

# Washington Principal

ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

VOLUME 3 - 2019-20



## TRIBAL EDUCATION

### *ALSO IN THIS ISSUE*

- Leading in Unprecedented Times
- Inclusionary Practices
- Shadowing a Student
- The Principal-PTA Relationship



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# WashingtonPrincipal

Association of Washington  
School Principals  
VOLUME 3 – 2019-20



COVER STORY



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**Cover photo:** A Nisqually Tribe member participates in the Billy Frank Jr. Day celebration at Nisqually Middle school. *Photo by Xenia Doualle*

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# LEADING in Unprecedented Times

The COVID-19 global pandemic challenges us all to rise as leaders

**Dr. Scott Seaman**

*Executive Director, AWSP*

**N**one of us could have imagined or predicted our current reality. You were all principaling along per normal in the hustle and bustle of school when all of sudden the world literally came to a stop. School as we knew it, was over. After a few weeks of confusion, worry, and speculation, you overnight became a digital principal. And, overnight, we became an association charged with supporting you in this new virtual reality.

As a result, this spring, the team at AWSP made strategic adjustments in order to continue providing the highest level of support for K-12 principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders in our state.

We are facing unprecedented times in public education right now, and per normal, principals are right in the middle of everything. Your students, staff, parents, and community are looking to you for answers to questions that don't have answers yet. You are stuck in between a rock and a hard place, and we get that. Please

continue to reach out and share with us both the amazing success stories you are having while leading during these challenging times AND the barriers you are running up against.

Your communication with us is vital as your professional association shares your voice while sitting at the Zoom table with policymakers, discussing next steps for the K-12 system. Now is the time to make your voice heard and influence the big decisions that will impact you and your school.

Although we are working remotely, our AWSP team is strategically deployed to continue fighting for principals, the principalship and all students. Here's how we have been and continue to be here for you during the crisis:

**Advocacy:** We are representing your voice at a state-level group defining what "continuous learning" should look like in our state at every level. We are also sharing your reality with the K-12 State Leadership COVID workgroup. And, even though the legislative session is over, now even more than ever, we are reaching out

to our colleagues at the governor's office, OSPI, and state and national representatives to describe your daily realities.

**Professional Learning:** We are helping principals network with each other within their regions and across the state via Zoom and other platforms. We also continue to encourage YOU to apply for our Networked Improvement Community grants. They can provide financial resources for you to gather — virtually — with your colleagues. We continue to put more and more resources on our AWSP YouTube channel. And, we've committed to bringing the greatest AWSP/WASA Summer Conference ever straight to you — virtually. Plan to join us!

**Member Support:** You can call 800.562.6100 just like normal and be connected to any one of our amazing staff. Our phones are ringing and we continue to support all of our members throughout the state during this crisis. If you need some quick advice and/or support with an issue regarding your employment, please don't hesitate to give us a call.



Your leadership has always mattered, but it matters even more, now.”

**Diversity and Equity:** Although we’ve had to cancel the 2020 Equity Summit and the MTSS Fest, our focus hasn’t changed. AWSP fights for equitable systems for kids and right now that battle has never been more important. Again, keep reaching out to us about the barriers you are encountering in your district when trying to serve the kids in your school.

**Student Leadership:** With great disappointment, we have made the difficult, yet necessary decision to not hold our 2020 residential summer camp programs on our campuses. Since 1956, AWSL has offered summer leadership programs for our state. Our conclusion, like the times we are living in, is unprecedented. This decision was not made lightly.

However, our amazing summer staff members are busy developing some unique programming options for this summer. We are working to bring parts of our programs to you at your site. More details will be coming your way in

the next couple of weeks. Even if your school wasn’t slated to attend a camp this summer, let us work with your team of leaders this summer.

As you know, AWSL is not one event or camp; it is all of us, together. AWSL is an integral part of AWSP and this is one of your resources to continue your work with student leaders. AWSL looks forward to welcoming you back to events in the next school year and to residential leadership camps next summer.

Check out the long list of resources on the AWSL website at [www.AWSLEaders.org](http://www.AWSLEaders.org).

**Learning Centers:** While we have not had any visitors since mid-March, Cispus is working ahead on some infrastructure improvements towards our utilities. Cispus is also holding a fundraising campaign of Cispus shirts or Cispus wood cookies. Check out [awsplearningcenters.org](http://awsplearningcenters.org) for more information. And since we are not holding our residential programs on

site this summer, please give us a call. If your school is interested in utilizing Cispus or Chewelah Peak this summer.

**Communications:** Our team is working tirelessly to mine all of the great COVID related resources out there and update our website daily. That should be your first stop every day. I already mentioned our YouTube channel, but I’ll say it again, check it out and subscribe today. We work hard not to bombard you with unnecessary communications, so when you see something from us, take the time to click on it, open it, and read it. We are sending “Principal Matters” out weekly during these closures. Our goal is to help you be an informed and effective school leader.

Finally, as you know, I’m a big believer in hope and relationships as the foundation for our schools, and this has to be one of the hardest times in school history to be a champion of hope. We need to continue to be communicators of hope and do whatever it takes to maintain those relationships with kids.

Your leadership has always mattered, but it matters even more, now. ■





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Elementary  
 Middle Level  
 High School

#### National Affiliates

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

## How's Your Vision?

*AWSP offers vision coverage for members who have set their sights on improved culture, systems, and learning.*

### David Morrill

*Communications Director, AWSP*

## For leaders, vision is critical —

and we aren't talking about eyesight.

Vision, by a school leader's definition, is seeing culture, systems, and learning through a lens of hope. What's current reality, and how can it be improved? What can be done to maximize student voice, innovation, and family engagement? In the wake of COVID-19, vision is even more important than ever.

For example, we couldn't pass up the opportunity to give our 2020 Summer Conference a vision theme. For one, there are too many good puns. (We have your prescription for a great year!) But more importantly, this is a critical time in education for focus, clarity, and insight. Our virtual conference sessions will address social emotional learning, inclusionary practices, strategic communication and engagement, and more. We hope you'll join us online June 29-30 for a time of planning and renewal.

Our vision doesn't end at Summer Conference. The AWSP team is working on a five-year-planning tool to help members use the School Leader Paradigm to improve culture, systems, and learning in their schools over the course of five years. (Learn more at [www.awsp.org/paradigm](http://www.awsp.org/paradigm).)

This issue of the magazine includes fresh perspectives on inclusion, diversity, key relationships in the school, and leading in unprecedented times. We also highlight the leadership of North Thurston Public Schools and River Ridge High School (my alma mater!) Assistant Principal Mike Smith. They're making sure the relationship between the Nisqually tribe and the schools who serve their students won't be overlooked.

We've seen tremendous examples this spring of what leadership looks like and how vital your roles are. With so much uncertainty about next school year, it's never too early to envision how you'll take what you learned this spring and apply those lessons this fall and beyond. What will school like next year? How will you address equity gaps made wider by the pandemic? Where do you see yourself as a leader this time next year? Five years from now?

Keep your eyes on the prize as this school year draws to a close, but keep thinking about the future. As a former hockey player, I'll leave you with this quote from hockey legend Wayne Gretzky, who said, "I skate to where the puck is going, not where it's been." So I ask you dear reader, "What puck are you skating to?" ■



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

# ASK A PRINCIPAL

## “What’s Your Superpower?”

Back in October, we asked our members on Facebook, “If you were a new Marvel character, what would your superhero name be, and what would be your superpower?” Here are some of the amazing answers we received!

“ **CAPTAIN NAMERICA** — I am really fortunate to be able to remember the name of every student, volunteer, and parent that walks through the door of our school.”

**Jeff Byrnes**  
Principal, Mountain Meadow Elementary,  
White River SD

“ **STAT GIRL** — I would be able to eliminate the fear of math with one swoop of my hand. Students (and parents) would be able to say, ‘I may not understand math now, but I can persevere through, understand, apply, and even like math one day.’”



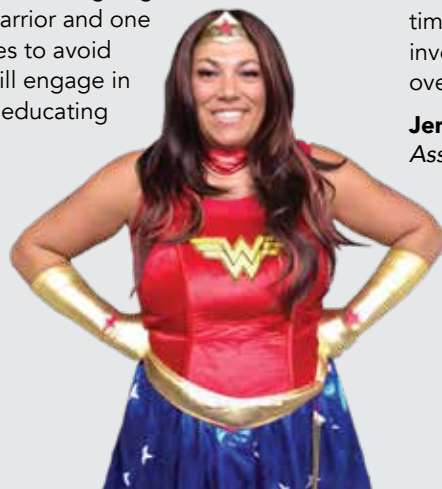
**Tanya Anne Simons**  
Assistant Principal, Lakes High, Clover Park SD

“ I would be **THE INCREDIBLE HOPE!!!** Smashing negativity and poor self image!! Dr. Discourage would be my nemesis!! Hope Smash!!”

**Brock Maxfield**  
Principal, Hoquiam High, Hoquiam SD

“ I know that **WONDER WOMAN (WW)** is not a Marvel character; however, you have never seen me and WW in the same room. My staff will agree with this. WW is a compassionate, caring, stubborn, opinionated, highly competitive, outgoing, amazing woman. WW is a warrior and one has to be in this job. She tries to avoid conflict but if pressed she will engage in battle all for the purpose of educating our youth.”

**Sarita Whitmire-Skeith**  
Principal, Sultan High,  
Sultan SD



“ **AQUA MAN** — because in my first year in a new building/new town, my superpowers help me keep my nose above water...barely.”

**Nate Salisbury**  
Principal, Oak Harbor High, Oak Harbor SD

“ **THE FANNY PACK PRINCIPAL** — It started as a joke, but now I wear one every day. I wear it as a crossbody (business in the front, party in the back). It holds my radio, schedule, fidgets, bubble timer, theraputty and PBIS tickets. Proud to say the trend has caught on and I’m not the only person rocking these awesome things around my school.”

**Mallory Wilson**  
Assistant Principal,  
Chambers Prairie Elementary,  
North Thurston PS



“ **CAPTAIN OBVIOUS** — because it is obvious...if we build relationships, we will obviously set ourselves and our students up for success.”

**Jerry Grisham**  
Assistant Principal, Sedro-Woolley High,  
Sedro-Woolley SD

“ **DRAMA DISSECTING DIVA**. Working in a school system, there is so much drama among students due to social media, texts, pictures, he said/she said. I would have power in my pointer finger, shake it three times and POOF! The drama would just disappear in mid air and I’d have time to deal with more important issues. And everyone involved would forget whatever it was they were fretting over.”

**Jennifer Godinho-Hefley**  
Assistant Principal, Castle Rock High, Castle Rock SD

## Coronavirus: Resources and Impact

We think it's safe to say that no one on this planet has gone unaffected by COVID-19 this spring. At AWSP, we moved our office into "the cloud" to continue supporting members through the crisis. If you haven't already, check out our ever-growing page of resources at [www.awsp.org/covid19](http://www.awsp.org/covid19). Also, check out our article on page 4 that highlights how we're addressing the crisis based on each goal area.



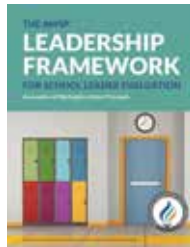
## Cispus Learning Center T-shirt Campaign:

Many of our members have fond memories of and connections to the Cispus Learning Center. With being closed due to social distancing, Cispus is seeking support from alumni, friends, and believers in the mission of non-profits. Help by

purchasing a \$25 t-shirt or making a charitable contribution. Contact Sue at [sharples@cispus.org](mailto:sharples@cispus.org) or call 360-497-7131.

## AWSP Leadership Framework and Professional Growth Pages are Coming for 2020-21

We are hard at work finalizing the new AWSP Leadership Framework for the 2020-21 school year. The new Framework document will have the User's Guide embedded into it as Professional Growth pages for each criterion. The Framework will be launched on our website this summer at [www.awsp.org/Framework](http://www.awsp.org/Framework). Additionally every building leader will receive a printed copy in the fall. Questions? Contact AWSP Associate Director Jack Arend at [jack@awsp.org](mailto:jack@awsp.org).



## Otterbot: Financial Aid Texting Service

Otterbot is a new texting service from the Washington Student Achievement Council. Designed to help high school seniors navigate financial aid for college and career education, Otterbot is accessible to students via text message 24 hours a day, seven days a week by texting "Hi Otter" to 360-928-7281. After a student signs up for Otter, they will receive periodic messages with need-to-know financial aid information, resources, suggestions, dates, and deadlines. When a student gets a text from Otter, they may follow-up with questions by replying directly to the message. If Otter receives a question it cannot answer, it will send the message to a financial aid expert from the Washington Student Achievement Council.



## Erika Burden Named 2020 NASSP Advocacy Champion of the Year!



Erika Burden

We are thrilled that one of our own members was awarded this national recognition in April. In lieu of presenting this award in-person at the Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC, it happened virtually via Zoom. Congrats, Erika!

## USYSS Winners

Each year, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation sponsors two high school juniors or seniors from each of the 50 states and the



Dana S. Ahmed,  
Kamiakin High,  
Kennewick SD



Andre James Ramsey,  
John R. Rogers High,  
Spokane PS

District of Columbia to attend the United States Senate Youth Program — an all-expense paid, week-long tour of Washington, DC and to receive a \$10,000 scholarship. Congratulations are in order to this year's winners, Andre Ramsey from Spokane and Dana Ahmed from Kennewick.

## Amazon Smile



If you haven't set up your Amazon account to give back to charity yet, this is a great time to do it. Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and select **Washington School Principals' Education Foundation** as your charity. Amazon will start sending 0.5% of all eligible purchases back to the Principals' Foundation.

## Updated Principal of the Year Nomination Timeline

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, AWSP made the difficult decision to "hit pause" on the 2019-2020 POY/APOY process. The good news is, we reopened the nomination process! Nominations will be accepted through July 31.

For those who were nominated and completed the application, we are holding your completed packets and pushing them to the 2020-2021 POY/APOY round, which will be announced in October 2020. For those of you who were nominated but didn't complete the application, you now have until August 31 to do so!





# AWSP/WASA **VIRTUAL** SUMMER CONFERENCE

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## Summer Conference is Going **VIRTUAL!**

The safety of our members is our highest priority. AWSP and WASA have been working around the clock to pivot the direction of our 2020 Summer Conference to keep you safe, informed, and connected while navigating this unprecedented time. We are excited to announce that for the first time in history, we'll be bringing a **VIRTUAL Summer Conference directly to YOU!**

You'll hear from the same great keynote speakers:

### **HAMISH BREWER**, *Relentless*



Hamish Brewer, the relentless, tattooed, skateboarding principal in Northern Virginia, isn't your normal principal. Hamish is high octane, constantly calling on his students to "Be Relentless." Mr. Brewer has become known as an educational disrupter who transcends the status quo and typical educational norms. His story has become a viral sensation with over 32 million views.

### **KRISTIN SOUERS & PETE HALL**,

*Fostering Resilient Learners*



Kristin and Pete's book, "Fostering Resilient Learners," is the go-to social emotional resource for schools and districts across the country.

They both passionately

envision a future where children and adults feel fully supported by their community, know they are capable of making a difference in their lives and their world, and are prepared for successful futures.

### **SEAN GOODE**, *CHOOSE 180*



Sean Goode is the executive director of CHOOSE 180. The CHOOSE 180 Program was started to reduce the flow of youth into the juvenile justice system. His powerful personal story and message of how CHOOSE

180 is changing the lives of students and positively impacting schools will inspire each and every educational leader to ensure their buildings and districts are creating hope for each and every child.

### **DR. JOE SANFELIPPO**,

*National Superintendent of the Year*



Dr. Joe Sanfelippo is the Superintendent of Fall Creek SD in Fall Creek, WI. Joe was selected as 1 of 117 Future Ready Superintendents in 2014 and 1 of 50 Superintendents as a Personalized Learning Leader in 2016 by the US Department of Education. He attended summits at the White House for both distinctions. Joe has been a featured speaker in multiple states in the areas of Telling Your School Story, Advancing the Use of Social Media for School Leaders, Creating a Culture of Yes, and Personalized Professional Growth for Staff.

### **ALREADY REGISTERED?**

You're all set! We'll send instructions for getting you logged into the conference and AWSP's new learning management system closer to the event date.

### **STILL NEED TO REGISTER? USE YOUR TPEP DOLLARS!**

Every year, districts leave hundreds of thousands of dollars unspent in their **TPEP iGrants 664 budget**. This year, instead of giving that money back, why not use it to register for Summer Conference? With access to more breakout sessions than ever and no travel costs, why wouldn't you register your whole team for a mix of on-demand and live learning?

Download the registration form at  
[www.awsp.org/sc20](http://www.awsp.org/sc20)

## Meet Jack Arend

Pause for a second and think about the nicest, most positive person you have ever met. Chances are that if you've met Jack Arend, you might be thinking about him.

Jack is AWSP's newest associate director. He has served in education since 1989 as an elementary, middle and high school music teacher. He began his building leadership career in the fall of 2006 as the principal of Peter G. Schmidt Elementary in the Tumwater School District. After 11 years in the principalship, he served two years at the central office, overseeing multiple content areas and mentoring first-year teachers.

Jack's responsibilities include professional learning, mentor support, and framework and evaluation support. He is also the leading force behind this year's AWSP Leadership Framework refresh!



Jack is also the lead this year on the AWSP/WASA Summer Conference. He has great vision for *Focus, Clarity & Insight* for educational leaders this year.

Best of all, Jack has an amazing singing voice!

Jack and his wife, Brenda, are both graduates of Washington State University. Jack received his master's degree from Western Washington University and his administrative credentials from Seattle Pacific University.

Jack and Brenda enjoy living in the Olympia area and love spending time with their three children, Amanda, Emily, and Thomas.

Send Jack an email at [jack@awsp.org](mailto:jack@awsp.org).



## Hit Em Up



Hit Em Up is an app that lets leaders text fast and personally. People use Hit Em Up for appointment reminders, personal motivational texts, event invitations, holidays and birthdays, relationship-building, and more. Features include:

- **Personalized 1:1 Texts**  
Show you care about every recipient by customizing each message with contact specific tags like First and Last Name.
- **Smart Groups**  
Create groups from your contacts to distribute your texts to just the right people.
- **Photo Attachments**  
Attach photos to your iMessage and SMS messages quickly and easily.
- **Templates**  
Save and reuse text messages you need frequently.

Users can start off with a free seven day trial (no credit card or commitment of any kind required). Then, pricing differs depending how long you'd like the service going as low as \$2.50/mo or \$29.99/yr when you buy the year subscription. (This is an introductory offer.)

Here's what Kelley Boyd, principal at Coulee City Elementary, had to say about the app:

*"I use the app **Hit Em Up** to send group texts without actually putting them into a group message that so many people reply to and annoy others. You can even personalize the texts you send with names. It's not totally perfect, but my staff seem to appreciate it!"*

Thank you Kelley for the suggestion!

Visit [www.hitemupapp.com](http://www.hitemupapp.com) to learn more.

## Did You Know?

Created by the Washington State Legislature in 1969, each of the nine Educational Service Districts (ESDs) help 295 school districts in 39 counties provide essential local services by pooling resources and networking to support all 1,149,011 students statewide. In Washington state, ESDs also provide intermediary services between OSPI and local school districts, and to help OSPI implement legislatively-supported education initiatives.

Educational Service District	Counties	School Districts	Schools*	Principals	Assistant Principals	Students*	AWSP Grade Level Committee Representation
NorthEast Washington ESD 101	7	59	278	209	98	96,486	14
ESD 105	4	25	145	108	118	66,503	7
ESD 112	6	30	219	179	145	103,347	4
Capital Region 113	5	44	190	153	86	77,695	8
Olympic ESD 114	4	15	112	95	49	49,080	6
Puget Sound ESD 121	3	35	786	715	666	447,506	22
ESD 123	7	23	154	127	116	78,410	6
North Central ESD 171	4	29	137	101	42	49,260	7
Northwest ESD 189	5	35	362	279	199	174,564	9

\*Variance in school and student totals is for Charter and Tribal schools without ESD designation.  
Citation: OSPI School Apportionment, Enrollment, and Fiscal Reports for 2019-20

# A New Kind of Leadership

## Cameron Grow

2019-20 AWSP Board President,  
Principal, Lincoln Middle, Pullman SD

**Leadership has** always been challenging. Challenging in a good way, of course.

Principals love a challenge when it comes to doing something right for kids. For many of us, our communication skills with staff members, communities, and kids is one of the reasons why we are



None of us thought we would be in this position, but here we are, making it up as we go.”

currently in the principalship. We know how to work with people and to lead them in the right direction for kids. We know how to build positive relationships with all of our stakeholders to ensure we are moving forward, together.

It is a different time. It calls for a new kind of leadership. Think about the role principals around the state have played in the last two months, leading a group of adults and kids who are no longer in the building while ensuring

*Continued on page 12*



Continued from page 11

engagement and learning. None of us thought we would be in this position, but here we are, making it up as we go. We set our paths for the rest of the school year with help from the district office personnel (who have never done this before), teachers (who have never done this before), and colleagues (who have never done this before).

AWSP has been there for all of us through this time. This is about learning from each other to ensure kids get what they need. Talk about an organization stepping up for its membership! They have always been there for us when we need help with anything — and they are also here through this crisis.

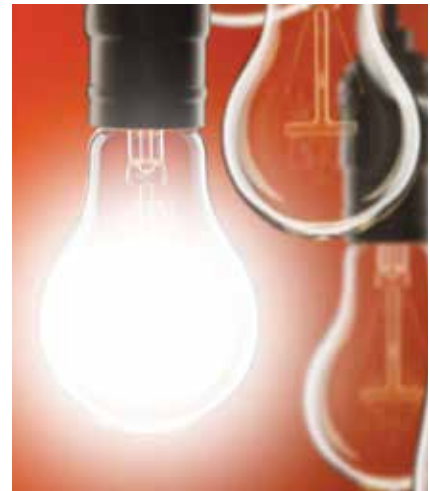
The team at AWSP is here to help us *lead* our staff through the social-emotional side of this pandemic and what it is doing for the adults who are not in the building. They are here to help us *lead* our staff in getting



As we have all said before, they did not teach us this in “Principal School.” No, they did not. However, AWSP is there to help you learn as you go.”

really good at distance learning, and to do that really fast. They are here to help us *lead* our staff through a plan where they can sustain this distance learning for a long period of time. AWSP is here to help us *lead* our staff through the idea of switching from engagement to learning in a distance learning model.

All in all, it is an amazing time to lead. Our teachers will be stronger and our schools will be better than ever because of our leadership through this time. As we have all said before, they did not teach us this in “Principal School.” No, they did not. However, AWSP is there to help you learn as you go. Take advantage of their leadership to help yours. ■



Cameron Grow is the 2019-20 AWSP Board President. He has been principal at Lincoln Middle School in Pullman School District since 2007.

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*Bringing out the best in people.*

# RECOMMENDED READING

 SCHOLASTIC

AWSP is partnering with Scholastic to bring you book recommendations related to school leadership and education. Here are this quarter's recommendations.



Find these books at [scholastic.com/teachers](https://www.scholastic.com/teachers)

## FOR EDUCATORS

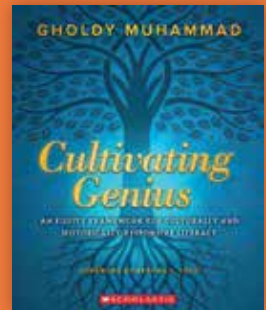
### **Cultivating Genius** *An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy* By Gholdy Muhammad

In “Cultivating Genius,” Dr. Gholdy Muhammad presents a four-layered equity framework — one that is grounded in history and restores excellence in literacy education. Muhammad’s Historically Responsive Literacy Framework is essential for all students, especially youth of color, who traditionally have been marginalized in learning standards, school policies, and classroom practices. The framework promotes four learning goals—or pursuits:

- Identity development: defining self; making sense of one’s values and beliefs.
- Skill development: developing proficiencies through reading and writing meaningful content.
- Intellectual development: gaining knowledge and becoming smarter.

- Criticality: developing the ability to read texts to understand power, authority, and oppression

When these four learning pursuits are taught together—through the Historically Responsive Literacy Framework— all students receive profound opportunities for personal, intellectual, and academic success. Muhammad provides probing, self-reflective questions for both teachers and students as well as bibliographies of culturally responsive text and sample lesson plans across grades and content areas.



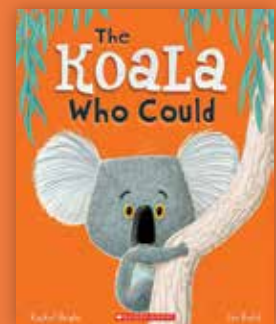
## FOR STUDENTS

### **The Koala Who Could**

By Rachel Bright | Grades PreK-1

Sometimes a little change can open your world to BIG possibilities. Kevin the koala loves every day to be the same, where it’s snug and safe. But when change happens,

will Kevin learn all the joys that come with trying something new?



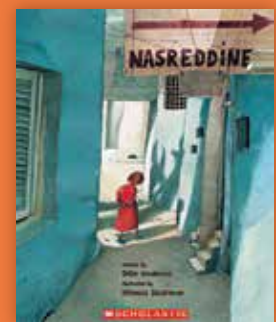
## FOR STUDENTS

### **Nasreddine**

By Odile Weulersse | Grades 1-5

It’s time to go to market, so Nasreddine loads up the donkey and sets off with his father. But when onlookers criticize his father for riding while Nasreddine walks, the boy is ashamed. The following week, Nasreddine persuades his father to walk, and let him ride — but then people criticize the boy for making his father walk! No matter what Nasreddine tries, it seems that someone always finds something to disapprove of. Nasreddine is a legendary

character popular in stories told throughout the Middle East, and this clever story will bring him to a new audience. Accompanied by stunning artwork, this tale offers a gentle reminder to readers that it isn’t always necessary to listen to the world’s criticisms.



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## Annalee Braley

Membership Coordinator, AWSP

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Improving Instruction, Engaging Families and Communities, Closing the Gap*

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“Professional membership is an essential investment in your own future at every stage of your career. No other statewide education organization offers the same variety of membership resources for every member of your school leadership team.”

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- *Principal Insights* newsletter
- *Communicator* newsletter
- *Report to Parents*
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  - Office Depot/OfficeMax
  - ID Shield identity theft protection
  - Legal Shield personal legal support
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The NASSP Strategic Intent is to develop value-based relationships with key stakeholder segments across the education space, with the long-term goal of being a collaborative platform for building great schools and nurturing great school leaders.”

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# Shadowing a Student

## What It's Really Like to Be a Student in My School

### Christine Bromley

Principal, Marysville Pilchuck High,  
Marysville SD

#### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety,  
Planning with Data, Improving Instruction*

**Y**ou know how our kids say being a teenager is stressful? They aren't kidding.

I spent a day shadowing a sophomore in my high school and what I learned changed my whole perspective as a principal.

It all started in a PTSA meeting. I told the parent group I was going to have a student shadow me as a "Principal for the Day," and one parent told me while that was interesting, it would be even more interesting to spend a day as a student.

She told me she learned from her daughter and her friends that students were experiencing a high amount of anxiety and felt pressured to do well all the time. She explained while she was sure I spent a good part of my day with certain segments of our student population, it might be a different perspective for me to spend a day with a quiet, hardworking student who would otherwise blend in.

I readily accepted the challenge, and I encourage you to do the same.

Principal Christine Bromley shadowed sophomore Isabella Reynaud for a day.

### HERE'S HOW IT WORKED:

- First, I made sure the parent was comfortable with my plan and I had her talk to her daughter, letting her know I would also call her in to discuss the idea with her.
- Next, I called in the student (a sophomore) and let her know the "why" behind my plan. I had a conversation with her to gauge how she felt and we decided to move forward with scheduling a date.

*Continued on page 18*



- I cleared my calendar for one whole day (mind you, I kept my 4-6 p.m. meeting as scheduled, as well as my evening supervision).
- I communicated with staff in my weekly newsletter. I also emailed all of her teachers to let them know I would be her complete shadow. I would sit with her, do all of the work she did throughout the day, and adhere to the same expectations they had for all students in their classroom. The one thing I would not do was play her instrument (she had two sections of band in her schedule).
- I reminded the teachers and student a day in advance.

### HERE'S WHAT I LEARNED:

**Students are compassionate, generous people to spend time with.** My student partner and her friend, who spent a good deal of the day with us, were so kind to me it nearly brought tears to my eyes. They let me know what to expect in each class, shared genuine reflections with me, and even brought me a matching t-shirt and homemade gingerbread! It wasn't just those two students, though, as I also witnessed other students checking in with each other and providing encouragement throughout the day.

**Paying attention is hard!** My day as a student shadow began at 6:30 a.m. with a zero hour jazz band class and went until 2:15 p.m., with only a half hour break for lunch. My classes were taught bell-to-bell and I barely had time to grab a drink from my water bottle, let alone study for one of the two tests we had that day. My student partner also had a presentation to prepare for and she took every moment (as in, those when we were walking between classes) to look over her notes. I took a geometry and chemistry test and in both cases I was nearly the last to finish and my heart was pounding.

Luckily, the teachers were very kind



“As a building principal I work every minute of the day, answering questions and considering difficult situations. As a student, I was mentally exhausted.”

to me. By fifth period I could feel my student partner's tension and when she finished her Spanish presentation (and nailed it!) I swear I could feel the stress release in my own shoulders. This all added up to a lot of focus on the part of each student. As a building principal I work every minute of the day, answering questions and considering difficult situations. As a student, I was mentally exhausted. Despite the wonderful people I had around me all day by the end of the day I was so happy to let my guard down and return to business as usual.

**Teacher attendance matters.** Students know who will be out and they know that expectations are different with guest teachers. I heard from my student partner that I should be aware that one of her classes would be rowdy, because, while it was a “good class,” they were having a hard time maintaining an orderly environment in the absence of their usual teacher. It causes additional stress to students when the environment changes because they rely on knowing the expectations in each unique classroom. For students who need a trauma-informed approach (most students) this can set

off their whole day. It's not only the change in routine that adds stress, though; students also struggle to prepare for exams and to get answers to questions when teachers are out.

**Relationships matter, and not just the ones we expect adults to have with students.** My student partner relied on her team — and by that I mean her best friend and her classmates. She needed them to get through her day for a number of reasons. She needed connection, moral support, help with a study guide, and advice on what to expect when she got to the class that another student had already attended. It is easy to scoff at students who want schedule changes to have a class or lunch with a friend. What I discovered, though, is that without friends, school is a very lonely place.

**We need to ask kids for feedback.** At one point in the day I needed a pencil sharpener. We were quietly taking a test and my pencil was quickly dulling. The problem was, where was the pencil sharpener? I thought about asking a neighbor but I didn't want the teacher to think that I was distracting others. I also



## REFLECTION:

My goal this year was to help my school focus on learning and to increase expectations system-wide. I had no idea that this would amp up the pressure to a point where students were racing to class (who needs to use a restroom, anyway?) and left without any downtime to study or relax. Even during lunch, the students I spent time with were discussing the tests they needed to take the next day. For a few days following my experience as a student shadow I needed to take time to reflect quietly on how my own focus and drive may have inadvertently caused undue stress in my students. This reflection allowed me to clearly share my experience with my staff. My hope is that my perspective shift will encourage my school community to take a step back and consider how it feels to be a student in our school.

felt uncomfortable raising my hand to ask — I know this sounds strange, but you try it and let me know how it feels.

So, I just did the best I could with a very dull pencil. My point here is, if we don't ask students how it feels to be a student in our school, how will we ever know?

We hit tardies hard this year in my building with the intention of getting kids in class on time. In the five minutes we allow for passing, no one has time to go to the bathroom.

When you get to class, each teacher has different expectations about using

the restroom, along with various ways to sign in and out. The result? I didn't use the bathroom. I also didn't snack or drink anything other than water throughout the day. Taking the time to ask students how we can help make their day run more smoothly, or how we might make it easier for them to focus on learning, might have a dramatic effect on outcomes.

I will forever be indebted to the student who spent her day with me and to the teachers who opened up their classrooms to allow me to get the most authentic experience possible. I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone. Put on some sneakers and get into your classrooms for a whole day. You won't regret it. ■

“ I will forever be indebted to the student who spent her day with me and to the teachers who opened up their classrooms to allow me to get the most authentic experience possible.”







# Mastering the Three-Legged Race



**Jen Hirman**  
*President, Everett Council PTSA*



**David Jones**  
*Past President, Elementary School Principals Association of Washington*

**PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**  
*Engaging Families and Communities*

**E**very Field Day, the three-legged-race is a big event. And, every year, within the first 10 yards, it is easy to see which teams will finish well and which won't.

Some teams move in smooth coordination, employing some pre-agreed system to stay in sync. Other teams are clearly out of balance, with one teammate pulling harder than the other, or taking long, fast steps while the other moves at a different pace.

At the extreme, these teammates pull against each other, tumble over, get angry and start blaming.

The relationship between a school's administration and parent organization can be a bit like a team in a three-legged-race. You are bound together, in a very public way, and you are supposed to be moving together toward a common goal line. With a bit of careful forethought and agreed upon operating systems, the entire school community wins when the leadership in both organizations takes steps to ensure the partnership works together well. Not all PTAs are created equal. Some schools have stronger PTAs than others, but principals can help support the development of a PTA no matter where theirs currently stands.

First, a reminder of who makes up the team. A Parent Teacher Association (PTA or other parent organization) is legally separated from a school system. They select their own leadership and committee chairs. They write their own by-laws, draft their own budget, and manage their own finances. They create annual goals, decide which programs to implement, and establish their meeting calendar. They are supported by their own district, regional, state, and national systems, which provide excellent structures and leadership development programs.





## Strategies to build a productive relationship with your PTA

“ You are bound together, in a very public way, and you are supposed to be moving together toward a common goal line. With a bit of careful forethought and agreed upon operating systems, the entire school community wins when the leadership in both organizations takes steps to ensure the partnership works together well.”

Schools, on the other hand, are bound by national and state laws, district policies, and collective bargaining agreements. Their success, and the success of their administration, are judged by the ability to achieve externally-determined metrics. A single school administrator may, in many cases, be responsible for the performance of 60-90 direct reports. Reaching out for more-frequent and deeper involvement with a PTA may feel impossible to an already overworked school administrator.

So, why add one more leadership role to your list of duties? Put simply, most parents and the community at large conjoin these two organizations when forming their impression of your school. Almost everything you do to strengthen the relationship between your school and your school's PTA has the potential to increase student achievement, parent satisfaction, school safety, and the overall sense that your school is well-functioning.

Too often, new administrators view organized parent groups as a threat. It's easy to worry about what gets talked about in the parking lot, or whether parents are second guessing your actions. As a new administrator, you are the last one in the door. Parents, in some cases, have been with the school for decades. Seasoned, successful administrators know that a healthy PTA can help achieve many desired elements in a school's vision, far beyond what a school's resources

*Continued on page 22*

or staffing can handle. But, where to begin?

Nothing starts the administrator/PTA relationship on the right path better than a meeting before the start of the school year to share goals, discuss procedures, and clarify roles. Here is a possible agenda for an early August meeting between the school principal and the PTA Executive Committee:

## TRAPS FOR ADMINISTRATORS TO AVOID:

- Treating PTA leaders as employees who can be told what to do and how to do it. Remember, these folks are volunteers, giving their time out of a desire to serve.
- Allowing preferential treatment for the children of PTA leaders. Nothing good ever comes from this. Ever.
- Leaving PTA leadership in the dark about upcoming changes and challenges. When you share news with your PTA leaders you gain a sense of how the range of parents in the community will respond, and help those parent leaders explain to other parents the rationale behind an upcoming change.

## SAMPLE AGENDA

1. Discuss/write norms and guidelines for your shared time. Encourage your PTA leaders to bring along any plans or materials that they would like to share with you.
2. Talk through the annual goals for the school, and those for the PTA. Seek ways for these two organizations to mutually support each other, and to identify and focus on shared goals. Think Venn Diagram.
3. Review the annual calendar for the school and the PTA. Identify and resolve potential conflicts, including busy times of the year when school families might feel overly stretched or testing windows when there is limited access for visitors or events on campus.
4. Clarify contact people within the school for the following:
  - a. Request for use of the facility
  - b. Additions/changes to the school event calendar
  - c. Access to the site after hours
  - d. Providing information for the school or PTA newsletter
  - e. Requesting background clearance for volunteers
  - f. Proposing before/after school clubs and activities
5. Clarify whether the PTA can use the school's photocopiers, and, if so, how copies will be tracked and charged. If the PTA will have access to photocopiers, clarify who will provide training for the volunteers, how to report a paper jam or refill the paper drawer. Address access to other workroom materials, such as colored paper, staplers, and markers.
6. Talk through systems for distributing PTA flyers and other materials to students and their families, and the need for the PTA logo to be on each item distributed.
7. Discuss the handling of money. PTA rules and often district policies prohibit school staff from collecting money for a PTA function during their paid work day. If this is the case, clarify who from the PTA will be available to receive money from parents or students for PTA functions. Consider installing a locked office drop box for PTA membership forms and checks.
8. Review the procedures for signing in and out when on campus as a volunteer.
9. Talk through where, if at all, PTA supplies may be stored on the site.
10. Explain how custodial time and services can be requested for non-school events, and whether there is a charge.
11. Work out the expected role of the school administration at PTA meetings. Will there be a scheduled time on each meeting's agenda for a Principal's Report?
12. Talk about how the PTA Exec Committee and the principal will communicate. Will the Committee request time on the principal's calendar?
13. Remind everyone that every minute at school is instructional time. Proposed assemblies and other uses of the instructional day are expected to contribute to the educational program and must tie directly to one or more state standards.
14. Clarify that the PTA does not have a say in school decisions, but can be an important sounding board before decisions are made, a key source of parent representatives on hiring committees, an essential resource as chaperones on field trips, trained as effective classroom volunteers, and serve in many other ways that contribute to the overall functioning of the school.



- Shortcutting the PTA decision-making process. No individual PTA member, even the PTA president, can commit to a project or decision without first consulting their board. PTAs are self-governing, member-led associations with bylaws and guidelines. Honor their structure, processes and timeline.
- Failing to support enrichment and recognition programs offered by your PTA. Our state and local organizations have access to many programs that support children, families and schools. If your PTA wants to offer a program, find a staff member who will serve as the school liaison to the committee organizing this assistance, and make sure the program receives the attention and support it needs.
- Neglecting to model to staff the respect and appreciation for the PTA that these volunteers deserve.



The entire school community benefits from the coordination between these two entities, capitalizing on the talents and energy of parents to advance the mission of the school.”

### OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Be clear as to which PTA events/ programs need to be approved by the school administration before they are shared with parents, and which can be approved by someone other than the school’s administration.

The PTA Board members will be talking with many more parents than the school administration and can be effective ‘ears on the ground’ to identify concerns and issues in the school community. Clarify when and what kind of concerns (or gossip) to share with each other, and how to respond if a student’s safety is at risk.

Remember that if the PTA leadership finds itself in a jam the school administration can be a helpful, confidential resource. Principals know a lot about leadership, problem-solving, and working with difficult people. You share the PTA’s desire that the school environment be positive and well-functioning. Be open to help as needed.

While principals cannot serve on a PTA’s nominating committee, administration and office staff can be especially helpful to PTAs by keeping an eye out for other parents who regularly volunteer at the school and contribute to a positive school climate. PTA leadership changes from year to year as children graduate and parents move on. Identifying future parent leaders can help sustain a high performing PTA, and for struggling PTAs this is a way you can help build their membership.

If the PTA is in the fortunate situation of having funds that can be used for classroom or school grants, help the PTA understand any limitations and weed out requests

ahead of time that shouldn’t be under consideration. For example, the classroom pet that the science teacher is asking the PTA to buy may not be permitted under district policy, or perhaps the climbing wall the PTA is excited about adding to the gym can not be covered by the district insurance.

New PTA leaders should understand that, when speaking with the school administration or another staff member, they need to be clear when they are speaking as a parent and when they are representing the PTA.

PTA members must be trained on FERPA laws. Students and families have a right to privacy, and a child’s safety may even be a stake. Schools by law may not share addresses, parent contact information, phone numbers, student names or birth dates with anyone without a parent’s permission. FERPA also applies to photographs taken at school and at events in which student faces are recognizable. As a workaround, PTAs will often have their own social media accounts and will want to share pictures publicly, following their organization’s privacy policies.

Discuss the expectation that PTA volunteers will follow the district’s confidentiality policies. When on campus, volunteers will inevitably observe actions and come across information that must remain private. It helps to rehearse possible scenarios and appropriate responses, including which staff will serve as a contact to handle questions and concerns from PTA volunteers.

Often, PTA regions or councils offer a workshop titled, “PTA and the Principal.” Invite your PTA President

*Continued on page 24*





or Executive Committee to attend with you. This is one more way administrators can strengthen their relationship with their school's PTA leadership and can demonstrate their active, visible support of the organization's positive influence on the school.

“ The cheers that erupt when a team successfully crosses the finish line can also echo in June if your admin/PTA team is functioning well.”

## CROSSING THE FINISH LINE, TOGETHER

It takes time, effort and foresight to establish and maintain a positive relationship between a school administration and PTA. When that relationship is working well the administration feels supported and in sync with the parent community. School staff benefit from a powerful partner, helping them meet the needs of their students. Members of the PTA see their efforts and energy making a positive, direct impact. The entire school community benefits from the coordination between these two entities, capitalizing on the talents and energy of parents to advance the mission of the school.

Remember that field day analogy and the three-legged race?

The cheers that erupt when a team successfully crosses the finish line can also echo in June if your admin/PTA team is functioning well. Coordinated teamwork is the foundation for success, in which students' lives are enriched, teachers are supported and parents are engaged.

A positive administration/PTA relationship becomes a model for



other partnerships and is a reason for the entire school community to celebrate. Your leadership can build that level of coordination and get that team to the finish line smoothly, efficiently and without a lot of shouting or blame. ■

**Jen Hirman, Ph.D.**, has been a teacher with the Peace Corps and in the US, as well as served in various PTA roles

over the last 10 years, including school volunteer, PTA President, and most recently as the President of the Everett PTSA Council.

**David Jones, Ed.D.**, has worked as a teacher, counselor and principal at the elementary, middle and high school level, and most recently served as the President of the Elementary School Principals Association of Washington.

## TRAPS FOR PTA MEMBERS TO AVOID:

- As actively involved school volunteers, assuming a level of familiarity and sidestepping rules. Always sign in. Always wear a visitor badge, even if “they know me.” Do not drop by a classroom unexpectedly. It's important for PTA members to remember they serve as role models for parent engagement in the school's community.
- Using PTA funds to cover items that should be paid out of the district or school's budget. Parents feel strongly about helping out their school and want to make sure no need goes unmet, but PTA funding should be for enhancements or enrichments, not basic education.
- Being overly social with the front office staff during school hours. PTA members want to feel connected with the school and can forget that all paid staff have many other responsibilities that need to be completed throughout the day.
- Blurring the lines between PTA and school programs and events. This can lead to invalidated insurance coverage for PTAs and confusion over who is responsible if an incident occurs. Make sure that contracts for PTA events are signed by PTA elected officers and PTA money, either for an event, fundraising or membership, is handled only by PTA volunteers and not staff, unless those staff are ‘off the clock.’
- Interceding in parent concerns. If a parent approaches you to complain about something at school the most helpful response is, “I know the school is working hard to serve this community, and I know they want to hear from you if you have a concern. Have you talked with the teacher/staff member/administration about this yet?”



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# SAVE our Special Education Teachers

## 10 things you can do as a principal to keep great sped teachers

### Melissa V. Charette

Special Education Teacher,  
Washington Middle, Olympia SD

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

It's widely realized special education teachers are leaving the profession in droves. They are feeling overburdened, isolated, and unprepared. We need to save special education teachers, and principals have one of the most important and influential pieces of this complex puzzle. You set the tone for the school and your staff around special education.

I work at a school where my principal, Paul Anders, and assistant principal

“ We need to save special education teachers, and principals have one of the most important and influential pieces of this complex puzzle.”

Annette Pasquariello, taught me best practices in supporting special education teachers. They make the job doable and make changes that keep us in the job. Here are 10 best practices I learned from them that principals can do to help support their special education teachers.

**1. Build Relationships.** Help your special education teacher become a vital part of your school. Bring their expertise to the table, help them feel useful and form relationships with other staff members. We feel isolated and alone many times and need to have a support network. In addition



to building relationships within the school, we also need a cohort of special education teachers. Teachers learn best from other teachers and need to be given the time and the place to do so.

**2. Placement of Classrooms.** Think about where your special education classrooms are located. Are they a part of your school? Do they meet the needs of the students and the teachers? One way to find out is to ask your teachers.

**3. Lunches and Breaks.** Do you know if your special education teachers are getting a duty free planning and lunch? Ask — you may be surprised to find out many are not. It is absolutely necessary teachers have breaks, we interact with other staff, and we have time to take a breath. Many of us feel it's our duty to cover what is needed, but that's where burnout starts.

**4. School-Wide Planning.** Having special education representation on your planning committee for assemblies, school functions, fire drills, and class scheduling is key. A myriad of accommodations and modifications need to be considered and taken into account for all kids to be integrated successfully, which is what we strive for each day. For everything the school does, the question should be asked, "Does this work for all students?" If it doesn't, what changes need to be made?

**5. Paraeducators.** Having administration on top of filling for open para positions is so important. Human Resources moves at their own speed, but it's vital to keep your teachers in the loop on when the positions are posted, will close, and to set up interviews as quickly as possible. By doing this, you make your teachers feel important and supported.

**6. Know the Kids.** My principal and assistant principals are in my room weekly, if not daily. They know each

“ You are truly the key to how special education teachers and students are looked at and treated within your school. Take a hard look at your school. Are you doing everything you can do to help?”

of my students in-depth. My students are greeted by name in the hallway and given high fives. It makes my kids and I feel a part of the school, and that we matter. It also models for other staff and students how to interact with my kids and what is expected.

**7. Training.** It is hard to find good trainings. Principals could be wonderful advocates to help us find these trainings, especially for our new special education teachers. We need to be given the tools to succeed both academically and behaviorally.

**8. Communication.** The number one thing my administration does that makes me feel the most supported is ask two important questions: "What do you need?" and "How can I help?" Doing this opens the door to let them know if I have a need, but more importantly it lets me know I have back up, I'm not alone, and they are there to support me.

**9. Paperwork.** This is the bane of all special education teachers. It is what chases people from the profession. Coming up with ways to sneak in extra work time for your special education teachers to work on IEPs, FBAs, BIPs, evaluations.... they will truly love you for it. Could you hire a sub once a month to help cover IEP meetings so teachers don't have to be held after and before school? Are there meetings they could be excused from?

**10. Integration.** Make it the norm that ALL kids are our kids! Help integrate special education kids

into every part of the school day. Think about how to build in more support to help them be successful with their general education peers. Lunch groups, recess buddies, reading friends, peer mentors...there are tons of ways.

My school is known as being one of the best and most inclusive in the area; this is directly related to the support and leadership of my principals. You are truly the key to how special education teachers and students are looked at and treated within your school. Take a hard look at your school. Are you doing everything you can do to help? Is there one of these 10 things you could start doing tomorrow that may help save a special education teacher? These teachers got into the profession because they have a passion for it — help them keep that passion alive.

There are frequent discussions about how to attract special education teachers to the profession. We need to change the focus into trying to retain the teachers we already have. This would ensure the population of students who need them the most would have highly-trained, veteran teachers.

The most important thing you need to do right now: Go ask your special education teachers how they are doing. Ask them what they need. Ask them what they are missing. You have the power to change their lives. Choose retention over recruitment! ■

To hear more from Melissa, watch our video with her featuring Washington Middle School's Peer Mentor program at <http://bit.ly/wms-peer-mentor>.







# THE FIRST STEPS FORWARD

One district's focused effort to provide Native students with an equitable education

**Michael S. Smith**

*Assistant Principal, River Ridge High,  
North Thurston PS*

**Dr. Debra Clemens**

*Superintendent, North Thurston PS*

**Willie Frank III**

*Tribal Council, Nisqually Indian  
Community*

**Jerad Koeppe**

*Native Student Program Specialist,  
North Thurston PS*

**Introduction**

*Michael S. Smith, Assistant Principal,  
River Ridge High School, North  
Thurston PS*

Like many school leaders across Washington state, my knowledge of the local Native community was minimal. I certainly didn't have a deep understanding of their treaty rights or sovereignty, how their structures of governance differ, their educational mission, or how their successes/struggles have impacted their independent nation. However, as an educator, I was aware our Native students struggled to meet public educational milestones; that they were less likely to come to school, are referred more frequently for discipline, and have lower rates of high school graduation. Like many school administrators, I was guilty of lacking tools to help this population of students due to a general uncomfortableness with communication, and a severe lack of cultural awareness.

**A STARTING POINT**

I'm inspired to admit my shortcomings because I was fortunate to meet Willie Frank III, a member of the Nisqually Tribal Council. Willie's niece attended River Ridge High School, and over several weeks, Willie and I connected on a personal level. We met for coffee, talked about Native student success in schools, basketball, being kids in the 90's, and most fascinatingly, Native treaties and sovereignty. Willie shared his experiences of his family as they have historically interacted with local government, seeking to protect his peoples' rights. These conversations sparked an interest to learn more about my local tribe and indigenous education in general. However, like so many administrators, I was unsure of where to start.

Jerad Koeppe, North Thurston Public Schools' Native Student Program Specialist, has worked in our district for eight years. His knowledge of

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*Continued on page 30*



general Native history and specific knowledge of the Nisqually people is impressively vast. As a starting point, I invited Jerad to meet and asked him, somewhat clumsily, to give me a “crash course” on local and global indigenous education, and what education means to this specific culture. He highlighted historical documents such as the “Meriam Report” and John F. Kennedy’s 1969 report, “The State of Indian Education in the United States.” The context Jerad provided gave me much more meaningful insight to the current trends in educational data, and with this context came an intense passion to learn as much as possible about the current state of Native education, and more specifically the state of Native education from the perspective of indigenous leaders.

“ While some public school officials perceive trust between indigenous communities and school systems as positive, tribal perspectives of relational trust between entities is less than desirable.”

Native scholars provide insight on how hundreds of years of colonial rule — and subsequent institutional racism — place barriers between indigenous communities and public-school leadership in seeking educational reform. While some public school officials perceive trust between indigenous communities and school systems as positive, tribal perspectives of relational trust between entities is less than desirable. Indigenous scholars contend this is due to a lack of outreach by school officials into the Native communities to create authentic relationships for collaboration and reform.

## CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

As school leaders, it is our responsibility to change this narrative. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how effective partnerships between indigenous communities and public schools can be achieved. The beginning of this process relies heavily on school districts implementing progressive measures: equity policy and resolutions, public-school leaders engaging in authentic, meaningful partnerships with local tribal leaders, and the development of programs to support Native youth success in public schools.

### Creating Policies and Practices Focused on Equity

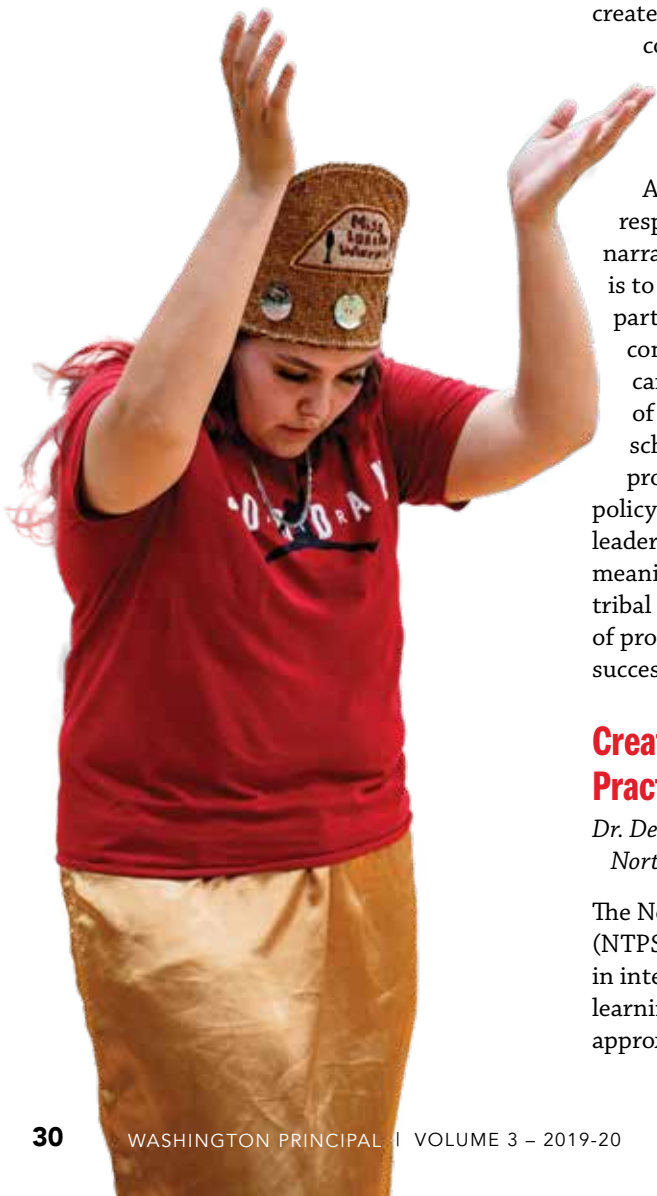
*Dr. Debra Clemens, Superintendent,  
North Thurston PS*

The North Thurston Public Schools’ (NTPS) Board of Directors engaged in intentional, focused professional learning on the topic of equity approximately three years ago.

Their journey began when a few board members and I attended a session at the annual WSSDA conference presented by the Tukwila School District. Shortly after that experience, several members of the board and my cabinet joined a regional learning community of school directors and superintendents to attend a series of workshops facilitated by ESD 113 in partnership with WSSDA. The board and cabinet engaged in professional readings and attended several other equity conferences over the next two years.

Meanwhile, I had the opportunity to restructure the responsibilities of a district-level administrative position and chose to narrow the responsibilities to focus on equity and languages. We hired Kate Frazier as our new Director of Equity and Languages and created a comprehensive equity plan. The plan provided for professional learning for all district administrators (principals and classified administrators) in the 2018-19 school year prior to rolling out an equity series of professional learning for all certified staff members in the district in 2019-20. It was our plan to train all principals first, so they were well prepared to engage in equity conversations with their staff.

Critical to our success, the equity plan was developed to support the implementation of the district’s strategic plan which has thoughtfully identified outcomes monitored regularly. The outcomes focus on both social emotional and academic learning and include an equity lens. Kate worked closely with our NTPS Equity Advisory Council to provide input to the Equity Resolution, which was adopted by the Board of Directors in August of 2019.





The first collaboration meeting between North Thurston Public Schools and Tribal leadership took place in February at the Nisqually Tribal Council Office.

NTPS is a policy governance school district; therefore, many of the sample equity policies written by other districts in Washington state were not structured in a way that would be suitable for adoption by the NTPS Board of Directors. However, the Bellingham School District adopted an equity policy and they are also a policy governance school district. I worked with Kate to revise Bellingham’s equity policy to be inclusive of the key elements of the newly adopted equity resolution.

The NTPS Race and Equity Policy provides clear expectations and parameters to me for leading the equity work in NTPS. It includes

everything from expectations regarding the racial characteristics of the workforce hired by the district to the expectations for incorporating student voice in the decision-making process. Further, it includes an expectation to provide professional development in race and equity for all staff. We worked with several local trainers to provide professional learning for all staff—office professionals, paraeducators, teachers, and administrators. We also scheduled several community cafés to reach the broader community to engage in thoughtful conversations about race. The Race and Equity Policy and the Equity Resolution provided

the foundation for the work that aligned with the collaborative work taking place with the Nisqually Tribe.

The result of all this work led to a meeting in October of 2019 between District Administrative Leadership and Tribal Council members to discuss the process for establishing a Land Acknowledgment and the display of Tribal Flags. Our NTPS Board of Directors approved the recommendations of the administration at their November 5, 2019 Board meeting. We also scheduled two joint work sessions between the Nisqually Tribe and the School District Board of Directors to be held each year.

*Continued on page 32*



School projects about salmon on display in the gymnasium on Billy Frank Jr. Day in March.





## Nisqually Indian Community and North Thurston Public Schools Partnership: Equity in Action

Michael S. Smith, Assistant Principal, River Ridge High, North Thurston PS

Over the past two years, Nisqually Indian Community and NTPS have implemented collaborative projects, highlighting the values of equity, inclusion, and community. Below is a list of collaborative projects undertaken in partnership with our local tribe to better serve our indigenous students, families, staff, and community.

1. Professional development on local indigenous tribes, treaties, and knowledges: Reaching out to your community's local Native leadership to learn about the culture and history is an essential first step. Consider inviting your local tribal leaders to discuss their viewpoint, as it is truly the foundation of future change. These important conversations will guide staff professional development and are deeply important to creating



Left to Right: Bill Kallappa, Willie Frank III, Jerad Koepp, Mike Smith, and Hanford McCloud.

a plan together toward student achievement.

2. Land recognition: Indigenous tribes have occupied these lands for 10,000 years and will remain here for 10,000 years to come. Formally recognizing that our schools sit on historic lands once occupied by Native peoples will assist in developing further conversation. It is essential this is a collaborative process. It is a living document that should be reviewed, updated, and changed over time. North Thurston Public Schools' land acknowledgment reads:

“We acknowledge that North Thurston Public Schools resides on the traditional lands of the

Nisqually people. The Nisqually have lived on and cared for this land and these waterways since time immemorial. We make this acknowledgement to open a space of recognition, inclusion, and respect for our sovereign Tribal partners and all indigenous students, families, and staff in our community.”

3. Visual representations: Starting this year, North Thurston Public Schools will fly a Nisqually Tribal flag at every building owned and operated in the district. This serves as a daily, visual representation to students, families, and the community about the importance of our Native community.



Nisqually tribe members celebrate Billy Frank Jr.'s life and legacy at Nisqually Middle School during the second annual Billy Frank Jr. Day.



“ While these are the most recent projects, there are many more to come.”

4. Implementation of culturally diverse curriculum: This year, River Ridge High launched its first de-colonized history course in the fall of the 2019-2020 school year. This course, “U.S. History through the Native Perspective,” seeks to provide the narrative of indigenous peoples from pre-contact through present day. This course counts as a U.S. history credit.

While these are the most recent projects, there are many more to come. The success of these projects is the result of the collaborative relationship between our organizations, fostered by the support of our district’s Native Student Liaison, exceptional teachers, tribal leaders, and policies and practices aimed at bringing equity to the forefront of our educational responsibilities.



Native Student Program enrollment booth during Billy Frank Jr. Day at Nisqually Middle School.

## Reflections on Impact and Influence: A Guide Forward

*Jerad Koepp, Native Student Program Specialist, North Thurston PS*

Title VI is a valuable cultural and professional resource that exists in many districts across the country. It is a federally funded Native education program available to any interested district meeting a minimum Native student population. They are typically small in size and staffed with, though not exclusively, Native American classified or sometimes certificated educators.

Those of us in Title VI committed our careers to Native education and serving and advocating for our Native

students and supporting and training district staff. Your Title VI program should be your starting point. Your Native education program is there to partner with you and facilitate your project or idea. They are your primary liaison and gatekeeper, having spent years developing and fostering meaningful relationships with various tribal leaders, families, and communities. Based on your plan, they can introduce you to relevant community partners, educate you on proper cultural protocols and history, and help establish government to government relationships.

Beginning such a relationship starts with serious self-reflection on your institution. Administrators need to be able to communicate openly, jargon-free, and honestly about how their school or district serves or underserves their Native community. This includes reviewing your district policies. Cultural protocols are key to bridging our two worlds meaningfully and for long term success. Partnering with Native communities is a journey of learning, listening, building trust, earning respect, and healing. It involves addressing the past to improve the future with systemic changes to education built with meaningful consultation and collaboration with our Native communities. Successful and sustainable partnerships will improve not only educational outcomes, the cultural awareness of your district, but also ultimately help you approach education in a more decolonized way.

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Students explore different animal skins and furs.

## Reflections from A Native Leadership Perspective: The Value of Government-to-Government Relationships

Willie Frank III, Tribal Council,  
Nisqually Indian Community

I am excited about the relationship between the Nisqually Tribe and NTPS. Many of our Nisqually and Native youth attend River Ridge High. As we can educate all students within NTPS about Nisqually



Bill Kallappa (far left) and Principal Mike Smith (second from left) talk during the first collaboration meeting between North Thurston Public Schools and Nisqually Tribal leadership.

“ There are 29 federally recognized tribes in the state of Washington. Tribes are spread in every part of Washington and our schools should be reaching out and trying to educate kids about their local tribes.”

history, the Boldt Decision, and tribal treaty rights, I believe it will help this relationship continue to grow stronger to the benefit of all students.

I grew up attending NTPS schools and always wondered why we were not taught about tribal treaty rights and Native culture. We live in a state, and area, with a rich tribal history, and it should be taught in every history and world studies class throughout the state of Washington.

There are 29 federally recognized tribes in the state of Washington.

Tribes are spread in every part of Washington and our schools should be reaching out and trying to educate kids about their local tribes. Our tribes aren't going anywhere; we will always be here. I hope people read this and want to become better

educated about tribes and treaty rights.

I want to thank the leadership in North Thurston Public Schools for making this a priority to get more involved with the Nisqually Tribe. This is just the beginning. We have much more to do to make sure the right history is taught to all our future leaders of this great state of Washington. ■

### Where to Begin?

One place to start is at Nisqually's website at <http://www.nisqually-nsn.gov>. For a general overview of the western Washington treaty tribes, [www.nwtreatytribes.org](http://www.nwtreatytribes.org) and [www.salmondefense.org](http://www.salmondefense.org) are great resources as well. In addition, most tribes have their own website with information about history, culture and the actions that each tribe is doing to move forward and contribute to both their own, and larger, community.





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# THE Climate and Culture PUZZLE

*My journey as a first-year principal*



**Brandon Bakke**  
Principal, Fife High,  
Fife SD

**PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

*Creating a Culture, Closing the Gap*

In 2002, I sat down for a heart-to-heart conversation with principal Dan Bisset, who would go on to become the 2018 Washington State High School Principal of the Year. He was an assistant principal at Wilson High, where he had been for over a decade. I was a 29-year-old principal intern — and my life had just been turned upside down. I found myself quite suddenly a single father raising two small children, which

undoubtedly had me asking some big questions about my life and career.

Dan, sensing I was struggling to balance my ambition with my new reality, shared some encouragement: **“Don’t be in a hurry, Brandon. I myself am waiting until my kids are out of high school before I will entertain any idea of being the principal, and I don’t regret it.”**

Dan’s wisdom would shape the next

17 years of my life. I crossed out written goals where I meticulously benchmarked how I’d be climbing various points in my professional ladder. I hoped to be a superintendent by 40, but I adjusted my thinking. I became resolved to travel the assistant principal road until my kids graduated from high school. To be honest, I felt “judged” professionally at times for this decision. But for me, it was the right decision.



## EMBRACE YOUR JOURNEY

It was a glorious day in June 2018. I got to announce my son's name from the stage at Sumner High School's graduation, where I was an assistant principal. A week later, I started a new position as principal at Fife High School. My first day as the principal.

**"Embrace Your Journey!"** This saying adorns the wall in my office, and I mention this journey to the principalship because one would think that after 16 years as an assistant principal, I'd feel one hundred percent ready. I can honestly say I felt confident, but I was undoubtedly nervous and some self-doubt was creeping in. Frank DeAngelis, Columbine High School's incredible former principal echoed this in his book, "They Call Me Mr. Dee": "... I don't care if you were an assistant principal for 20 years or two: until you're the one sitting behind that desk making those decisions, you have no idea what it's going to be like."

“ Fife is known in our region for having a strong school culture and climate, but the school experienced some bumps in the road in recent years.”



Brandon Bakke with Class of 2020 Senior and Eastern Washington University-bound Casonndrah Polo.



Students celebrate the first day of school at Fife High.

Fife is known in our region for having a strong school culture and climate, but the school experienced some bumps in the road in recent years. Whether I was ready or not, the charge given to me by the district leadership was to improve the staff and student climate and culture, and this is what I set out to do.

Defined, in organizations and schools, culture is how we behave and climate is how we feel. Improving either of these is not a one-person undertaking. Principals are like quarterbacks — they often get too much blame when things go wrong or too much credit when things go right. It takes a lot of people showing commitment to impact a school's culture. I viewed the principal as a leader who could be a catalyst for positive change, which I sincerely hoped to be.

As my first year as a high school principal came to a close, students and staff alike noticed some positive change. One long-time teacher shared with me, "We haven't felt positive energy like this in years." A student commented, "Mr. Bakke, the school just feels different, in a good way!" Statements like this from all stakeholders were common. Examining pre- and post-year staff

surveys showed very encouraging results, and by all indications, it was a great school year. The staff at Fife High School did amazing work!

## PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Healing a school's culture and climate for a principal is like a puzzle really: it takes a lot of pieces fitting together, but only a few falling into place to bring clarity to the big picture. So here are the five pieces that made the puzzle fit.

### PUZZLE PIECE 1: MAKE MOMENTS AND SHARE THEM

In the book, "*The Power of Moments*," authors Dan and Chip Heath contend that as leaders, we should help people make meaningful moments, rather than just trying to solve problems. Thinking in these terms really empowered me. From simple things like how you recognize people's achievements, to how you welcome newly hired staff members, making moments changes how people feel (*climate*).

With students, it started with the first day when we honored our state champion track team with a

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banner-raising ceremony followed by a new tradition we started called, “the popsicle celebration.” From that moment on, every time we win a state championship, the whole school celebrates with popsicles! We tweaked how we recognize monthly outstanding students; it now involves our administrative team going into classrooms with music blaring from my backpack with some standing ovations and Twitter images being sent out.

We started holding a quarterly “press conference” where we recreate a professional press conference highlighting students and staff achievements as well as providing a forum for students to ask me questions. These are just a few of the moments we tried to create, but a theme exists: as much as possible we are trying to make “the ordinary something extraordinary.” All of these moments we tried to capture on social media. Telling the story, changing the narrative, and showing our joy was a big step in our school community, and we are starting to feel proud again.

## **PUZZLE PIECE 2:** **STRESS RELATIONSHIPS**

Making moments becomes shallow if there isn’t a relationship. My quest was to memorialize our staff’s existing belief in the importance of student and staff relationships while doing my best to model it. I believe people love because someone first loved them.



Bakke and student Miguel Hernandez lead a cheer at Fife’s Top 5 Unified Special Olympics ESPN Assembly.

I tried to show love by greeting students every day at our front gates, being quick to respond to staff or students in crisis, and taking time to get to know people as people. I wrote notes to staff and students daily, and sent notes to the parents of some staff members to let them know how fantastic their “kids” are in their profession. I asked for forgiveness if I hurt someone. I made it a goal when addressing our students as a group to tell them as much as possible that I love them. None of this is rocket science or new ideas to anyone reading this, and I feel like I still have a long way to go, but I can affirm in hindsight it was the most important thing I did in year one as a principal (and every year to come).

“ From that moment on, every time we win a state championship, the whole school celebrates with popsicles!”

## **PUZZLE PIECE 3:** **LEARN OUR HISTORY**

Fife High School is over 100 years old with incredible history and tradition, both in the community and the school. I made it a goal to become an authority on our past. I met with our local museum, spent hours with alumni asking questions, read old yearbooks, and spent much of my winter vacation reading two books on the history of Fife. About three months into the school year, I began working Fife history into the speeches I was giving and the lessons I was writing. Why? I want the Fife community to know I’m all in and one of them! I also want our staff and students to know they have a lot to be proud of being a part of this school, and our history is a great way for people to feel that. Did you know that



Brandon Bakke getting Fife High School students fired up for the start of the school year!

the Fife School District was started by a Native American tribal leader, or that the town decided to incorporate so they wouldn’t lose the school to a neighboring district? Did you know that Fife was nearly 50% Asian American for the first 50 years of its history and was known for embracing diversity? That is a story that needs to be told!

There is much to learn from the successes and mistakes of our past, and history continues to be a great source of wisdom. What untold stories need to be told from your school’s history? It is the leader’s job to provide a sense of positive identity for both staff and students.

## **PUZZLE PIECE 4:** **COMMUNICATE VISION**

Vision gives us purpose and meaning. It is the spyglass keeping us looking ahead at our destination and the rudder keeping us on the right path.

I spent hours crafting a multi-year vision for our school; I think a lot of principals do this. The really important thing, however, was making sure I had a practical and aspirational plan for *communicating* the vision. I needed to make an



“ Having vision can create powerful organizational belief, but we have to constantly communicate and teach it to our stakeholders.”

emotional case for change. Part of this process was developing our staff’s collective beliefs, as well as the values we wanted our entire school to be teaching, modeling, and following. I’ve held strong to the belief that we have to define our culture so we can teach it— and then teach it!

Our staff did a great job helping roll this out in our first year together. I had many opportunities through lessons I wrote for the school advisory classes, as well as whole grade-level meetings where I directly taught student lessons on the different aspects of our collective culture. We created new imagery articulating our culture, and a new school mantra.



Culture assembly celebration at Fife High.

Having vision can create powerful organizational belief, but we have to constantly communicate and teach it to our stakeholders.

### PUZZLE PIECE 5: TAKE RISKS

It was the first volleyball game of the year (a few days into the school year) when I noticed our student section could use a little help creating some positive energy. After a brief moment of contemplation, I just jumped in and started leading cheers. Without the students really knowing me quite yet I took a risk, and thankfully the students responded! I didn’t know it at the time, but I created my own monster. Students are constantly checking to see if I’m coming to their games or events and actually get upset with me if I do not have it on my schedule. I later developed a cheer I taught our students, and throughout the year at games, assemblies, and even graduation, we do the cheer together. Teachers have the best job in the world — they get to have direct connection with students every day! Principals can have the same connection, but we have to be incredibly intentional to create the opportunity.

The lesson? Take risks! From my cheer, to the press conferences and lessons I taught to students, to finding moments to tell them how much I care, to even the unique twist I used for the speech I gave at graduation, I don’t regret one risk I took this first year. In most cases, these risks took preparation and extra effort, which I was committed to not letting deter me from something potentially great. Sometimes the risk was simply being vulnerable, like sticking your hand out every morning to say hello hoping students will reciprocate. I found people actually noticed the risks I took, and encouraged me by letting me know it was appreciated.



Bakke looking on with pride as student Taylor Mountsier and Zoie Breland address the media at Fife’s Special Olympics ESPN Unified Top 5 Inclusion School Press Conference.

### STILL PUTTING IT TOGETHER

As I reflect on my first year, I can honestly say I am really proud of our people and the work they did to help improve our culture and climate. The people of Fife — our staff, students, and community — are truly remarkable and deserve to feel good about their school.

Healing climate and culture is indeed one big challenging puzzle, and so is being a principal. In reality, I’m still figuring out where all the pieces go. But, one piece, one smile, and one handshake at a time, I’m excited to see the beautiful picture taking shape. ■

*Brandon Bakke is in his second year as Principal at Fife High School. Fife was recently recognized by Special Olympics and ESPN as a Top 5 National Banner school for their work with inclusion. Brandon has been a high school administrator for 17 years, with previous stops at Sumner, Foss, and Mount Tahoma High Schools. He started his educational career at Clovis High School in Clovis, CA where he taught social studies and was the Head Boys’ Basketball Coach. Brandon graduated with a BA in history from Fresno State University, and earned his MA in Educational Leadership from City University.*

# Leadership Self-Care

## Tips for surviving distance leading and learning

### Gina Yonts

Associate Director, AWSP

#### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Improving Instruction, Managing Resources,  
Engaging Families and Communities*

Life as a school leader in a building with staff and students is one thing; trying to lead from a distance and not face-to-face is another. With COVID-19, school closures, and “stay home, stay healthy” decrees, school leaders are once again facing challenges with unimaginable stress and leadership tests that even the best principal preparation programs could not have prepared us for.

As the school closures progressed from temporary to permanent for the 2019-20 school year, students, staff and leadership alike are making changes to their day-to-day existence in public education. Managing stress and work life balance is more important now than ever as the cocoon of your home environment becomes the Principal’s Office.

### LEARNING HAPPENS IN RELATIONSHIPS

Humans are social. Lock everyone down in their houses for three weeks and watch people struggle. Tasks as simple as walking to the mailbox, a quick grocery store run, or the daily office banter have turned into major productions and as a whole we may not have been prepared for what this will all look like in the coming months. As a human race, we are missing these seemingly benign interactions. Our brains are constantly seeking connection —

“Humans are social. Lock everyone down in their houses for three weeks and watch people struggle.”

it is how we are hard-wired. Your leadership matters!

How are leaders modeling relationships for their staff and families? What amazing ideas have you come up with out of pure happenstance and “Leadership Heart Work?” How are you encouraging your staff and families to create connection and re-connection with their students and children? What are YOU doing to prioritize relationships in your new work environment?

Family walks, board games, closet cleaning, yardwork, cooking meals together, gardening, story-telling of family history and back-to-basics family engagement within the home setting are examples we should not overlook as we model and encourage our stakeholders to capitalize on the gift of time we’ve been given due to the COVID-19 situation.

### CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

For our family, the first week of “stay home, stay healthy” orders came on the heels of a family snowboarding trip. We went from empty-nesters to

having three adult children at home as they were navigating uncertain work situations, closures, and travel home. Crisis planning ensued and stress was high. However, using this time to have the millennials call and coach grandparents through installing Zoom apps on tablets and practicing launching and answering calls was a beautiful bridging of the generations. Family text chains and weekly calls to stay connected was the result of stabilizing uncertainty for our family, young and old alike. The school family needs the same level of connection to be successful during stressful times and looking within your team to identify the helpers can bring your school family together as well.

The OSPI COVID-19 Continuous Learning document calls out very clearly the importance of taking Maslow’s Hierarchy to heart as we proceed into these final few months of distance learning in our schools. How are you modeling and leading intentionally around the theme of connection for your staff? Your personal family and friendships? Are you intentionally reaching out to those who may have a limited circle of connection? The culture of your school can be supported through strategic thinking and planning for connection. Urging teachers to intentionally pursue their colleagues, their students/families could be an opportunity to support your virtual school culture when face to face opportunities are limited.





“ Connection over content is the mantra we are using in our home as we navigate sharing workspace, the daily sprawl of work on every open counter space, multiple Zoom calls as well as new and different work expectations.”

### GIVE YOURSELF GRACE

School leaders who find themselves working and leading from home are adding a new layer to leadership and work/life balance. Be gentle with yourself and give yourself the grace you so willingly give to others. Connection over content is the mantra we are using in our home as we navigate sharing workspace, the daily sprawl of work on every open counter space, multiple Zoom calls as well as new and different work expectations. Productivity and efficiency are different in these new working conditions and simple tasks can produce frustration and anxiety as we discover new work-arounds. This isn't the time to add the pressure to yourself to work just as hard and be just as productive as you would normally be if your work life hadn't been upended. It will take time, patience and a little perseverance to get used to the "new normal."

Are you designating workday boundaries for yourself? How are

you coaching your teachers and families to establish and maintain healthy boundaries around work/life balance? Are you modeling and sharing strategies around your own struggle and being vulnerable and open to share your experiences with your teams? You are the leader, but there are many other descriptors you all carry — don't be afraid to be your FULL self with your people. Building and maintaining trust with your stakeholders through sharing our own struggles offers a rare glimpse into leadership, and models giving grace to ourselves.

### OPTIMISM IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

The School Leader Paradigm is an excellent resource to draw on as our soft skills of leadership are being pushed and pulled. The personal intelligence that I have looked into much this past month is *optimism*. Optimism is the quality school leaders possess to remain steadfast personally and professionally in

the face of adversity — believing adversity can be overcome and looking on the positive side of challenging situations. Students, staff and families look to the leader to be the beacon of hope and encouragement in uncertain times.

What have you been doing to maintain or even bolster your optimism? Have you plugged into a new podcast or subscribed to a blog that has been particularly helpful? Listed below are a few of my favorites that you might be interested in checking out:

- “Unlocking Us” podcast, by Brene Brown
- “The Empowered Principal” podcast, by Angela Robeck Kelly
- “The Happiness Lab” podcast with Dr. Lori Santos
- “Emotional Agility” TED Talk by Susan David

Finding ways to acknowledge our circumstances and get ready for a new normal takes time. At AWSP we are here to support you during this time. Please read “Principal Matters” and consider joining your grade-level associate directors for office hours as well. Knowing you're not alone is one of the most helpful things you can do for yourself as we weather the COVID-19 storm together. ■





# What's the T on the Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project?

**Cris Sippel, MPA**

*Project Specialist, AWSP*

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Planning with Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Engaging Families and Communities, Closing the Gap*

**Y**ou may be hearing a lot of talk about increasing professional learning around inclusionary practices for educators in Washington state.

OSPI recently shared a study conducted by the National Council on Disability (2018) ranking Washington state in the lowest quintile for inclusion nationwide (44th out of 50 states)[1]. Data shows only 57% of students with disabilities are included in general education settings for 80-100% of the school day[2]. Last year, the Legislature responded by passing Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1109, which provided \$25,000,000 to OSPI over fiscal years 2020 (\$10M) and 2021 (\$15M) to create professional learning opportunities supporting better inclusionary practices, emphasizing coaching and mentoring. OSPI selected the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP) to plan and coordinate the Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project (IPDP).

“AWSP is excited to be one of many organizations involved with the IPDP cadre as an external partner navigating the implementation of better inclusionary practices for Washington state educators — our focus being, of course, YOU, the building learning leaders.”

## WHY ARE WE TELLING YOU THIS?

AWSP is excited to be one of many organizations involved with the IPDP cadre as an external partner navigating the implementation of better inclusionary practices for Washington state educators — our focus being, of course, YOU, the building learning leaders. Since November 2019, AWSP has embarked on a “fact-finding” mission to measure the understanding of what inclusion and inclusionary practices are from our members’ perspective and evaluate what the immediate needs are in order to embed targeted inclusionary practices within all of our professional learning opportunities.

AWSP developed and deployed a survey to our members to gauge a better understanding of inclusionary best practices, perceived barriers, and professional learning needs of school leaders. Between Nov. 22, 2019, and Feb. 24, 2020, AWSP provided this survey to attendees at AWSP professional learning opportunities, board and committee meetings, and through targeted emails and e-newsletters to all 3500+ active AWSP members. Through these efforts, AWSP received 88 responses. This small, blind sample of active school administrators will help influence and guide AWSP’s future professional learning opportunities targeted to — and framed with — the lenses of equity and inclusion.

Categorizing these findings within a Culture, Systems, and Learning philosophy, as outlined within the *School Leader Paradigm: Becoming While Doing*, AWSP, utilizing a cycle of inquiry, will assist learning leaders in enriching their professional pedagogy to build and lead learning organizations. Our goal is to help you, as a learning leader, disrupt and dismantle systemic isolation of students who have IEP plans and identify better practices for incorporating inclusive practices as professional and educational expectations and norms.

When analyzed through the culture/systems/learning lenses, AWSP identified many areas of improvement [Table 1] based on survey responses. Further analysis of these improvement areas indicated overlap: there were several categories that fell into two or more buckets on the culture, systems and learning continuum. AWSP identifies these areas as immediate needs [Table 2] and will work to embed relevant content addressing these needs within our professional learning opportunities first.

### WHY NOW?

Why such a push on inclusionary practices now? Because it is way overdue. Based on the body of research, the current reality of inclusionary practice programs in Washington state has much room for improvement. As learning leaders, we know you are all focused on improving the culture, systems and learning in your buildings and are committed to learning about and supporting inclusionary best practices. AWSP will continue to provide ongoing professional learning embedded with inclusionary best practices to assist you in increasing the academic, social and emotional outcomes for all students. We are dedicated to supporting you through engaging professional learning as you navigate your way to improved inclusionary practices for all your students and your entire school community.

“ Why such a push on inclusionary practices now? Because it is way overdue.”

If you did not take the opportunity to participate in our research, don't worry! AWSP will be sending out further surveys as this project progresses. We want to make sure all voices have a chance to participate

and share understanding because no two schools are the same.

We exist to strengthen your learning and your leadership.

For more information on the IPPDP cadre and the work being done statewide, please visit: <https://www.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/special-education-funding-and-finance/inclusionary-practices-professional-development-project>. ■

Table 1 — Areas for Improvement

Culture	Systems	Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a vision of shared ownership for all students at the school</li> <li>• Expectations for students with IEPs</li> <li>• Visiting sites where inclusionary practices are being implemented successfully</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General education teachers and special education teachers regularly plan together</li> <li>• All faculty members are knowledgeable of the contents of each student's IEP for whom they are responsible</li> <li>• There are in-class support options for students with special needs utilizing co-teaching</li> <li>• There are in-class support options for students with special needs utilizing peer support</li> <li>• Service personnel such as occupational therapists and speech pathologists plan with the general education teacher and provide services within the general education class, when appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated instruction is the predominant instructional methodology used in classrooms</li> <li>• Teachers understand the difference between accommodations and modifications</li> <li>• Limited understanding of what inclusion and inclusionary practices are</li> <li>• Pedagogy and continued professional support</li> </ul>

Table 2 — Immediate Needs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students served on IEPs are actively involved with their placement</li> <li>• The school has a plan or program for increasing positive student-to-student relationships (ex. PALS, Circle of Friends, etc.)</li> <li>• Ability to hire and retain quality staff</li> <li>• Learning from panels of leaders, teachers, families and students who have been implementing practice and their experiences</li> </ul>
---

[1] National Council on Disability. (2018). The Segregation of Students with Disabilities. [https://nccd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD\\_Segregation-SWD\\_508.pdf](https://nccd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD_Segregation-SWD_508.pdf)

[2] Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2019). Special Education Federal Child Count.

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## Digesting discussions about diversity & equity

### Mallory Wilson

Assistant Principal, Chambers Prairie Elementary, North Thurston PS

#### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

**"Y**ou know what I'm craving? A little perspective. That's it. I'd like some fresh clear, well-seasoned perspective." This is what

Anton Ego tells the poor waiter, Mustafa, in one of my favorite Disney Pixar films, "Ratatouille." Now in this case, he's talking about dinner, but I'm craving a little perspective as well. I'm craving perspective regarding equity.

### SETTING THE TABLE

Experiencing discomfort is one of those norms that looks great on a table tent. It sounds like a no brainer when leaning into equity work but is incredibly hard to do in day-to-day situations with your staff. It takes time to build authentic relationships with staff that allow you to have meaningful and courageous conversations.

Even the possibility of conversations around equity leaves room for fractured relationships with those who I've worked tirelessly to build trust with. Questions plague my mind. Can I really say something to a teacher who has been teaching longer

than my lifespan about something insensitive that he said? Is it okay to call out someone who is of another marginalized race for continuing to spread stereotypes of others? Why is it so easy to address inappropriate student behavior but so difficult with adults? Am I going to survive experiencing discomfort knowing that staying silent will only do more harm to our students in the future?

The answer to all these questions is yes, I will survive. Experiencing discomfort is going to happen on both sides when giving perspective, but it's crucial for change.

### DISHING IT OUT

A feedback survey is a tool I wished I thought of last year before approaching uncomfortable conversations. It's nothing extreme, just an inventory of how staff would like to be approached or informed if they do or say something revealing biases or perpetuates "isms." Without this tool, I had to approach uncomfortable conversations in the best way I knew how: with kindness and respect. There were two similar situations that occurred in the past year where I found myself wincing at a sentence a person had said in a meeting or written in

**"**It takes time to build authentic relationships with staff that allow you to have meaningful and courageous conversations."





“ I attempt to keep my emotions out of it and remind myself this isn't about how I feel, it's about how my actions made another person feel. I don't make excuses and instead, I offer a thank you and an apology.”

an email. On both occasions, I took a moment to examine intent versus impact. Then I braced myself, headed into their learning environment when nobody else was within earshot and asked them each a question. “Do you want to know if you say something offensive to others?” And, “May I teach you something?”

Both educators said yes, and truly meaningful dialogue ensued where both of us left the conversation thanking one another.

### HEARTBURN

If I'm going to be offering perspective to others, then I need to be prepared to receive perspective as well.

Experiencing discomfort as both the giver and receiver is essential in my own learning and growth.

Recently, I heard a teacher refer to biased and racist comments as food on one's face. I've made it clear to those around me, I want to know when I'm walking around with food on my face. The first thing I try to do when receiving feedback is keep my facial expressions and body language in check. The slightest brow furrow, crossing of arms, or light sigh could turn the conversation into a confrontation. I attempt to keep my emotions out of it and remind myself this isn't about how I feel, it's about how my actions made another person

feel. I don't make excuses and instead, I offer a thank you and an apology.

### CLEARING THE TABLE

When an uncomfortable conversation is over, you save what you can still use, and you throw away what you can't. I save my respect for others and hope they do the same in return. I save my courage, my character, and my voice knowing I'll need them again soon. I throw away assumptions, judgment, and excuses knowing none of this is going to lead me in the right direction.

We leave the conversation fuller than when we started and with perspectives we once didn't see. While it may not always be ratatouille we are craving, we all get hungry, and we all need to eat. We might as well set a few more places at our table and eat together. ■

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# Outdoor School for All

Expanding access for all students in Washington state

## Chase Buffington

Cispus Learning Center Director, AWSL

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Improving Instruction, Closing the Gap*

**W**hat do you get when you mix some silly songs around a campfire, pH testing of a mountain stream, tracing the outline of a Big Leaf Maple and learning to identify a Douglas Fir tree?

Answer: An abundance of laughter and ideas going off in young minds, appreciation of where one fits in the world, and a great big dose of critical thinking skills.

We, at the Association of Washington School Principals, know the magic and discipline of hands-on science learning because we've been doing outdoor school for decades at Cispus and Chewelah Peak Learning Centers. We've seen young people's eyes light up when they make connections with the world, with their peers, and with themselves. Outdoor school catches kids at an important time in their lives and gives them insight and experiences that are hard to duplicate in the classroom.

“ We've seen young people's eyes light up when they make connections with the world, with their peers, and with themselves.”

This winter, the Washington School Principals Education Foundation helped launch “Outdoor School For All,” with the goal of funding universal outdoor school in Washington. Modeled after Oregon's successful efforts, it has sparked a coalition of educators, community leaders, and others to ask the governor and the Legislature to fund outdoor school. OSFA was active in the 2020 session, seeking funding for a baseline study of current programs in our state, as well as demand for expanded offerings. As we met and contacted legislators, we found a lot of positive interest in outdoor school. Over the next year, we will continue to grow the OSFA coalition and make our case. Washington state has long been a leader in outdoor education.

Want to know more or get involved for the 2021 session? E-mail [info@outdoorschoolforall.com](mailto:info@outdoorschoolforall.com).

## CISPUS

***“It is a critical moment, the time for self-discovery, and the chance to create positive social structures to be ones that bond and empower. For fifth- or sixth-graders, I hope to give them support and allow for their imagination to unfold, that their peers around them can embrace nature, and quality time amongst classmates working to celebrate success and failures that take place. From this, resiliency and understanding can turn into empathy. That is outdoor school, a bigger-than-any-of-us moment, the turning of the tide for many. I want that opportunity for them all to be protected, to be secured.”***

— Chase Buffington

“ And then there are the evenings, watching it snow while sipping hot chocolate with your classmates! It is the perfect space to apply social-emotional learning objectives to science education.”

### CHEWELAH PEAK

**“Outdoor school can take on a different appearance here at Chewelah Peak. With an elevation of 4,000 ft, we have the opportunity to offer a snowy winter camp experience. Students gain a new appreciation of where the water that they use throughout the year originates. They study snowpack and look at the varied levels that make it up. They see the conditions that create avalanche risk. Snowshoe hikes provide a view of nature that is unique. Finding animal tracks in the snow can be exciting, particularly the deep holes**

**that our local moose population leave. Late afternoons “after school” is a great time for making snow angels and snowmen. And then there are the evenings, watching it snow while sipping hot chocolate with your classmates! It is the perfect space to apply social-emotional learning objectives to science education.”**

— Bill Barnes



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# LEADERS in Unexpected Places

AWSL programs help schools find student leaders in every part of a school's community

**James Layman**

AWSL Program Director

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Improving Instruction, Engaging Families and Communities, Closing the Gap*



**“W**hen someone sees my abilities and supports me in cultivating them, it motivates me to further develop my natural talents even when I can't see them within myself.”

– Anna Gonzalez, Othello High

Who was the person who tapped you on the shoulder and told you, “You are a leader”?

Can you think of a time or situation where you felt seen by an adult, as they empowered you to take your skills and use them to your fullest leadership potential? These important moments have been pivotal in our lives, and careers and have certainly shaped us into who we are.

As we walk through the hallways of schools each and every day the question for us to ask is, how many students have been tapped on the shoulder with a similar leadership wand?

## ‘I SEE YOU’

As we continue our journey into 2020, the Association of Washington Student Leaders continues to ask the question, “Who are the students furthest away from hope and opportunity, and how can we close that gap?” As we examine equity, opportunity, and

**“**Mission Peak opened in 2017, and over the past three years has served as a subtle yet powerful reminder that there are leaders in all corners of schools, just waiting for the moment to be told, ‘I see you.’”

access throughout all aspects of our origination and offerings it has become our charge to eliminate the mantra of “train and empower student leaders” to “train and empower (all) students to lead.” This intentional language change has caused systemic changes in how we market, promote, create, and teach our programs and services.

An example of this has been the creation of Mission Peak Leadership Camp, a high school summer camp that brings together students who lead from throughout the entire school, a la “The Breakfast Club” to create connection, shared experience and to create a community where all of their leadership skills can be elevated. Students from Band, Football, ASB, Dance Team, Multi-Cultural Club, Honor Society, and students who just lead without being linked to an extracurricular activity spend a week together to practice strategies that promote respect and acceptance in regard to multiple perspectives. Mission Peak opened in 2017, and over the past three years

has served as a subtle yet powerful reminder that there are leaders in all corners of schools, just waiting for the moment to be told, “I see you.”

**“Mission Peak is for everyone. Whether you are a strong leader, want to become a strong leader, or you don't consider yourself a leader at all, Mission Peak will give you all the necessary knowledge and confidence you need to realize that you can be absolutely anything you want to be.”**

– Johnna Jensen, Republic High

As Dr. Paul Batalden says, “Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets.” As long as leadership in schools remains centered around those who benefit most from the status quo, we lose opportunities to elevate, cultivate and develop potential leaders within our schools. When we begin to open doors and create pathways for ALL students to lead, we can witness the true power of kids these days, as they become the true agents of change in our world.

## SUPPORTING ALL SCHOOLS, PRINCIPALS

The Association of Washington Student Leaders is determined to create a paradigm shift as it relates to the definition of a leader. We want to challenge the gatekeepers of leadership opportunities to cast a wider net and to find leaders in unexpected places. It is our belief that all students can learn leadership skills, just like they can learn math, science, and social studies. Let us take the time to be treasure hunters in our schools and find those leaders just waiting to be found. As always, our students say it better than we ever could.

**“Often leaders get recognized for being loud, energetic, and extroverted—the leaders who stand in front and are the most visible in the public eye of the school. There are more of us out there. There is nothing better when adults find the leader in every student and create the moment for that student to feel seen. It is an incredible feeling.”**

– Averie Golladay, Warden High

Students, when given opportunities to lead, infuse these learnings into themselves. AWSL is here to support all schools and principals on this path. ■

*From OSPI’s guide: SEL is not a way to “grade” or identify deficits, and it is not just a curriculum or add-on. Rather, SEL is an intentional approach to building student assets.*

AWSL works to create programming options that meet the needs of all students as leaders, to nurture and grow in that capacity, and to understand their own self-identity as well as the social constructs in which they roam. We continue to develop our offerings for increased knowledge and proficiency but are infusing OSPI’s social-emotional learning standards into all our programs and events. Visit [bit.ly/2wZW90x](https://bit.ly/2wZW90x)



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# EQUITY EFFORTS IN OLYMPIA

A look at the 2020 Legislature’s impact on equity for every student

## Roz Thompson

Advocacy and Governmental Relations  
Director, AWSP

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Planning with Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, Engaging Families and Communities, Closing the Gap*

Since 2017, AWSP has been working hard to achieve the three goals of our strategic plan. One goal is related to principal support, another is related to ensuring the health of our association, and our first goal is related to equity. This goal states that AWSP will, “lead on diversity and equity issues for historically underserved populations and use an equity lens to best serve all of our members.”

So how well have we been leading on equity issues and using an equity lens as it relates to education policy? For the past several legislative sessions, lawmakers have approved bills intended to change inequitable systems and provide more support for

“ This goal states that AWSP will, ‘lead on diversity and equity issues for historically underserved populations and use an equity lens to best serve all of our members.’”

groups that have been marginalized. One of the most significant bills was HB 1541, which passed in 2016. This bill has many pieces to it, but in part it added professional development in cultural competency and prompted the changes to discipline laws with the goal of reducing suspensions and expulsions. In 2019, HB 1621 passed which said that for people applying to teacher preparation programs, achieving a minimum score on the WEST-B was no longer required for admission because the current test

was biased. SB 5290 also passed last year and, over the next few years, intends to help eliminate detention as an option for students who engage in non-criminal offenses.

Taking an equity stance on more issues continued this session. Here is a look at some of the bills that passed this year with our support that will help change systems that may have been historically bad for students.

## 2SHB 1191 | CONCERNING SCHOOL NOTIFICATIONS

In response to two state audits, this bill will streamline the notifications process from various entities such as juvenile courts to school districts. Superintendents will first receive the notifications and will then get the information to the appropriate building principal. Principals then have the discretion with whom to share this information.

Several RCWs included in this bill were out of date or in conflict with other RCWs so it was important to get this bill passed. In addition to these updates, concern over stigmatizing or labeling students who return to the school setting after an adjudication was expressed. After many meetings with a wide range of stakeholders, including students, the final bill is a compromise with regards to the information that superintendents and principals will receive. Notifications for drug, sex, firearm, or violent offenses will be included. The bill will discontinue notifications to schools related to diversions, the unlawful inhalation of toxic fumes, and liquor violations. WSSDA will be creating a model policy and procedure related to this bill.

## EHSB 2251 | PERMITTING STUDENTS TO WEAR TRADITIONAL TRIBAL REGALIA AT GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Beginning with the class of 2020, school districts, public schools, and institutions of higher education may not prohibit students who are members of a federally recognized tribe from wearing tribal regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance along with or attached to a gown at graduation ceremonies or related events. Districts, public schools, and public institutions may not require these students to wear a cap if it is incompatible with the



“These are just a few of the bills that passed the Legislature that relate to creating equity for each and every student.”

regalia or significant object. The bill recognizes the nation-to-nation relationship between tribes and the state government.

## 3SHB 1660 | CONCERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE LOW INCOME IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Following last year’s budget requirement that schools collect and publish data related to high school possession of Associated Student Body (ASB) cards and student participation in athletic programs, this bill now codifies this practice into law. Schools are now required to analyze this data, set goals, and implement plans related to any opportunity gaps that may exist for students. School boards are directed to adopt a policy and regulations for waiving attendance and extracurricular participation fees for students who are low income. Our Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL) staff encourages schools and districts to include students in this process and can provide guidance on what this might look like.

## SB 6066 | EXPANDING ETHNIC STUDIES MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES K-6

Public schools with students in grades K-6 are encouraged to incorporate materials and resources related to ethnic studies. By Sept. 1, 2021, OSPI must identify existing state learning standards addressing knowledge and skills all public school students

need to be global citizens in a global society. An OSPI advisory committee currently exists related to ethnic studies in grades 7-12 and will be expanded to include educators with experience in age-appropriate ethnic studies curricula. AWSP members serve on this committee.

These are just a few of the bills that passed the Legislature that relate to creating equity for each and every student. More work is needed and more is coming next session. For example, SB 6262 would require districts to incorporate the Since Time Immemorial curriculum into all social studies classes. Since it did not pass this year, I would expect it to return in 2021. Also, in the final report of the Staffing Enrichments Work Group coordinated by OSPI, the recommendation is made to “provide required professional development for all staff ensuring key topics of racial literacy and cultural responsiveness are included to help with the elimination of opportunity gaps.” AWSP played a prominent role in shaping the outcomes of this workgroup. This report, including its recommendations to change the prototypical funding model, will play a significant part in next year’s legislative session.

For a more complete list of all of the bills that passed this legislative session, check out our website. ■

# TURNING A SHOVEL INTO TEARS

*A day gone wrong was actually a day gone right*

**Dr. Scott Seaman**

*Executive Director, AWSP*

**The crackle** of the radio was rarely good news, and today's urgent all-channel broadcast was no different. "There's an angry student who took a shovel from the greenhouse and is swinging wildly at anyone who comes near him in the courtyard," was the panicked message from the high school front office.

As principal, I remember changing courses immediately from wherever my previous mission was taking me and began running straight toward the courtyard. While at the same time I was yelling back at the radio, "Call the police! I'm on my way!"

I also remember doing the math on how close we were to a passing period and thinking the math was not in my favor. Should I call for a lockdown?

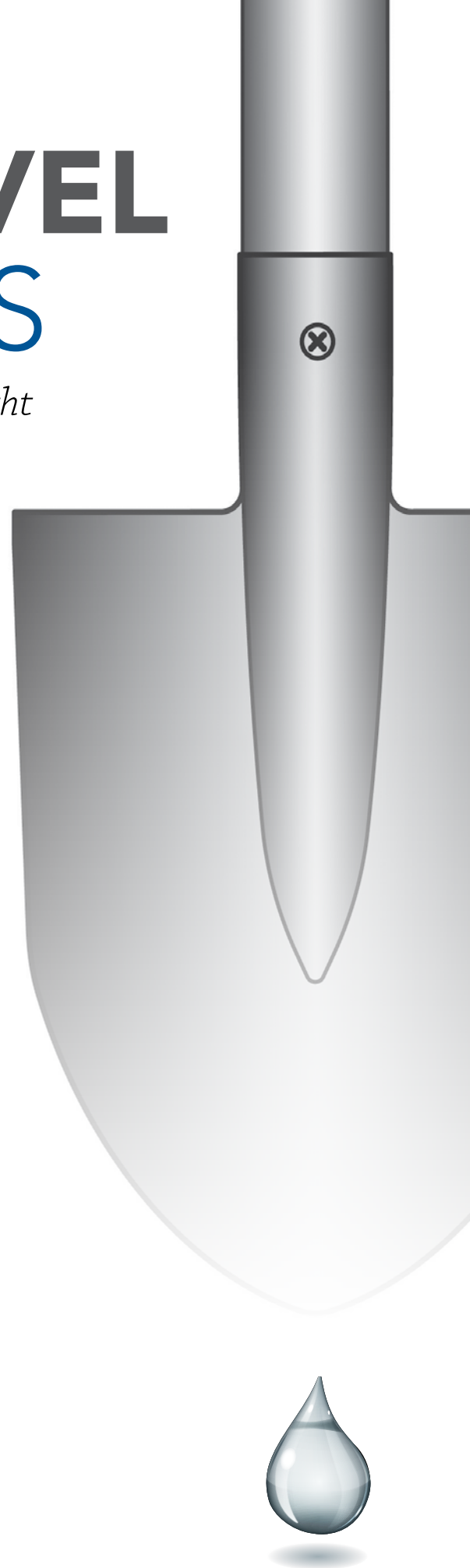
We all have those moments in our career where you think that you've seen it all — until you are reminded quite directly that's never the case. When I blasted through the doors of the courtyard, I saw something I hadn't seen before: a student with his back against the wall, swinging a shovel, yelling obscenities at anyone and everyone, and extremely angry at the world.

I was first on the scene and took a quick assessment of the situation. I immediately dug deep into my principal prep classes that trained me for this exact situation and

“When I blasted through the doors of the courtyard, I saw something I hadn't seen before: a student with his back against the wall, swinging a shovel, yelling obscenities at anyone and everyone, and extremely angry at the world.”

remembered I didn't have a class on how to deescalate a suicidal, angry, violent and emotionally-wounded student. So, my next step was to turn to whatever natural instincts I had for dealing with a situation like this. I looked around to assess the situation and found about five classrooms full of students pressed into the windows like an aquarium exhibit. I also remember hearing the sirens of our local police racing to the scene.

"Billy, put the shovel down," were the first words that came out of my mouth. This is a crucial first piece to the story that all principal prep classes should take note of: I knew the student's name (lesson #1 — in





“ Please don’t shoot him. I know him. Give me a chance to talk him down.”

this case I’ve changed the name to protect his identity). His gaze back at me was filled with rage and hate. However, because I’ve had a long nurturing relationship (lesson #2) with Billy, I knew his hate and rage was not directed at me, but rather at the world he was born into.

“Billy, please put the shovel down. Let’s just go for a walk and talk this out. I’m here to help,” was my next attempt to break through the shield of anger he’d put up around himself.

Have you ever had those moments in life that seem like a dream? This was one of those. I remember the bell ringing, signaling an imminent “passing time” which meant that about 1,100 kids were about to change classes while I was in the middle of this crisis. (Yes, I should have called for lockdown.) I just remember trying to block out the noise around me and focus on his eyes and our longstanding relationship.

What happened next changed the equation drastically. A police officer appeared next to me with his hand on his gun. I’m not sure if it was the shadow to my right or Billy’s words that alerted me to this new piece to the puzzle. “Go ahead and shoot me motherf’#@#\$er!” Billy yelled.

Oh boy, that’s not what we need right now.

I specifically remember slowly turning to the officer who I knew really well (lesson #3) and saying, “Please don’t shoot him. I know him. Give me a chance to talk him down.”

“Shoot me, mother f’#@#\$er!” he yelled again with even more taunting, anger, and hate. And, again, I found myself turning to the officer and saying, “Please don’t shoot him. We can talk this out,” as more officers started appearing, as well as the rest of my admin team. Thankfully these additional adults knew to block and redirect student traffic away from this standoff, but more adults didn’t necessarily help de-escalate our emotionally fragile student.

“Billy, c’mon man, put the shovel down. Let’s go to my office and just talk this out.” Most behavior experts would recommend not going back to my office, but in this case, Billy was used to that space as a safe and calming harbor. I just needed everyone to relax and for him to focus on the safety of our relationship (lesson #4). His eyes darted back and forth between me and all the uniforms as he continued to bait one of them to shoot him. To say things were a little tense was an understatement.

We continued this verbal dance for what seemed like an eternity as I slowly chipped away at his anger and got him to see me as a lifeline, not a threat. Eventually, instead of asking to be shot, he began begging for help. Billy was hurting and today was not a good day. And, per his normal reaction to overwhelming circumstances, anger was his first emotion. His second emotion was always hopelessness. The shovel turned into tears and I knew I had him. I could safely go in for what he needed most — a hug.

Scenarios like this are played out in schools all across our country on a daily basis. Many kids are hurting and hopeless, and building leaders are

first responders to massive amounts of emotional trauma. The answer isn’t a shiny new curriculum, more testing, and higher standards. The answer is an education system (with more adults) built upon time, space, and grace for relationships.

As much as some people might think Billy’s scenario was a day gone wrong, I see it as many things gone right. Just think how badly this could have ended up if relationships didn’t exist between the hurting student, building leaders, local law enforcement, and the rest of the staff in the school? Relationships matter. I’m also thankful I worked in a school where everyone agreed (including law enforcement) that the only “discipline” this hurting student needed was unconditional love, more adult support, and seeds of hope.

“ The answer is an education system (with more adults) built upon time, space, and grace for relationships.”

I find myself reflecting back on this day quite often and wondering if I could have done something different. And, each time I come back to the same answer: I wish I could have connected with Billy earlier in the day when hopelessness started taking him over. That’s my only regret.

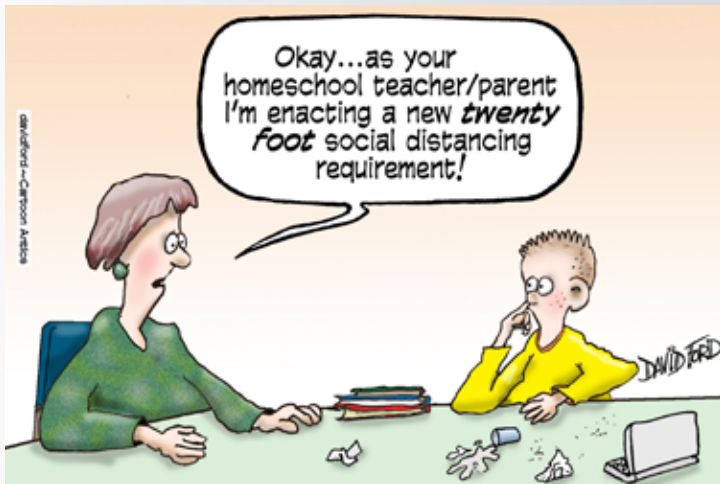
Thank you to all of you who create hope and build relationships every day in your schools. ■



*Dr. Scott Seaman joined AWSP in the fall of 2013 after serving as the principal at Tumwater High School. In July 2018, he assumed duties as Executive Director.*

# Humor me!

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





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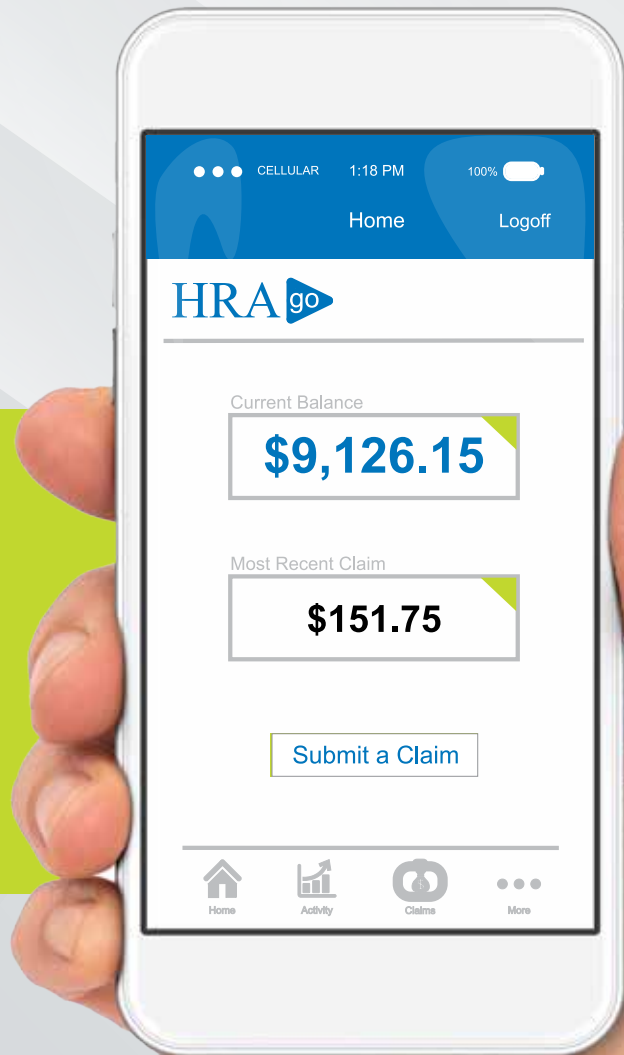
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