning and frequent monitoring.”

Healthy, effective school administrative teams do not exist by accident. They require strategic planning and frequent monitoring. As your team reviews, together, the five key elements listed above make it a point to celebrate the structures you have created, identify areas for attention, and model the open communication that is essential to effectively sharing the responsibility for leading a high performing school.

# SUPPORT THAT PRINCIPALS NEED



**Dr. Rita Chaudhuri**

*Elementary Education, Tacoma PS*



**Dr. Kathleen Beaudoin**

*Associate Professor of Education,  
University of Washington Tacoma*

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Improving Instruction,  
Managing Resources*

School principals play a pivotal role in creating optimal learning environments and supporting systems to ensure that learning occurs for all students. They are responsible for creating the conditions so that teachers can effectively teach their students. This includes overseeing basic operations to ensure that the building and classrooms are clean and furnished; providing teachers access to amenities like books, materials, and technology; and creating schedules that proactively inform teachers what and when they will teach.

In addition, principals must provide, if not lead, professional development that assists staff members in

developing an understanding of the sequential nature of curriculum, in selecting appropriate instructional strategies for a given group of students, and in implementing appropriate and timely assessments for diagnostic and reporting purposes.

## ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS AS LEADERS

The AWSP Leadership Framework (2014) asserts that student achievement is front and center in the principal evaluation process. This evaluation system for principals is based on the eight criteria identified in the framework and was created with the intent to foster instructional leadership that results in optimal

“ They are responsible for creating the conditions so that teachers can effectively teach their students.”

learning environments for all children.

As noted by Kipp and colleagues (2014), “Today, more than ever before, principals in Washington’s schools are expected to be leaders of learning” (p. 3). We also note that accountability requirements for building principals continue to increase with every new initiative (e.g., closing the achievement gap,

*Continued on page 36*



building teacher capacity using the CEL 5 D framework and conducting high quality evaluations and coaching conversations). With added accountability also comes the need for support.

Given the complexities and the breadth of the job, principals will clearly need support to enhance their effectiveness as leaders. The AWSP evaluation tool addresses the issue by suggesting supports that districts can provide for principals under each of its eight criteria (see Figure 1).

Yet, how principals might view the utility of these suggested supports was unknown. With this in mind, we asked 60 elementary school principals in Washington state to rate the types of supports suggested by the AWSP framework in terms of if they believed that they were critical to their success as instructional leaders and whether or not their districts provided adequate access to those needed supports.

## IDENTIFYING AND PROVIDING SUPPORT

Our results indicated that principals see all of the supports identified in the survey as critically important to their effectiveness as school leaders. Those identified as most critical were: *time outside the school day to collaborate with staff on instructional practices and data analysis, receiving professional development in best practices to support the learning of subpopulations of students, and using resources for staff training and in-services*. However, their responses about the adequacy of the availability of these supports were low across all of the suggested supports. Principals reported having the least amount of access to: *having time outside the school day for collaborations and data analysis; training coverage and support for building community involvement; and training in best practices to prevent violence*.

“ Given the complexities and the breadth of the job, principals will clearly need support to enhance their effectiveness as leaders.”

The pattern of principals' responses indicates that the AWSP Leadership Framework and the suggested supports under each criterion demonstrate an obvious understanding of the professional needs of principals. That said, it appears that we have a long way to go in order to provide our principals with the level of individualized support that they need for their own context.

An obvious place for district leaders to begin would be to target the area in our study that received the highest rating in terms of critical importance, yet the lowest rating in terms of adequacy of access to the support as provided by their districts, i.e., *the ability to have time with staff outside the school day for collaborations and data analysis*. Time for collaborating with staff is well noted as a significant factor for enhancing effective instructional leadership (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Many, 2010; Marzano & Waters, 2009).

“ Time for collaborating with staff is well noted as a significant factor for enhancing effective instructional leadership.”

The principals in our investigation understand the urgency of the need to work with their teachers to meet the challenges of their student's learning needs and build capacity of teachers to ensure learning and growth, yet need increased support to do so. It is our hope that by giving voice to the principals who participated in our study, these results can be used to create systems of support, professional development

and onboarding for new and experienced principals.

## TAILORING PD NEEDS

A more individualized suggestion is that principals themselves analyze the supports under the 8 AWSP criteria and answer the two questions posed by this study. That will help them identify their own need for supports and then they will be better able to communicate with their supervisors how they wished to be supported. Having a clearly identified list of supports based on the AWSP Framework can help principals tailor their own professional learning needs and seek targeted professional development relevant to their work. Doing so would be considered taking responsibility for their own learning and help them become more effective leaders.

Analyzing and identifying supports critical to them and what they are currently being provided, and sharing this with district leaders, can also help districts review and recreate their own principal professional development plans. ■

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AWSP/WASA

# SUMMER CONFERENCE

LEADERSHIP: EQUITY IN ACTION | JUNE 24-26, 2018 | SPOKANE | [WWW.AWSP.ORG/SC18](http://WWW.AWSP.ORG/SC18)

## Summer Conference Sneak Peek

*We've got a great set of speakers lined up for the upcoming AWSP/WASA Summer Conference, taking place June 24-26 in Spokane. Here's a sneak peek of some of the wisdom we'll tap into as we explore the theme, "Leadership: Equity in Action."*



Dr. Mike Schmoker



Kevin Carroll



Salome Thomas-EL



Dr. Caprice Hollins

### DR. MIKE SCHMOKER

Dr. Mike Schmoker is a former administrator, English teacher and football coach. He has written six books and dozens of articles for educational journals, newspapers and for TIME magazine. His most recent book is "Leading with Focus" which follows his earlier ASCD best-seller, "FOCUS: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning." His previous bestseller, "RESULTS NOW," was a finalist for book of the

year by the Association of Education Publishers.

Dr. Schmoker is the 2014 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award by the National Association of Secondary School Principals for his publications and presentations. He has consulted and keynoted throughout the US, Canada, Australia, China and Jordan. He now lives in Tempe, Arizona with his wife, Cheryl.

Website: [www.mikeschmoker.com](http://www.mikeschmoker.com)

### KEVIN CARROLL

Kevin Carroll is the founder of Kevin Carroll Catalyst/LLC and the author of "Rules of the Red Rubber Ball, What's Your Red Rubber Ball?!" and "The Red Rubber Ball at Work," published by ESPN, Disney Press and McGraw-Hill. It is Carroll's "job" to inspire businesses, organizations and individuals to embrace their spirit of play and creativity to maximize their human potential and sustain more

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meaningful business and personal growth. With his consulting endeavors, Carroll has helped turn creative ideas into reality for organizations such as the NHL, ESPN, Nike, Starbucks, the NBA Walt Disney Company, and many others.

Website: [www.kevincarrollkatalyst.com](http://www.kevincarrollkatalyst.com)

## PRINCIPAL EL

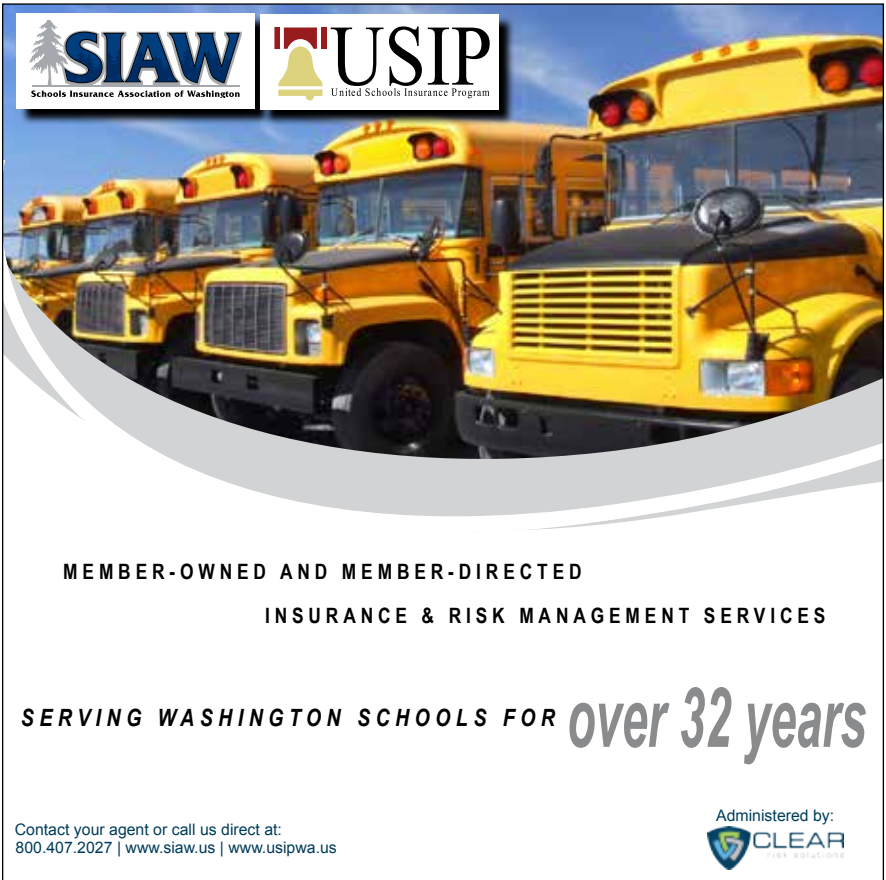
Principal Salome Thomas-EL says, "Every child needs someone to be crazy about them." These words shape Principal EL's lifelong commitment to answering the question, "How do we ensure that every child achieves their greatest potential?" An award-winning teacher, principal, and nationally recognized educator, Principal EL has transformed the attitudes and strategies of school staff, parents, and members of the community to help hundreds of troubled children not only graduate from high school but go on to earn higher degrees from major colleges and universities. (He has also been featured on Dr. Oz!)

Website: [www.principalel.com](http://www.principalel.com)

## DR. CAPRICE HOLLINS

Caprice D. Hollins, Psy.D. was born and raised in Seattle. She received a B.A. in psychology from Seattle University and M.A. and Psy.D. degrees in clinical psychology with an emphasis in multicultural and community psychology from California School of Professional Psychology@LA. She became licensed in Washington state in 2000 and has over 20 years of experience researching, studying, and working with ethnically diverse populations. Her experience includes opening and directing the Department of Equity & Race Relations for Seattle Public Schools. Dr. Hollins is currently an affiliate professor of counseling at The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology. She works hard to balance her passion and commitment to equity and social justice while at the same time raising a family with her husband, Gary Hollins.

Website: [www.culturesconnecting.com](http://www.culturesconnecting.com)



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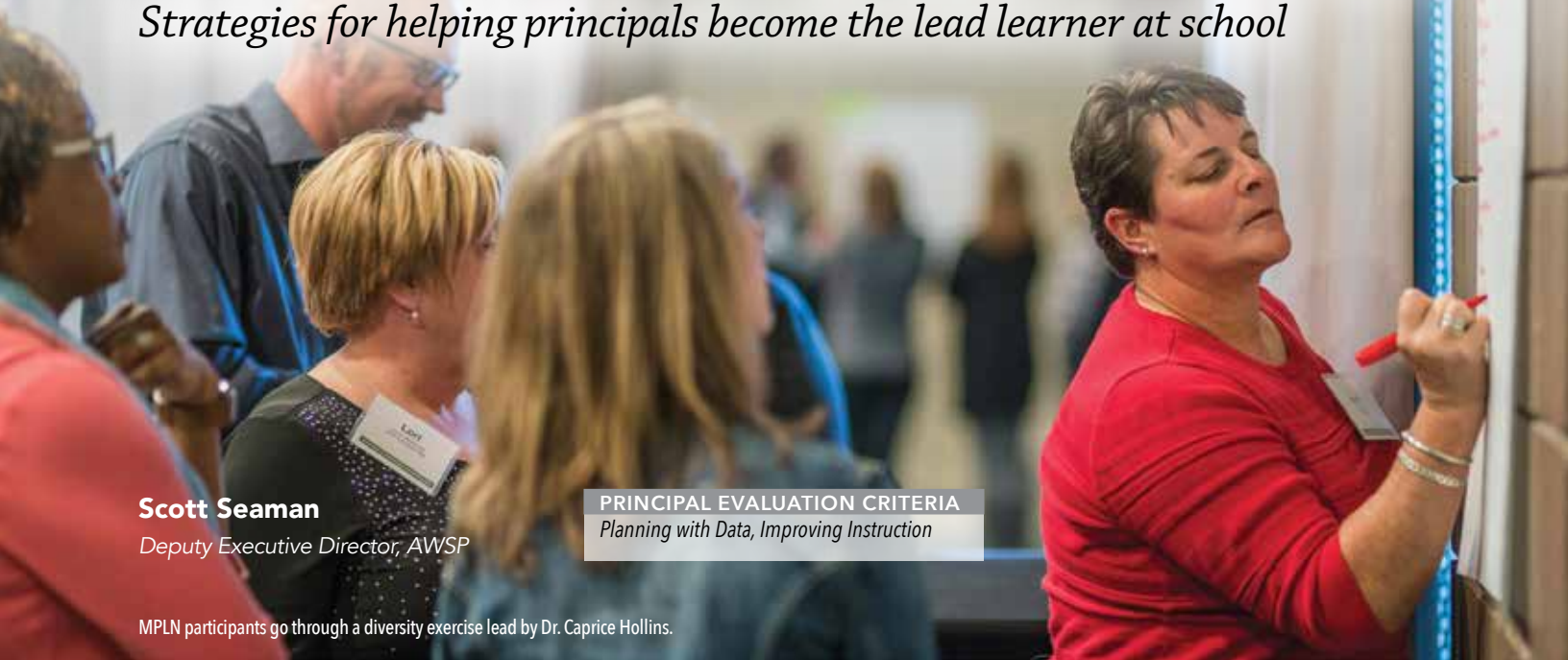
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AA/EO



# WHAT'S YOUR PLN?

*Strategies for helping principals become the lead learner at school*



**Scott Seaman**

*Deputy Executive Director, AWSP*

**PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

*Planning with Data, Improving Instruction*

MPLN participants go through a diversity exercise lead by Dr. Caprice Hollins.

**W**hat's your PLN? Are you so busy worrying about the learning for everyone else you neglect your own professional growth and learning? Is your professional learning time spent running around popping into everyone else's PLCs? How is that helping you? And, is it really helping them?

## STOP THE INSANITY.

There is an urgency for you to be the lead learner in your building. It all starts with you.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NETWORKS

Research on adult learning indicates adults learn best through professional networks where participants are tackling relevant problems of practice connected to their work. The only way to have space to engage in these conversations is to participate in a professional learning network (PLN).

“Is your professional learning time spent running around popping into everyone else's PLCs?”

What's yours?

Is your “PLN” a district principals meeting where you spend more time on administrative tasks? Is it standing in the school cafeteria talking to yourself...or colleagues? Is it following other educational leaders on Twitter?

At AWSP, we believe in the power of professional learning networks and strive to create opportunities for principals to engage in PLNs. From specially designed PLNs for new principals to networks sharing best practices for veterans, we offer the full spectrum. We see principals engaging with each other in many ways around the state. And, more importantly, we see the results of principals networking, sharing,

collaborating and supporting each other.

The question remains: Why isn't every principal involved in a PLN? Again, what's yours?

## MASTERING PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP NETWORK

Principaling alone is principaling ineffectively. There is no other way to spell that out for you. You must be engaged in some form of a PLN or you are missing the most powerful way to push your leadership to the next level. Your growth is the most important in your building. Who has a greater urgency to learn, you or the kids?

AWSP offers a PLN we refer to as the Mastering Principal Leadership Network (MPLN). This network consists of K-12 principals from all around the state who come together throughout the year to share their best practices, learn from each other, and stretch their comfort levels around school leadership. From tough

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conversations about race and equity to the sharing gap-closing strategies, this group hits it all.

Kristen Rue, principal at Chinook Middle School in North Thurston Public Schools and an MPLN participant, said her involvement in this PLN “helped me to kick start some game-changing initiatives in my building.” She added those initiatives are “translating to Chinook becoming a better place to work and go to school for our staff and students.”

The principal at Bonney Lake High School, Cris Turner, shared, “It is a privilege to be a part of a group [MPLN] of such professional and knowledgeable principals! In our everyday work, we run into an extremely large and diverse set of problems and issues. It is comforting to know others are experiencing that same things I am.” He went on to say, “No matter what the issue — scheduling, resource management, interventions, community connections, accountability measures, discipline, etc. — there is someone in the group who will be able to offer concrete strategies to successfully engage in the process of addressing the issue.”

At Toledo Elementary School, Principal Angela Bacon said her involvement in MPLN has expanded her knowledge, skills, and expertise. “My elementary has moved from being a Priority School to a Schools of Distinction and received a Washington State Achievement Award for closing the Achievement Gap for low income students,” she said.

### STOP PRINCIPAL CHURN, START A PLN

So, what’s your PLN? If you are a new or newly assigned principal, you need to join our Launching Principal Leadership Network focused on building your foundation to have a long, successful career as a school leader. If you are in years 2-5,

then you need to join our Building Effective Leaders Network. This PLN will help you move your leadership and the impact on your school to new heights. The only way to do that is to engage with colleagues in ongoing, relevant and timely conversations about best practices.

All of our professional learning events and networks rest on the foundation of current research on adult learning. We believe in providing high quality, relevant and personalized professional learning opportunities for you. You will be engaged in rich discussions with colleagues and spend more time listening and sharing with each other than sitting through death-by-PowerPoint presentations from us. We guarantee you will walk out with tools, tangibles and takeaways to be used back in your building. In fact, we will model the professional learning you should be leading back in your school for your teachers.

So, what are you waiting for?

Principal churn in our state has a profound impact on student learning. A lot of churn is related to principals feeling overwhelmed by the daily demands of the job and the lack of support. We all know being a

“ In order for you to be the best you for your students and staffulty, you must take care of yourself first.”

principal is one of the most important and rewarding jobs in the world. We need great principals to create great schools for kids. More importantly, we need those great principals to stay longer in their respective schools. When a school loses a principal, the process of creating culture has to start all over. To stop that churn, we need to do a better job of supporting principals to become even more effective while leading the same building over the course of time. That is what is best for kids.

The only way to increase our effectiveness is through the creation of powerful, rewarding and engaging principal professional learning networks. In order for you to be the best you for your students and staffulty, you must take care of yourself first.

What’s your PLN? ■

## AWSP Theory of Professional Learning

Learning happens when adults ...

- **Access** expertise inside and outside of the group
- **Participate** in authentic activities with the group
- **Practice** with relevant Problems of Practice
- **Engage** (formally & informally) with colleagues
- **Apply** new learning to professional contexts
- **Reflect** on leadership and new learnings





At the House of Awakened Culture in Suquamish, squeals of excitement, cheers of accomplishment and the groan of an occasional defeat were all a part of the team-building activities.



## WALK, TALK AND ROCK LIKE A LEADER A DAY OF SERIOUS FUN!

### Joe Fenbert

Program Director, Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL)

A nine-card deck of slick concept cards, silly songs with motions, sit-down story times and a crew of cool high school role models are the ingredients that make the AWSL “Walk, Talk and Rock Like a Leader” workshop a hit for elementary students. Through engaging activities, planned reflection and a dose of good-old fashioned face

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Ensuring Student Safety, Closing the Gap*

“The AWSL crew were instrumental in developing skills in teamwork, knowledge of inclusive recess games and growing leadership capacity among our students.”

to face play, elementary students learn how to lead themselves, help others and make their schools a kinder for everyone.

Travis Howell, principal at Jennings Elementary School, Colfax School

District, explained how the “Walk, Talk and Rock Like a Leader” workshop fits into their school improvement plans.

“We have been developing ways to

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improve our school culture through PBIS by developing school-wide common expectations that we are intentional about teaching,” said Howell. “The AWSL crew were instrumental in developing skills in teamwork, knowledge of inclusive recess games and growing leadership capacity among our students. Some of these students have now become leaders on the playground. Our K-2 age range is learning how to play appropriately while still having fun. It was a great day that has continued to have positive impacts on our school culture.”

## WALK, TALK AND ROCK WITH STUDENTS OR STAFF

The “Walk, Talk and Rock Like a Leader” program is designed as a two- to three-hour program for up to 120 upper elementary students. High school students help ensure the small group teambuilding activities run smoothly while serving as positive role models during the day. For each concept, a card, song, activity and story cement the message.

Jeannie Isaak-Turner, a preschool teacher and parapro at Coulee City Elementary, said the program engaged all students.

“The way they incorporated songs,



Students participating in some WTR fun and games.

acronyms, leadership concepts and fun games was so helpful. As a teacher and a recess supervisor, it gave me great tools to use. It also taught the kids necessary social skills to get to know each other, play fair, play fun and include everyone!” she said.

“The program helped kids practice building positive relationships by listening, smiling, inviting, asking good questions and learning the strengths of their leadership style. I think it would be helpful for any group of people who need the important skills of getting along and working together as a team where

everyone is valued and appreciated. Let’s do it as a staff!”

One of the unique twists of the Coulee City Elementary program was the opportunity for non-traditional student leaders to serve.

“We reached out to our child development class to find the students to be the role models,” said Coulee City Elementary Principal Kelley Boyd, “Often, the student leaders of a school are used over and over again for special events. By using the Our Child Development Class students, it gave them an opportunity to shine and put some of their classroom knowledge to use in a practical setting.”

The frenetic pace of the program is balanced with intentional calm breaks for concept-based stories and reflection.



## BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Each word in the program’s title serves as a metaphor. **Walking like a leader** means learning to be your best self each day through listening and building positive relationships through the Smile, Shake and Share technique.

**Talking like a leader** means learning and living leadership skills each and every day. Specific skills that are explored are being a positive member of a cooperative learning group through understanding that



Imaginary play is the hook that keeps the students engaged and moving.

everyone has a natural leadership style and the acronym Be NICE (Notice others to Invite, Compliment and Encourage).

**Rocking like a leader** means using your leadership skills to improve your school, community and world. This concept is addressed two ways. Students learn to improve play at recess through learning inclusive recess and table games under the guidance of the “Play of Allegiance”: Play fair, play fun, everyone plays with everyone. Students also generate ideas for the classrooms, hallways, lunchroom, going to and from school and on social media that fall under the categories Create a Culture where everyone feels like they belong, Ensure Safety where everyone feels comfortable and Close the Gap where everyone learns.

“When everyone works together, you can achieve what seemed impossible. It takes all types of leaders to achieve something,” said a Suquamish Elementary fifth-grader. “The program not only served our elementary students, it served our high school leaders as well.

Students at Suquamish Elementary eventually feed into either Kingston High School or the Chief Kitsap High School, so we intentionally brought

“ When everyone works together, you can achieve what seemed impossible. It takes all types of leaders to achieve something.”

in high school students from both schools,” said Gwen Lyons, principal at Suquamish Elementary. Lucy Dafoe, the principal of Chief Kitsap, and I worked together to recruit a group of student leaders. I’m not sure who had more fun and learned the most during the day, the elementary kids or the high school students.”

### MORE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

The “Walk, Talk and Rock Like a Leader” program is one of three workshops offered to elementary schools. It provides a two-three hour leadership opportunity for the upper elementary grades. The 60- to 90-minute All Play workshop focuses on inclusive recess games and it is appropriate for both upper and lower elementary grades. The Leadership 101 workshop is designed as a day-long training for a student leadership council or room representatives. It highlights meeting skills, public speaking and how to be a role model.

Thanks in large part to the support of principals, AWSL spent the last several years building school climate and leadership programs for elementary students. Along with “Walk, Talk and Rock Like a Leader” for the middle and upper elementary grades, AWSL developed All Play, a 60- to 90-minute workshop for all ages of elementary students, focused on inclusive recess and table games. Another elementary program is Leadership 101, a day-long training on meeting and communication skills for elementary student councils or room representatives.

Adding in 25 years of middle level curriculum and program development, and more than 60 years of high school camps and conferences, the continued support of principals enabled AWSL to become one of the preminent leadership programs in the nation, allowing us to build a continuum of leadership curriculum for students from kindergarten through high school graduation. ■

High school students are the “cool cards” that act as role models and leaders of small group activities.





# Own Your School's Messaging with Twitter



## Darren Nelson

Principal, Mt. Spokane HS, Mead SD

**"Twitter?** I'll never use it. Can't see anyone in my community actually entering the Twitterverse."

When thinking about the myriad avenues available to communicate information to school communities, Twitter seemed the least likely to grace my phone or computer six years ago.

Monthly newsletters (digital and online), automated phone callers, our school homepage, and with some hesitation, Facebook (\*gasp\*), were the places we guided anyone who hoped to glean information on Mt. Spokane High School. While these formats were — and are — effective ways to communicate, I found myself wanting to celebrate the great things happening within our school in a more timely manner. After watching a student tweet during lunch in 2012, I talked to her about what she liked about Twitter and I decided to take the leap.

Now, six years, 5,907 tweets, and 1,394 followers later, Twitter is part of my daily routine.

The ability to push positive, inspiring, celebratory and sometimes urgent information is now just 280

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Engaging Communities

“Remember, if you don't create your own message on social media, somebody else will do it for you.”

characters away. As parents and students reply, tag our school, like or re-tweet these messages, the narrative of our school community as a positive place only increases. Add local media, other schools, universities and educational professionals to the Twitter mix, and the value of having Mt. Spokane High School in this arena far outweighs any hesitations I once had in my mind.

For those looking to introduce their school to the world of Twitter, here are my four recommendations:

1. If you make the choice to add Twitter to your communication portfolio, stay committed to the platform. This means checking your page each day, refreshing the imagery and tweeting each week.
2. Although it's not best practice, our Twitter feed populates our

Facebook page. This is simply a matter of consistency and time-management.

3. Empower other staff in the building to add content, but keep your circle small and trusted. Too many hands on one account may lead to inconsistency and unwanted messaging.
4. Go for it! If after a few months, Twitter just isn't for you or your school community, simply disable the Twitter handle you created. You have little to lose!

While we still are refining our use of all social media platforms, it's become clear our school must enter the world our students and parents are using daily. This is where information is being received and shared.

Remember, if you don't create your own message on social media, somebody else will do it for you. Twitter is a great place to start! ■

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# THE CISPUS LEARNING CENTER GROWS TEACHERS!

**Martin E. Fortin, Jr.**

*Director of Learning Centers, AWSP*

**PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

*Improving Instruction, Closing the Gap*

**T**he Principals' Learning Centers have grown to be more than a place for fifth-grade outdoor school and summer leadership camps.

Our efforts to serve more and larger audiences have evolved.

Promoting and growing teachers is one aspect of our work. The experience we offer at our residential

learning laboratories have proven to be invaluable. Whether they come to us for a three-month internship or the challenge course, a year-long AmeriCorps adventure, or return to a summer leadership camp week, the time with us is convincing - the education profession is a great career choice. I asked four premier educators to comment on their pathway to teaching. Here are their responses.

**Travis recently completed his student teaching in science and is substituting while looking for his first teaching job:**



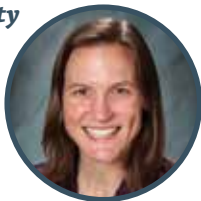
"I first went to Cispus for a leadership camp in high school.

*Continued on page 46*

I knew I would one day become a teacher, but I wasn't planning on entering the profession right away. Mt. Baker Leadership Camp provided me with a leg up in team work and communication skills, and servant leadership. I returned to become a staff member as soon as I could. Summer 2018 will be my sixth year on staff, and I credit the inspiring and motivational group of people at helping myself achieve the goals I have set for myself.

The years of practice facilitating, challenging and mentoring students through my time of service at Cispus prepared me well for the teaching profession; I will receive my teaching certificate this spring. It is hard not to be inspired by the great people on staff who donate their time to help serve the students. After working at Cispus, it is hard to imagine anything other than teaching."

**Susan is now deputy superintendent for a Washington state Educational Service District. She came to us years ago wondering if education was right for her:**



"While my path to an education career resulted from various experiences, being an intern at Cispus Learning Center encouraged me to pursue the field of education. My experience at Cispus also influenced how I conducted myself as a teacher and administrator, and how I interacted with students, staff, families, and colleagues.

Challenge course initiatives teach and reinforce soft skills and teamwork. Participants are encouraged to set individual and team goals and reflect on their progress throughout initiatives.

Participants experience various leadership roles in a physically safe and emotionally supportive environment.

There are many parallels between being a challenge course facilitator and being an effective teacher and administrator. Being an intern at Cispus gave me exposure to teaching & learning in a non-traditional approach to the field of education."

**Sarah is in her second year of teaching Spanish full-time at a high school in Portland. She joined us as an AmeriCorps volunteer in 2013, and spent her time at a local high school:**



"My AmeriCorps experience connected me to teaching in a number of ways: (1) the educational experience I got as a tutor and mentor has been invaluable, and given me a major leg up on every job interview since, including the one for my current teaching position; (2) as a teacher candidate and grad student, I felt ahead of my peers because I worked in a school and already knew a lot about how to navigate the public education system (administration, paperwork, graduation requirements, state/national testing, etc.); (3) working at the teen center and the classroom during my year of service gave me confidence working with teens and taking a leadership role; and (4) I am now somewhat 'known' at my high school for being really good at building community among students and staff, mostly using strategies I learned as an AmeriCorps volunteer."

Basically, my experience at Cispus AmeriCorps paved the way for my teaching career and launched me

pretty far ahead of my peers. That boost of initial experience not only helped me get this job, but helped me keep and get better at it. I considered quitting in late October my first year. I was brand new, things were getting really difficult at school, and I really lacked confidence. I think had I not had so much additional experience in education through AmeriCorps, I would not have been in a place to persevere and keep going. The rest of the year went much better after October, and I am really excited to keep teaching!"

**Marissa is in her first year as a high school English and leadership teacher:**



"I entered my Masters of Education program at the age of 22 feeling ready for my own classroom from the first day. In our initial practicum placement, we were paired with another member of the cohort to shadow a teacher and practice teaching lessons in live settings. My placement partner never stood in front of 30 14-year-olds, and he was nervous and hesitant to take the risk. I found myself thinking, 'If I could stand in front of 250 teenagers I didn't know yet and sing/dance to silly songs about frogs and bananas, then I can teach this lesson to these 30 kids today.' From that moment on, I confidently pursued my passion, and eventually landed my dream job. I credit much of my teaching experience to Cispus because it was there I first became a 'teacher'.

I joined the Mt. Baker Leadership Camp staff after being a delegate twice in high school and since then, I have been on both junior and senior staff for a total of about six years. Since I was 18, I have facilitated discussions



as I practiced asking thought-provoking questions in small group settings. Camp is a place where students learn the importance of reflection and mindfulness as tools to help them discover their own identities. I spent my years on staff learning from a group filled with educators, administrators and people with the natural gift of inspiring the best in others. I am a first-generation college student, but I never felt ill-prepared for my journey because I constantly received love, guidance and support from the staff members who are both my teachers and my friends.

Mt. Baker centers on the values of knowledge, courage and compassion. Those became the guiding principles behind my current teaching philosophy. I know education is more than teaching things to kids. It's about making a difference in someone's life and showing people love and kindness, even if they are different than you. The camp staff models the ideal group of educators that the world needs now more than ever before. I was destined to do this work and I discovered — and continue to rediscover— that at Cispus.”

I am convinced Cispus Learning Center is an ideal incubator for teachers. A sustained experience with us can help the potential teacher decide their future goals. We take all who are interested.

If you know someone who would benefit from spending time with us, point them in our direction. ■

## Share the Value of Membership!



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# THE WORK OF EQUITY: It Starts with the Principal

**John Custer**

*Principal, West Valley HS,  
West Valley SD*

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Improving Instruction, Closing the Gap*

**D**iscussing equity is not an easy thing to do unless you are in a group of like-minded people. That could be a group that is racially and ethnically diverse or not — but still thinks alike.

Group think is easy. Most often, a group just reinforces its thinking as it creates a group narrative. The problem is unique and distinct individual narratives help us understand the need to reexamine ourselves and get lost in the group's passion for the idea of equity, rather than the analysis of the topic and more importantly, ourselves. If we do not start with ourselves, then the analysis and solution will inevitably start with them. So all of us are absolved, and the problem is with them. Once that happens, all rational dialogue stops and feelings take over them — guilt, shame, anger which begets denial, defensiveness, wariness, and maybe the worst of all, avoidance.

Equity takes a backseat again, and the status quo remains.

### A HOPEFUL APPROACH TO EQUITY

When I saw our AWSP group, Mastering of Principal Leadership



Dr. Caprice Hollins leads professional learning on issues of race and equity at MPLN.

Network (MPLN), was going to take on the topic of equity, I was very leery of the process and outcomes. The first presentation and resulting discussions did not calm my trepidations and I found myself taking the route of what I just called the worst approach of all — avoidance. I remained silent (and anyone who knows me, knows how hard that is for me). However, just when I was ready to do the typical administrator avoidance approach (checking my all-important e-mail and texts) Kurt Hatch, AWSP's director of diversity, made some

thoughtful references to the book, "Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People." The terms "blind spot" and "good people" seemed to be more engaging and less threatening. Also, the research exposes the pitfalls of the "them and us" paradigm — thus, borrowing from the 60's cartoon character Pogo, "We have met the enemy, and he [them] is us."

### A PATHWAY TO SOLUTIONS

MPLN met again in January, and equity was again on the agenda. So given the work done before, I

anticipated an opportunity to dig into this topic and find some ways to engage my staff in the work of equity.

Having read “Blind Spot,” I was enlightened by the research regarding implicit association, hidden-bias blind spots everyone has. When Dr. Caprice Hollins effectively challenged us to get deeper into Equity-Focused Leadership, I was ready to fully engage and grow.

“ So now we can avoid, as President Bush described it, “the soft bias of low expectations.”

Dr. Hollins led with a very important focus as she took us through a series of bias exploring activities to discover our own bias’s knowing we would not immediately change the biases formed through many experiences in our life. However, in recognizing our biases — our blind spots — we could effectively respond in an unbiased and equitable way. So now we can avoid, as President Bush described it, “the soft bias of low expectations.”

Knowing it is not the initial biased feelings we have that we are responsible for, but the rational response considering equity is what reduces the unproductive feelings of guilt, wariness defensiveness and avoidance. It provides a pathway to positive actions.

### MY BLIND SPOT

It is one thing to accept the research behind the implicit associations revealing blind spots, and another thing to start examining myself.

Once I began, I realized why my reluctance to talk about equity was not just the problems I noted earlier. As a white male who grew up in an intact, middle class family with its roots in the Depression

and WWII, I was imbued with an ethic around work, resiliency, responsibility, sacrifice, team and delayed satisfaction. Like most people from the “Greatest Generation,” my parents believed in a no excuses, pull-yourself-up philosophy. It is at the core of American Individualism. They are worthwhile values and not exclusive to white males whose formative years were in the ‘50s and early ‘60s.

However, when equity starts and finishes with the explicit suggestion that all people have to do is simply apply these values, the conversation stops as implicit biases are buried below an explicit value system. Ironically, the success of minorities are used to reinforce the idea implicit bias does not exist and the system works equally for all. When reflecting on this, I realized I excused myself from tough discussions on equity by using that “rugged individualism”

philosophy. But once I identified my rationalizing away my personal responsibility to understand my bias, I knew I was responsible to provide Equity-Focused Leadership for my staff and students.

### FIRST STEP IN PRESENTING THE EQUITY ISSUE

At first, the thought of challenging my staff to explore their implicit biases created a bit of anxiety.

OK, a lot of anxiety.

After taking into account the culture our staff created at West Valley High School, I believe we laid the critical groundwork needed to launch this discussion (and that first step is to remind our staff of what they have done and why it has moved us in toward the equity discussion —equity is the bonding agent for all that we have done to create our Positive Climate at WVHS).

*Continued on page 50*

John Custer presents a breakout session at the 2017 AWSP/WASA Summer Conference.



The three most important pieces of the groundwork:

1. Equity in schools starts with standardized, consistent and rigorous curriculum and instruction. Every student is disadvantaged when we don't provide that across the board for each and every student.
2. A Redemptive Culture must have significant practices built into the system – our retake policy creates an emphasis on engaging

and teaching students rather than sorting out students.

3. We consistently speak to our teaching ethic: "We do not teach a course content and skills to a class of students, but we teach each student course content and skills in each class."
4. Our staff works with several pieces of data breaking out sub-groupings (every three weeks our staff gets a grade breakdown – our 18-week grade check shown below). We know we need to dig

deeper into the data after looking at implicit bias.


If we remind ourselves of the good work done already by good people, we should be able to embrace the topic of equity and implicit bias in order to strengthen the good and guarantee equity for all student. Given I started my own journey in discovering my biases and concluding our staff started on their journey toward equity, I can move forward with the equity discussion with much less trepidation. ■

### 2017-18 SEMESTER GRADE CHECK

EQUITY TOTALS AND GRAND TOTALS	A	B	C	D	F
Minority Male:	40.2%	23.4%	25.0%	8.6%	2.8%
Minority Female:	58.9%	27.7%	8.1%	3.9%	1.5%
Non-Minority Male:	41.0%	26.1%	17.1%	9.8%	6.0%
Non-Minority Female:	47.6%	27.8%	14.5%	6.8%	3.4%
GRAND TOTAL	44.5%	26.9%	15.8%	8.2%	4.6%



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Our quarterly profile of educational leadership in Washington state.

# Tami Skillingstad

Assistant Principal, Westwood Middle School, Cheney SD



*In this edition of Honor Roll, we are proud to feature Tami Skillingstad, AWSP's 2018 Assistant Principal of the Year. Tami's peers on the Association of Washington Middle Level Principals (AWMLP) chose to honor her exemplary leadership with Cheney School District students and adults through this award.*

## What made you decide to go into education?

Great and impactful teachers I had as a student: Mr. Gunderson and Mrs. Byrd. These two educators changed the trajectory of my life in such a positive way that I wanted to do the same for others.

## What led you to pursue school leadership?

This decision was a quick one. Our district planned to downsize the district office staff and use this money for staffing in buildings. I was the math and science coordinator at the district office and then assigned, after approval from the building principal, to be an assistant middle school principal and athletic director. I was so excited and fortunate to work with a principal that I have the highest respect for and in a building with teachers that are professional, have high expectations and love kids.

## What's the best part about being an assistant principal? The most challenging?

I love being with the students and having fun in my job every day. The most challenging part of being an assistant principal is the time commitment needed to get all of the work done well.

“The most challenging part of being an assistant principal is the time commitment needed to get all of the work done well.”

## What are the biggest challenges facing principals today?

A school today must provide numerous wrap-around services outside of reading, writing and math to all students. Our school provides nutrition, clothing, social and emotional support, health services, mental health services, counseling, restorative practices, discipline, extracurricular opportunities, and academics with intentional student centered interventions and enrichments. Today's principals are managing and running a highly complex system.

## What do you view as some of the strengths and opportunities of education reform?

One of the opportunities of education reform is for our state to fully fund public education. I hope we continue to make progress toward fully funding our public schools, which will have a

positive effect on all of our students. Our society will benefit when these students are adults. Another strength of education reform is the Common Core State Standards (Washington State Learning Standards) which outline the knowledge and skills all students should have and be able to do at each grade level.

## What advice would you give to a new assistant principal?

Work for an extraordinary principal. Don't be afraid of hard work. Try your best every day. Listen — really listen to others — and learn. See and understand the positive in others.

## What do you do to unwind and step away?

I love family vacations and continue to beg my adult children to join my husband and me on our excursions. Attending and rocking out at live concerts is another way I unwind by just getting lost in the music and the moments. As I get older, my dance moves have slowed to avoid injury. ■

**2018 AWSP/WASA**



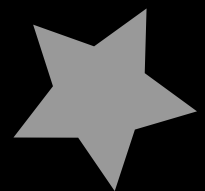
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## New State Discipline Rules:

# BACKLASH

# OR BALANCE?

### Gary Kipp

AWSP Executive Director

### Do you remember

the unbridled exhilaration of swinging on a swing when you were a child?

As you started back down, with the ground in front of you, you would pull back and stretch your legs as far as you could, and each time you got a little bit higher. You knew that the higher you got going forward, the higher you got going back, and that was the thrill that you could feel all the way down into your tummy. And, if you were lucky enough to have someone push you, you didn't have to pump at all. The inertia resulting from the force of gravity bringing you back to earth caused you to go nearly as high on the other side with no effort at all. If mom was pushing you from one side and dad was pushing you

“

The initial draft placed such an onerous restriction on removing disruptive students from class and school that I worry the result will ultimately swing the pendulum higher on the other side.”

back in the other direction, you would spend your afternoon effortlessly on top of the arc on one side, passing quickly past the ground on the way to the top of the arc on the other side. What a rush.

I was reminded of this phenomenon when analyzing the proposed draft of the new discipline WACs that are being written by OSPI this year. State Superintendent Chris Reykdal's office has been tasked with the difficult challenge of writing these rules to guide districts on how to implement

the new laws governing student discipline next year.

To their credit, OSPI staff held statewide input sessions to hear ideas from the public on how they should approach this work. At the time of this publication, OSPI released its draft of the revised proposed rules and is awaiting further public input before finalizing them this spring and putting them in effect by the start of the 2018-19 school year. The

*Continued on page 54*



initial draft placed such an onerous restriction on removing disruptive students from class and school that I worry the result will ultimately swing the pendulum higher on the other side.

It wasn't long ago that "no tolerance" policies were the rage. If a third-grader ate his peanut butter sandwich into the shape of a gun, out the door he would go. No tolerance for misbehavior translated into no judgment for those enforcing the rules. Think of no tolerance for misbehavior as the top of the arc on one side of the swing. Think of no tolerance for punishment as the top of the arc on the other side of the swing. The new WACs are providing momentum to get higher on the side of no tolerance for punishment.

Granted, this picture is an overstatement of reality. We were never at the top of the arc with state policies regarding no tolerance for misbehavior, and we are not going to make it to the top of the arc on the other side. And granted, we need to deal with the disparity of suspensions in many schools among sub populations. However, I believe it is fair to predict that the higher the swing gets on the no-tolerance-for-punishment side, the easier it will be to get as high on the other side.

When it becomes more difficult to remove a disruptive student from class, even temporarily, and when schools are responsible to provide a comparable education to the removed student that the behaving students are receiving in class, the more likely it will be that we see a backlash propelling the swing in the other direction. ■



Gary Kipp has served as AWSP's executive director since 2003. He has more than 40 years' experience as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and assistant superintendent.

# Humor me!

Created by **David Ford**, Retired Washington State Principal



# LAUNCHING PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP NETWORK

FOR NEW OR NEWLY ASSIGNED PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

## Save the Date!

**Stage 1: July 25-26, 2018 | ESD 113 in Tumwater**

The Launching Principal Leadership series brings new and newly assigned principals and assistant principals three opportunities to maximize their leadership during the first year. Attendees will hear from practicing principals, university professors and other educational experts in each workshop, which are based on one of three stages during a new administrator's first year.

Watch for details at [www.awsp.org/LPL](http://www.awsp.org/LPL)



From the Boardroom to the Classroom | May 23, 2018 | DoubleTree SeaTac

## Register for the 2018 Equity Conference

**When:** Wednesday, May 23, 2018

**Where:** DoubleTree Hotel SeaTac

**Audience:** Leadership teams from districts, ESDs and state agencies.

**Pricing:** \$250 per registrant (Includes breakfast, lunch, and clock hours)

**Registration is now open at [www.wasa-oly.org](http://www.wasa-oly.org).**



**Dr. Anthony Greenwald, Ph.D.**, Harvard University. Author of the acclaimed book *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*. Professor, University of Washington.

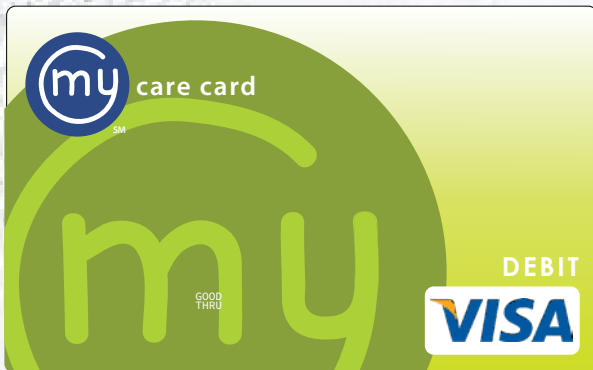


**Dr. Robin DiAngelo**, professor, author, consultant and two-time Educator of the Year recipient (UW). Dr. DiAngelo has been a consultant and trainer for over 20 years on issues of racial and social justice.



**Matt Utterback**, 2017 National Superintendent of the Year. Supt. Utterback was hailed for his equity leadership related to student growth and graduation rates.





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