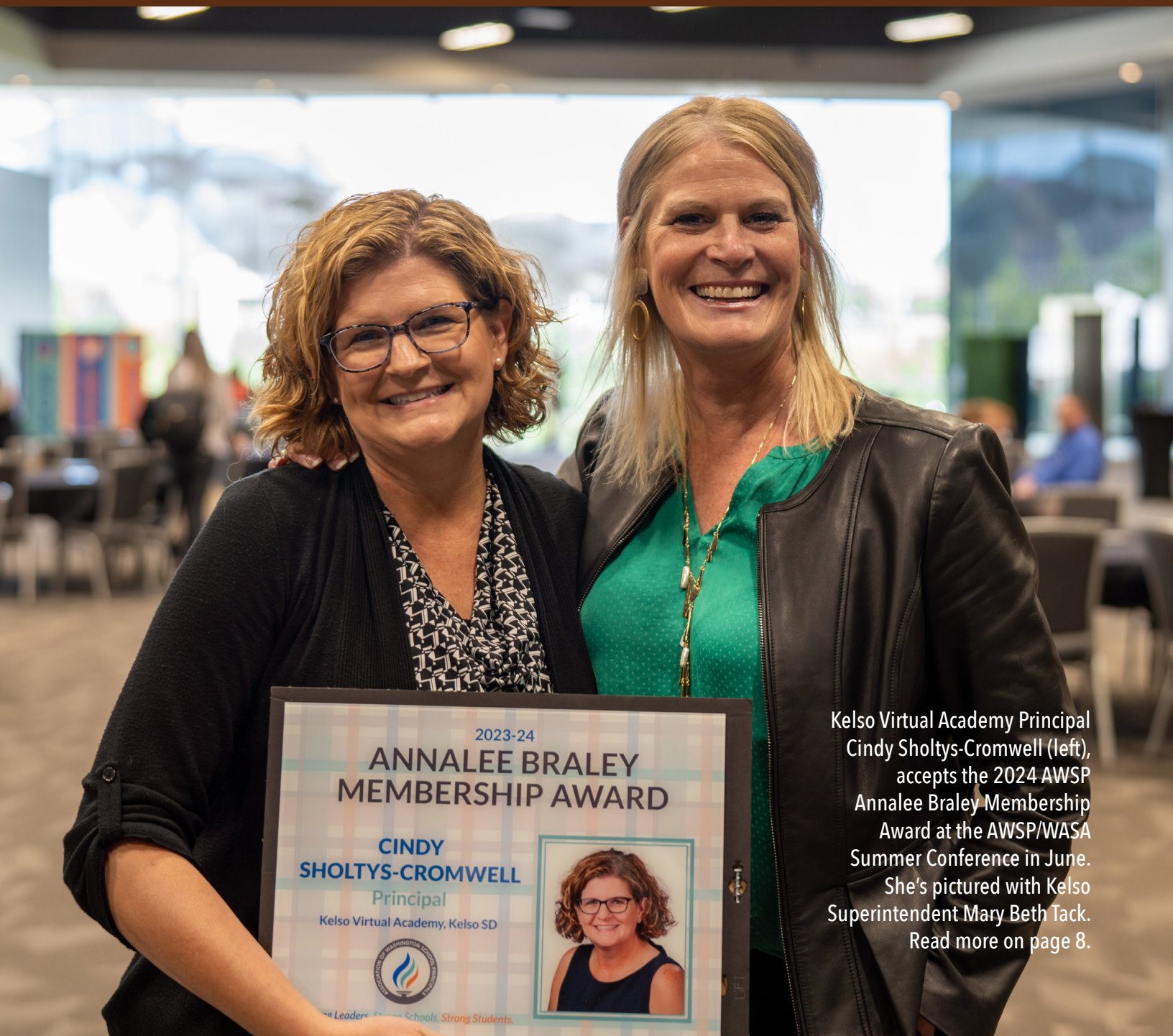


BOOKENDS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

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



Kelso Virtual Academy Principal Cindy Sholtys-Cromwell (left), accepts the 2024 AWSP Annalee Braley Membership Award at the AWSP/WASA Summer Conference in June. She's pictured with Kelso Superintendent Mary Beth Tack. Read more on page 8.



AWSP
**LEADERS OF
COLOR**
NETWORK

Building community to...



AWSP's Leaders of Color Network strives to create a safe and brave space for Black and Brown school leaders by providing opportunities for members to learn together, build collegial relationships, network, and create a sense of belonging.

Learn more at www.awsp.org/LOCNET

Leading the Science of Reading Revolution

For 40 years, Lexia® has been at the forefront of the science of reading revolution, offering trailblazing professional learning, curriculum, and embedded assessment solutions that provide districts with actionable ways to accelerate literacy gains.



AWSP's
**BUILDING EFFECTIVE
LEADERSHIP NETWORK**

Taking Your Leadership Above and Beyond

2024-25 Three-Part Series:

- Sept. 23
- Nov. 18-19
- March 10-11



Learn more
and register at
awsp.org/BEL

Retire With Dignity

The VEBA Plan has been helping school employees save for medical expenses since 1984. This need has never been greater!

Is your group saving enough?



To learn more about how the VEBA Plan can help scan the QR code, or to schedule a group presentation, call 1-800-888-8322 to reach a Gallagher representative near you. Plan consulting and local service provided by Gallagher.

 Vote YES! for VEBA
Founding associations: AWSP, WASA, and WASBO



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Reach Out to Us!

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

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



How Will You *Thrive* in 2024-25?

School Leaders,

There's something about starting points that bring new hope and a sense of anticipation. The first page of a blank journal. The pilot episode of a favorite TV series. The start of a new class or hobby. And of course, the kickoff of a new school year.

Way back in January, the AWSP staff each chose a word to be their personal starting point and inspiration for 2024. We chose words like “simplify”, “hope”, “joy”, and “perseverance.”

The AWSP staff would love for *your* word for the 2024-25 school year to be **“thrive.”** Too many of our school leaders have been just trying to survive for the past several years. This is your year to not just survive, but to thrive, and AWSP is here to help.

We have a “Surviving to Thriving” workshop coming up for Assistant Principals. This workshop is brand-new and led by 2024 Elementary AP of the Year Dr. Nick Davies. We hope you or your AP will join us October 3 in Vancouver.

AWSP has several new opportunities this fall for school leaders to invest in their own learning. We're focused on bringing many of these workshops directly to you virtually through the AWSP Learning Lab. We have a Women in Leadership event on October 8, a new series on Meaningful Evaluation Practices that started in August (jump in!), an equity-focused series with 2024 Secondary Principal of the Year Dr. William Jackson, monthly Leaders of Color connection opportunities, and much more. Check out the full professional development listing on page 20.

We're updating the AWSP Member Handbook this year and mailing each member a print copy in October (National Principals Month!). Along with helpful information about your membership, the Handbook features a “Survival Guide” with important reminders, events, and celebrations to think about during each month of the school year.

This issue of *Bookends of School Leadership* also highlights our most recent award winners and what they are doing in their schools and districts to help their communities thrive. Wrapping up the newsletter is a message of hope from AWSP's very own executive director, Dr. Scott Seaman.

As always, we'd love to hear from you. How will *you* thrive in 2024-25? Reach out to us anytime!

Caroline Brumfield
AWSP Marketing and Design Director



AWSP & Foundation

Join Us for the Fall Principals' Forum on October 1



Join us on October 1 from 4-5:30 p.m. as we kick-off National Principals Month with our virtual Fall Principals' Forum.

Our team kicks off the event with a welcome and some opening statements about what's happening in education around the state. After that, we'll open up our four topic-specific breakout rooms (topics and guest speakers will be posted as soon as they're confirmed). After reconvening briefly, you'll have another opportunity to join one of the breakout rooms you couldn't attend for the first session!

Leadership clock hours will be available. There's no cost to join us, but please register to receive the Forum Zoom link. To register, visit www.awsp.org/forum.

Announcing the First Annual AWSL/AWSP Culture Kickoff Award



We are thrilled to announce the inaugural AWSL/AWSP Culture Kickoff Award! This award recognizes and celebrates a school that creates and sustains a positive school culture, sets the tone for a successful year, and fosters a sense of community among students and staff. To honor a school that effectively sets the tone for the year with an engaging opening assembly, a strong theme, and a vibrant fall kickoff, we are looking for evidence of the intentionality of the planning for a positive school year start, as well as the plans to sustain it throughout the year. This award celebrates the building blocks of a positive school culture, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between students and adults. Schools can be nominated by students and/or principals/assistant principals.

Nominations open in September and the winner is announced in October. Learn more at www.awsp.org/culturekickoff.

Outdoor Schools WA Welcomes Adrian Shulock!



Outdoor Schools WA is pleased to announce that our team of four has grown to a team of five! Adrian Shulock accepted the position of Outreach Supervisor and joined the team on July 10. Adrian's experiences include working at outdoor schools as a high school leader, field

instructor, program director, and site executive director. He also spent part of his career in the business world as a development and communication manager for a non-profit and as a business development director. Adrian holds a bachelor's degree in environmental education and an MBA. His work with OSWA will include communication, membership development/engagement, and outreach to sites and schools. Welcome, Adrian!

AWSL's Middle-Level Fall Leadership Days are Here



The Association of Washington Student Leaders' (AWSL) Middle-Level Fall Leadership Days are back this fall! These regional, day-long workshops equip students with skills and ideas to understand themselves and their futures while leading in their schools. Students can contribute to planning for their future, creating a culture, ensuring school safety, and engaging the school community by working with school staff and each other.

Fall Leadership Days are rooted in the principles of "Who am I?" "Who are we?" "Where do we want to go?" "How do we get there?"

Learn more and register on the AWSL website at www.awsleaders.org/FLD.

Highlights

New AWSP Member Handbook Coming This October!



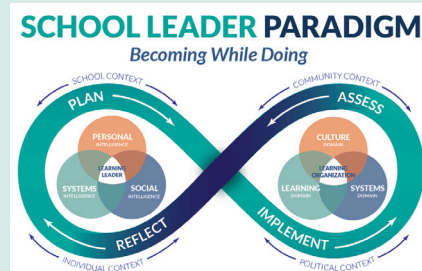
Every other year, AWSP updates, prints, and mails each member a copy of our AWSP Member Handbook. We're excited to send you the 2024-25 edition this October (National Principals' Month)!

Our member handbook contains key information about AWSP's goals, priorities, and organizational structure, as well as tips for principals about self-care, building a network, and having a leadership impact.

An abbreviated version of the AWSP Leadership Framework is embedded into the handbook. The handbook also features what we call our "School Leader Survival Guide." The purpose of the Survival Guide is to help you to think about the timeline of your school year from August to July and to consider the important culture, systems, and learning focuses to pay close attention to in each month and each season.

Watch for a print copy coming to your mailbox this October! A PDF will also be posted to our website at www.awsp.org/handbook. Until then, you can check out the current edition of the Handbook.

AWSP's Empowering Excellence Series: Becoming While Doing



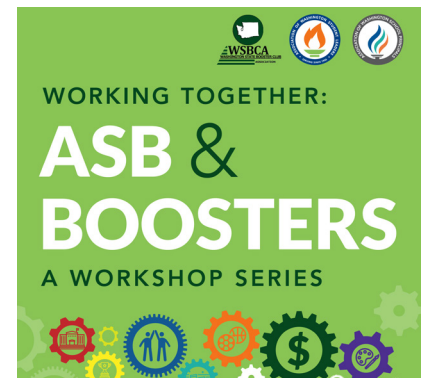
In order to provide a complete picture of principals and assistant principals as learning leaders leading learning organizations, AWSP and the School Leader Collaborative developed the School Leader Paradigm. The Paradigm is based on the concept of "Becoming While Doing."

AWSP has used this Paradigm in multiple trainings over the years, and now we're offering the Empowering Excellence series to bring the Paradigm directly to you and your school or district.

Covering a range of topics from setting foundations for the school year to assessing and connecting your leadership impact, AWSP's Empowering Excellence series breaks down the complexity of leadership into customizable sessions that bring to life all aspects of the School Leader Paradigm in a collaborative environment.

Customize your package with eight session options. We'll fit this training into your current meeting structure/schedule. Investment includes travel, planning, presentations, and materials. Learn more at www.awsp.org/excellence.

Working Together: ASB & Boosters (A Workshop Series)



The Washington State Booster Club Association (WSBCA) is teaming up with AWSP and the School Leader Collaborative to bring you brand new Compliance & Best Practices Workshops. The new workshops ensure that all parties are on the same page as you work together.

We'll come to you! You choose the date and time. Workshop content will be tailored to your school or district's specific needs.

- **Option #1:** Single ASB-Booster Basics Workshop (3 hrs).
- **Option #2:** Two Workshops; ASB (2.5 hrs) + Booster Basics (2.5 hrs) 5+ hours.

Invite your whole team: district and school admin, parent group leaders, coaches, advisers, activity coordinators, and athletic directors.

Register today at www.wsbca.org/awsp. ■

EMERGENCY

DISCIPLINE RULES

Related to Classroom Exclusions

By Roz Thompson,
Government Relations and
Advocacy Director, AWSP

OSPI enacted emergency rules related to classroom exclusions in August. The main changes to the rules will:

- Clarify the definition of classroom exclusion
- Include the definitions of discretionary and non-discretionary discipline
- Refer to RCWs related to professional standards of educator development, TPEP, and CCDEI
- Remove specificity related to time of exclusions and notifications
- Require that school districts and school boards revisit district policies and procedures related to classroom exclusions

The WACs that were updated pertain to discretionary discipline. Educators must work collaboratively to utilize resources and expertise in determining how the adults in school buildings will respond to student behaviors.

A coalition of associations including AWSP, WASA, WEA, and WSSDA, along with current building principals, teachers, and superintendents, have

been meeting with OSPI since January to discuss how we can collectively address school culture and focus on creating positive learning environments in our schools. The former rules around classroom exclusions were too prescriptive and these rule changes are an effort to clarify that educators have knowledge and professional judgment to help students learn and grow, both academically and in their social emotional skills. Changes to these rules acknowledge that learning is happening when students are self-regulating their emotions and their behavior.

In addition, clarity from the revised rules will help educators continue to work to decrease bias and disproportionality in discipline data. It is important that school districts discuss their own policies and procedures around student behavior and communicate and calibrate their expectations for behavior and learning throughout their school communities.

As the 2024-25 school year continues, there will be many more forms of communication coming out about these changes including a recorded webinar, articles, and guidance. AWSP will continue working with OSPI, WEA, WASA, and WSSDA to provide additional professional development opportunities.

Full discipline rule revisions will take place during the 2024-25 school year.

Please reach out if you need additional information or support. ■

Stay Up-to-Date on Advocacy and Legislation

AWSP provides a strong and respected voice on state and nationwide issues affecting K-12 schools and principals. We vigilantly monitor and research trends impacting our members' profession, reputation, and practice.

We offer several ways to help you keep pace with the legislative arena, including Legislative Update (our a weekly e-newsletter during session), how to find your state legislator, how to track the status of bills and find out how your lawmaker voted, and practical tips for talking with legislators.

Learn more at
www.awsp.org/advocacy

The Only Constant is Change

A Look Ahead to the 2025 Legislative Session

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

As we move into fall, we are closer to the important general election in November that will elect a new President and Governor and numerous new legislators and other statewide elected officials. Three initiatives are on the ballot as well. The makeup of legislative committees and leadership positions will change somewhat as a result of the elections, so significant change in Washington's political landscape is coming.

This year's legislative session begins in January 2025. It is the first year of the biennium, known as a long session that lasts 105 calendar days, including weekends and holidays (short sessions are held on even-numbered years and the last 60 calendar days). One of the primary tasks of legislators during a long session is to pass the state's biennial budgets for operating, transportation, and capital expenditures for the next biennium.

According to the Economic and Revenue Forecast Council, June's revenue forecast shows that our state collections are about \$500 million less than lawmakers counted on earlier this year which is manageable but could be concerning. Washington's economy projects to generate \$66.5 billion for the budget cycle that runs through June 2025.

Tightening budgets have led to some difficult choices for school districts. Staffing levels have been impacted, and student programs have been reduced. With five school districts in binding conditions and dozens more classified as financially distressed, one

of our main goals in the legislative session is to work with legislators to help them understand the impact budget decisions have on our public school system.

Superintendents led the way this spring when WASA adopted their legislative platform that spells out three specific areas where the Legislature needs to fully fund basic education: Special Education, Materials Supplies and Operating Costs (MSOC), and Transportation. The shortfall in these three areas is at least \$1 billion. District lobbyists and advocates have been working hard this summer to communicate this to legislators.

AWSP's legislative platform will echo the need to fully fund basic education. It will also point out the need to develop a stronger leadership development system in our state, including better internships, additional mentoring opportunities, and more robust professional development for building leaders. We will continue to point to

the need to support student mental and behavioral health as well as Outdoor School for All. Our platform should be ready to share by October.

There's already a growing list of bills for consideration in the next session, including cell phone limits, school start times, and a ban on flavored tobacco and vaping products. Bills from past sessions, including financial literacy, computer science, and restraint and isolation will be reintroduced.

Our AWSP advocacy efforts are multi-layered. In addition to having some great contract lobbyists working on behalf of principals and our foundation, we have a small army of principals and assistant principals serving on our AWSP Advocacy Council and as Principal Partners for Legislators. We will also coordinate about 10 "Principal for a Day" events in schools around the state this October.

Change is an opportunity to cultivate new relationships and educate current and new policymakers on the realities you face as you lead the systems, culture, and learning in your schools. Reach out for more information or to get involved. ■

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



Short-term support needed from the state now:

- Fully fund the actual costs of special education & student support needs.
- Increase funding allocations for materials, supplies, insurance, and other school operating expenses to match actual, rising costs.
- Increase funding for transportation to align with actual, rising costs.

Long-term solution:

Reexamine the McCleary "Solution" to fix some of the structural issues and develop a school funding mechanism that recognizes the unique needs and differences of Washington's 295 school districts. One size does not fit all.

"The underfunding of education through an insufficient funding model is hurting our schools, our students, our communities, and ultimately our state's future."
—www.waschoolfunding.org

WINNING at Leadership

AWSP and the Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL) recognized several schools and individuals this summer for their outstanding leadership in education. Read on to learn more about each award and each winner.



Annalee Braley Membership Award

Cindy Sholtys-Cromwell
Principal, Kelso Virtual Academy
Kelso SD

Cindy Sholtys-Cromwell is the third winner of the Annalee Braley AWSP Membership Award. Cindy is a ray of light who gives back a tremendous amount to AWSP and school leaders across the state and country. Cindy is an award-winning leader, Solution Tree consultant, and frequent conference presenter. Her devotion to helping her fellow leaders, our association, and her dedication to students make her an easy choice to represent Annalee's legacy.

Cindy has accomplished quite a lot in her 24 years of experience as a school administrator. In 2021, she was recognized by the National Association of Secondary School Principals as one of two National Digital Principals of the Year for her work growing Kelso Virtual Academy. In addition to her principal role, Cindy is a frequent presenter at the AWSP/WASA Summer Conference, as well as at national



AWSP Executive Director Dr. Scott Seaman presents Cindy Sholtys-Cromwell with the 2023-24 Annalee Braley Membership Award during the AWSP/WASA Summer Conference in June.

conferences and our Launching School Leadership series.

She lends her voice and wisdom in a variety of ways. Cindy has been a long-time AWSP Communications Advisory Council member and currently serves on OSPI's AI Advisory Group. Her monthly School Celebration Newsletter (republished on the AWSP blog) helps leaders find fun and innovative ways to celebrate staff and students and create an amazing culture.

"Congratulations to Cindy for receiving this award," said Mary Beth Tack, Kelso School District's superintendent. "This recognition celebrates Cindy's incredible passion, tireless work ethic, and inspiring contributions to AWSP and our professional community."

She is an exemplary leader, a valued AWSP member, and a leading voice for educators across the country, all of which make her incredibly deserving of the Annalee Braley Membership Award.

About the Award

The Annalee Braley Membership Award was created in 2022 to honor the memory of former AWSP Membership Coordinator Annalee Braley, who passed away tragically and unexpectedly in September 2021. Annalee started at AWSP when she was just 19 years old and was about to cross over to 32 years of service at AWSP in various roles. Annalee was one of the biggest reasons AWSP has the strongest membership in the country year after year.



Former AWSP Membership Coordinator Annalee Braley passed away tragically and unexpectedly in September 2021. The AWSP Annalee Braley Membership Award honors her legacy.



AWSP Deputy Director Jack Arend (left) presents Dr. Ismael Vivanco with the 2023-24 AWSP President's Award during the AWSP/WASA Summer Conference in June.

AWSP President's Award

Dr. Ismael Vivanco Superintendent, Northwest ESD 189 (Former Superintendent in Mount Vernon School District)

Every year, the AWSP Board President selects someone to receive the AWSP President's Award. The award goes to someone who is a relentless advocate for principals, assistant principals, and the principalship in the education of each and every student (AWSP's mission). Dave Riddle, the 2023-24 AWSP Board President and principal at LaVenture Middle School in the Mount Vernon School District, selected Dr. Ismael Vivanco this year. He is the outgoing Mount Vernon School District superintendent and currently serves as the superintendent at Northwest Educational Service District 189.

"Dr. Vivanco is the kind of systems leader who consistently supports the work of his principals. He listens to them, places trust in them, values their expertise, and stands behind his leaders' decisions," explained Dave Riddle. "His support of individual school leaders fostered strong and effective leadership in Mount Vernon and directly aided AWSP's mission. In addition to his leadership across the district, I will always appreciate his investment in me and his support of my leadership journey."

Throughout his career, Dr. Vivanco's efforts and focus have aligned with AWSP's effort to grow, support, and sustain principals and the principalship. His track record for supporting school leaders is one of many reasons he is a great choice for the AWSP President's Award.

About the Award

The AWSP President's Award is given to a person outside the association who has advocated on behalf of principals and the principalship in Washing-

ton state. Recipients are chosen by the AWSP Board in consultation with the AWSP executive director. The award is presented at the association's annual conference in June.



AWSP President Woody Howard and AWSP Director of Government Relations and Advocacy Roz Thompson present Rep. Paul Harris with the 2024 AWSP Torch of Leadership Award.

AWSP Torch of Leadership Award

Rep. Paul Harris

R-Vancouver

We're thrilled to announce that our 2024 Torch of Leadership Award is presented to Representative Paul Harris, who currently serves on the Health Care & Wellness, Appropriations, Education, and Rules committees. He also serves on the Joint Legislative Executive Committee on Aging & Disability, Joint Select Committee on Health Care Oversight, Washington

Marine Resources Advisory Council, Joint Oregon-Washington Legislative Action Committee, and the Long-Term Services and Supports Council. He is the House Republican Caucus Chair.

As a member of the House Education Committee, Representative Harris supported legislation that would prevent minors from using vapor and tobacco products, require the Professional Educator Standards Board to adopt rules providing for reviewing and vacating reprimands related to behavior that does not involve students, provide meals for all students, and improve the consistency and quality of

training for paraeducators. Importantly for school leaders, he sponsored our request in 2024 for additional funds for principal internships which increased the current funding level by \$223,000.

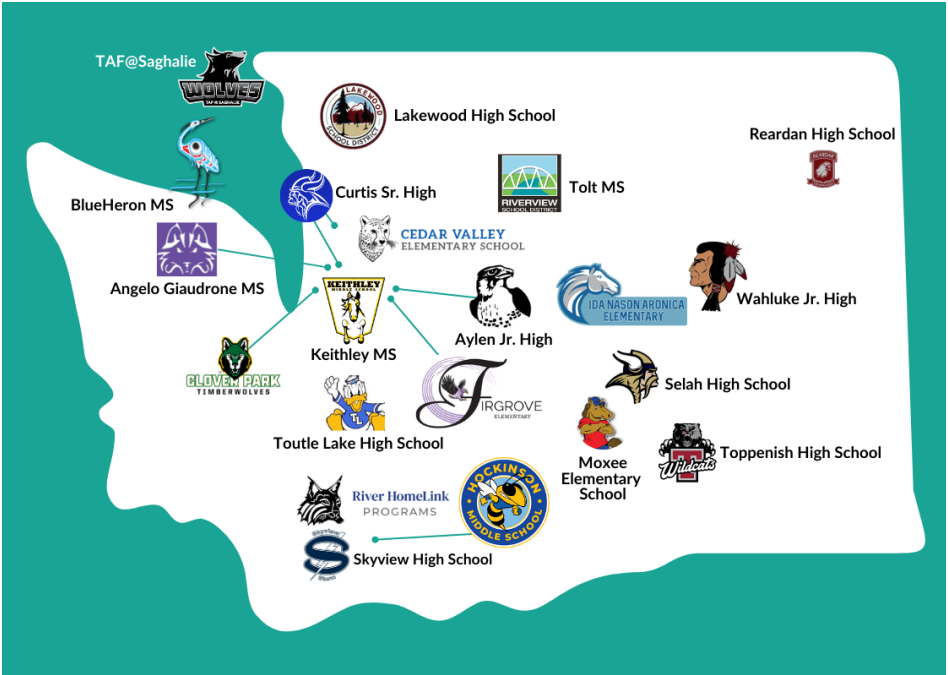
Representative Harris has represented the people of the 17th district for the last 14 years. His family has lived in the district for more than 45 years and he and his wife have five children who all graduated from Mt. View High School in the Evergreen School District. For over a decade, he served on the Evergreen School Board. He is currently running for the Senate position in his district.

Representative Harris can add this award to the long list of honors that he has received as a legislator. Most recently (2023) he received the Washington Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics (WCAAP) David Frockt Child Advocate Award. In 2017, he received the "Y Legislative Champion Award" from the YMCA for leadership in support of children, families, and healthy communities. In 2018, he received the "Annual Secretary of Health Award" from the Washington State Public Health Association. In 2018, he also received the "Courage Award," and in 2019 earned the "National Distinguished Advocacy Award" from the American Cancer Society for his work on the Tobacco-21 legislation. In 2019, the Washington Association for Career and Technical Education named him "Legislator of the Year."

About the Award

The Torch of Leadership Award honors individuals serving in the Washington state government who have demonstrated outstanding support of principals and the principalship. The award was established in 2009.

Nominations are submitted by members of the AWSP Advocacy Advisory Council. The final selection is made by committee and AWSP staff members. Recipients are named in the spring after the legislative session and honored in October at the AWSP's fall Advocacy Committee meeting.



2024 Inaugural Schools on the Rise Award Winners

- Giaudrone Middle School
- Aylen Junior High
- Blue Heron Middle School
- Cedar Valley Elementary
- Clover Park High School
- Curtis Senior High School
- Firgrove Elementary
- Hockinson Middle School
- Ida Nason Aronica Elementary
- Keithley Middle School
- Lakewood High School
- Moxee Elementary
- Reardan High School
- River HomeLink
- Selah High School
- Skyview High School
- TAF@Saghalie
- Tolt Middle School
- Toppenish High School
- Toutle Lake High School
- Wahluke Junior High School

AWSL/AWSP Washington Schools on the Rise

21 Schools Across the State

Introduced in 2023-24, the “Washington Schools on the Rise” award by ASSL/AWSP celebrates schools where students and adults collaborate to improve culture and amplify student voice. AWSP and its Foundation support these schools with resources and opportunities. These schools foster inclusive and equitable environments.

Schools are nominated by students, principals, assistant principals, superintendents, and/or district office staff.

Recognition Criteria

- Established systems demonstrating students and adults collaborating and leading school culture together.
- Tangible examples of co-design, collaboration, and joint leadership.
- Examples of authentic student engagement and elevated student voice.
- Examples of schools engaging multiple student voices and perspectives.
- Quantitative and/or qualitative data to illustrate the outcomes of student-adult joint leadership.

Awards are presented annually at the AWSP/WASA Summer Conference each June. ■

Nominate for 2024-25!

Know a Washington School on the Rise? Nominate them at www.awsp.org/ontherise starting April 1, or scan the QR code below.

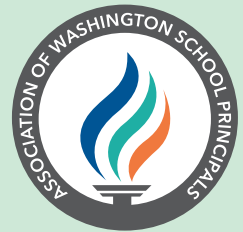


from
SURVIVING
to
THRIVING

AWSP's

Assistant Principal Institute

Oct. 3, 2024 | Vancouver, WA | www.awsp.org/API



About the Workshop

School leadership is supposed to be fun, fulfilling, and rewarding! And, yes, it is very challenging. AWSP and Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year Dr. Nick Davies will give assistant principals, principal assistants, vice principals, and deans of students the initial tools to move from surviving to thriving in school leadership. APs will begin to make that a reality starting the moment they leave this engaging workshop.

About the Presenter: Dr. Nick Davies

2024 WA State Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year

Dr. Nick Davies, assistant principal at both Ogden and Eisenhower Elementary Schools in Vancouver, shows up every day with the purpose of having “a positive impact on people’s lives so that they can become the best they are capable of becoming.” He shares his educational leadership knowledge with others as a writer of widely published articles. Learn more about Nick at www.awsp.org/apoy.



Featuring
Dr. Nick Davies
2024 WA STATE ELEMENTARY
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR



AWSP welcomed new principals and assistant principals at the AWSP office in Olympia during Stage 1 of our Launching School Leadership series this summer. Whether you're brand new or a veteran school leader, AWSP is here to help you thrive during every step of your career.

**By Erika Burden,
Retired AWSP Member**

Let me begin by affirming that principals are doing amazing work. We know this to be true, but it is important to keep this belief at the forefront of our conscious, especially in the difficult times we all face at some point in the year. The good news is that no one has to go it alone and feel isolated with AWSP at your side. AWSP exists to support principals and assistant principals so they can do amazing work even in tough times. In fact, AWSP can help you thrive in one of the most challenging of careers.

Throughout my 25 years as an administrator, AWSP was by my side. I was able to thrive because of the many opportunities available to me (and you!). AWSP provides support for principals no matter if you are in your first year, tenth year, or well into your career. Whatever you need, they are there to provide helpful solutions. Professional development, mentoring, job postings, legal advice and support, networking,

and leadership opportunities are all part of what the association has to offer.

Let me tell you how AWSP helped me thrive throughout my career. I began my relationship with AWSP during my internship when I was awarded a 45-day grant to practice being a principal. During my internship, I wrote for another grant from AWSP to attend professional development combined with a book study with three other principal interns. I was amazed at the level of support to set us off on the right foot as principals. I knew I had connected with a great organization that would be there to foster my success.

I continued attending a variety of offerings from the association and eventually was presented with the opportunity to become an AWSP Regional Representative (representing principals in ESD 101). This position launched me into the level of networking with colleagues that truly brought a sense of connection with principals all across the state. The camaraderie

and sense of belonging to something greater than my school and district appealed to me. Over time I joined the Legislative Advocacy team and also served in several executive roles for the middle level principals and assistant principals. I availed myself of every AWSP opportunity to learn and grow my leadership skills.

Getting involved with AWSP whether through professional development, legislative advocacy, or grade level leadership positions certainly increased my sense of confidence and community with professionals across the state and nation. I thank AWSP for the mentoring, learning, and friendship throughout my career and encourage all principals to find their own opportunities to thrive through all that AWSP offers. ■

Erika is a former school administrator who served on AWSP boards and committees for a majority of her career. She continues to advocate for school leaders alongside AWSP.



Thriving as a Leadership Team: Conditions for Collective Success



WOODY HOWARD
PRINCIPAL



DR. JEFF SNELL
SUPERINTENDENT

We asked incoming AWSP Board President Woody Howard, principal at Ben Franklin Elementary in Vancouver, and his Superintendent, Dr. Jeff Snell, to share advice with AWSP members about helping your principal/superintendent relationship thrive. Below are their tips for collective success!

A Bit of Background

Woody: As a long-time elementary principal and leader for AWSP, I saw an opportunity to collaborate with a new superintendent transition. I serve as co-president of our principal association and wanted to be a part of a leadership team that felt like we were all working together.

Jeff: As a high school principal, there were times I felt at odds with our district office. Although I appreciated support, it sometimes felt like there was a disconnect. Now, as a superintendent, I try to use both my school and central office experience to help create a culture where leaders can make the biggest difference for students, families, and staff.

Three Themes for a Successful Partnership

It's an important time for public education. With student needs evolving, budget challenges aplenty, technology accelerating, and strong polarized views about scope and purpose, public education is a great place to be if you're wanting to help bring your community together and thrive; and, it's really challenging. The connection between

central office and school leaders is crucial for sustainable success.

Our partnership is focused on lessons we have learned along the way and grounded in the School Leader Paradigm from AWSP and research from the University of Washington about central office leadership. There are three themes we think could be helpful for you to consider to help your leadership team thrive:

Focus on Leadership

Who we are as leaders is important. In anticipation of difficult budget and labor relation challenges, we intentionally focused on what drives us as leaders, our strengths, and where we need to grow. We invested time to clarify our purpose, establish core values, and develop leadership skills. Effective leadership begins with self-awareness and is also dependent on knowing each other. We have candid conversations about who we were, are, and want to be—both individually and collectively. A clear understanding of values and purpose not only strengthens individual leadership, but also fosters trust and respect essential for effective collaboration.

Focus on Systems

There never seems to be enough time, and developing consistent structures can help. We established structures to help develop and sustain relationships and engage voices that represent our students, staff, and community. We were able to flatten our organization by redefining central office administrative roles increasing direct support

for schools. The support includes a principal partnership plan based on an inquiry cycle model with regular progress monitoring of school improvement efforts. We also developed a decision-making framework which we publicly used during our budget reduction process. This framework established a mindset and process aligned with our equity policy for how we collectively make decisions. Creating a thriving educational environment requires robust systems that provide clarity, coherence, and continuous support. These systems should be designed to uphold a culture of belonging and facilitate alignment toward common goals.

Focus on Learning for All

At the heart of a thriving leadership team is a relentless focus on learning. As educational leaders, it is essential to create an environment that promotes continuous learning and growth, not just for students and staff, but for our leaders as well. Increasing principal voice helped us develop relevant and timely professional learning experiences. A partnership with AWSP on leadership development made us all learners together as we worked on our individual and collective leadership skills. Those kinds of experiences have helped provide a common language to frame how we lead.

Thriving as a central office and principal team requires a foundation built on leadership development, strong and supportive systems, and a focus on learning. Investing in these areas can help your district respond to and meet the challenges of leading for students and public education. ■



Membership FAQs

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

Q: When should I call AWSP?

A: Anytime you need us! Remember that your active membership comes with ongoing AWSP staff support. Whether you have a question about clock hours, evaluations, or contract negotiations; or there has been an incident where you feel like you may need representation and legal support, please call us; we are here to support you! Our number is 800.562.6100.

Q: I'm changing positions. What should I do?

A: Please let us know if you've recently stepped into a new role outside of the principalship. Some school and district positions would still benefit greatly from membership with AWSP and legal coverage from our national associations (NASSP and NAESP). We want to make sure we've always got you covered! Contact Macy Bruhy at macy@awsp.org for any questions about membership or to see what your options are.

Q: What support is available to new members?

A: If you're brand new to AWSP, we'd love to check in with you during your first year. Information will be sent to you about virtual, quarterly check-ins. If you're a new principal or assistant principal, AWSP offers a three-part workshop series called Launching School Leadership that is designed to address each season of a school leader's first year. You can jump in any time. Learn more at www.awsp.org/LSL. AWSP also offers a Principal Mentorship Program for new leaders. Learn more and apply at www.awsp.org/mentor. ■

Have Other Questions?

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

800.562.6100



STUDENT LEADERSHIP:

CAMPS STILL WORK!



AWSL Summer Programs bring culture, connection, and leadership development to the forefront!



Pictured above: Delegates connect and build lifelong memories at Mount Olympus Leadership Camp (Cispus Learning Center).

James Layman Director, AWSL

When you think of summer camp, thoughts of the outdoors, fun, and campfires likely fill your mind. While AWSL Summer Programs *do* contain all these things, they are also the training ground for networking, collaboration, and connection.

As the new year begins and school leaders start to think and ponder, “How can we build culture in our schools and create environments of hope?” The answer is quite simple—AWSL Summer Programs. AWSL Summer Programs have expanded to focus on “How to be the best ASB President” and how students can be agents of change and couriers of hope, empathy, and compassion in their schools and communities.

AWSL Summer Programs contain all the ingredients to empower students to connect with adult school leaders and their peers to create schools and environments where every student can thrive. Teamwork, networking, collaboration, personal growth, and the dynamics of school culture are the bedrock of each of our summer programs for Middle-Level and High School students.

AWSL strives to support schools by anchoring ourselves in three fundamental operatives: developing stu-

“The misnomer of ‘kids these days’ being apathetic towards their culture and schools is false... [Our kids] want to cultivate positive schools and culture and lead that movement.”



Delegates from University High School collaborate about their school culture at Mission Peak Leadership Camp (Eastern Washington University).

dents as leaders, creating life-changing experiences, and being leaders in school culture and climate impact. Our Summer Programs provide all three as a backdrop for students to explore and grow throughout the week.

One Mary Walker High School student asked their principal, upon being picked up from camp, “Can we go back next year?” This desire to experience camp again is a testament to the effectiveness of our interactive learning lab, known as Leadership Camp. It continues to create the leaders of tomorrow now. It allows students to challenge their thinking and think critically about their leadership moves and their impact on their school. It fosters lifelong connections with others who become resources and collaborative partners in their continued leadership journey. And—most of all—it provides students with the opportunity to disconnect and recharge in a collaborative and supportive environment. The success stories of past participants prove that our camps still work.

The misnomer of “kids these days” being apathetic towards their culture and schools is false. Our kids yearn and crave what AWSL Summer Programs offer them. They want to cultivate positive schools and culture and lead that movement. If you took a snapshot of any of our camps, you would see diversity (race, age, gender, urban,

rural, suburban, etc.) on full display. This diversity is not just a statistic; it’s a celebration of the inclusivity and the sense of community that our programs foster. You would see students desiring to make a (positive) change in the world, and you would see countless educators, principals, leaders from various professional fields, and college-aged students working tirelessly to create an experience that is second to none.

While our camps continually evolve to serve the needs of our students and schools now, the throughline is clear: camps still work. This is not just a statement; it’s a reassurance that our programs are constantly adapting to the changing needs of the students and the educational landscape, ensuring their continued relevance and effectiveness.

Camps still work! ■

James joined the AWSL staff in the summer of 2017. James has been a part of the AWSL organization since 2001 since attending camp as a delegate and has served as a Junior Counselor, Senior Counselor, and Camp Director.



GROW *back to school*

A Call for Reflective Leadership

Gina Yonts
Associate Director, AWSP

As I observed the early Back-to-School store displays, I felt a familiar unease. Though I love my role in supporting school leaders, these visuals reminded me that the school year's demands are looming. It made me reflect on the importance of downtime for restoring my heart and mind and preparing for the intensity ahead.

August brings a mix of busyness and a relaxed pace, offering a moment to gear up for the new school year. In this preparation, I've been focused on the growth mindset competency, which encompasses humility, reflection, intentionality, and accountability. A growth mindset enables school leaders to embrace challenges, persist through obstacles, and learn from criticism.

To Be Effective, You Must Be Reflective

Of all the attributes in a growth mindset, reflection is essential. Humility, without recognizing your impact, may lead others to perceive a lack of confidence. Being overly deliberate can seem like indecision. Accountability, if taken to extremes, might be seen as martyrdom. Reflection helps balance these attributes, ensuring they are applied effectively and inclusively.

A Call to Action

Before the school year's rush begins, take time to reflect on your leadership:

- **Humility:** Are you celebrating others' successes? Are you acknowledging your own effective leadership moves?

- **Intentionality:** Are you prioritizing key initiatives and ensuring they have your full attention?
- **Accountability:** Are you setting checkpoints for your goals and sharing your progress with trusted colleagues?

Effective school leadership begins with the end in mind. This year, let's not just "go" back to school—let's GROW back to school. Invest in a new journal, commit to regular reflection, and watch how it enhances your leadership and growth throughout the year. Have a fantastic school year! ■

Gina came to AWSP in 2018. Before joining our team, she served in education for 27 years as a teacher, middle school AP and principal, and elementary principal in Walla Walla SD.



What's **NEXT** for Washington School Leaders?



Next Level Leaders: Washington's Premier Professional Learning Membership

Ashley Barker Project Lead Next Level Leaders

According to Merriam-Webster, to thrive is "to grow vigorously; to flourish. To progress toward or realize a goal despite or because of circumstances."

What if systems were in place for you to thrive in your role as a school leader? What would feeling supported look like and sound like in your day-to-day work?

As teacher leaders and district and building administrators, many of us have spent at least 100 days in professional learning. Oftentimes, that learning is "a have to" or a "one-and-done" experience where most of us want to get it over with and move on. There is the unlikely possibility, too, that the learning is revisited or even mentioned as the school year progresses.

What Makes Adult Learning Impactful?

Unfortunately, most professional development continues without considering what is important for adult learners, according to the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE). For professional learning to really make an impact, it must: have relevance and applicability; have a level of self-direction; be experience-based; have a problem-centered approach; motivate the learner; engage the learners in active participation; provide time for

reflection; solicit feedback; appeal to diverse learning methods; and emphasize ongoing development rather than one-time training events.

When was the last time you attended or led in a way that checked all those boxes?

Next Level Leaders

Next Level Leaders is a partnership between AWSP and WASA. Our members will attest that it is our mission to meet school leaders' learning needs. As a statewide network of school leaders established for you to flourish in your work, we gather every month to learn, network, collaborate, and improve our practice in a learning environment that checks all the boxes!

Our members meet monthly during virtual "check-ins", utilize the statewide network for technical support, access free tools and resources, initiate opportunities for executive coaching, and are provided real-time, applicable, job-embedded professional learning at our three in-person learning sessions per year.

In celebrating our first year, the Next Level Leaders Network has had some monumental accomplishments. As a network, we have collectively learned to identify an adaptive challenge of practice, to engage in leadership strategies to address those adaptive challenges, collect and analyze evidence of impact, reflect and assess our own contributions to school achievements,

and receive and act upon feedback from others to improve our leadership.

A Statewide Reach

Next Level Leaders helps its members thrive in their contexts, which includes over 100 schools in every ESD region and in large, urban, small, rural, traditional, and innovative settings. Next Level Leaders has the potential to impact the learning of over 68,000 students across the state!

Though we are celebrating our second year of our first cohort, Next Level Leaders has more work to do until we reach every leader across the state to provide support, tools, and resources in order for each leader to thrive in their roles in support of students.

We Invite You to Join Us!

Please nominate yourself and/or a colleague to take advantage of this low-cost, top-shelf, premier professional development program and to be a part of a network that believes that supported school leaders are the key to improving outcomes for students across Washington state. Learn more and apply at <https://NLL.academy>. ■

For questions about Next Level Leaders, reach out to Ashley Barker, Project Lead, at ashley@nll.academy or (253) 507-0403.



AWSP PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



Meaningful Evaluation Practices (Seven-Part Series)

Evaluation is a big part of your job. How can you improve the feedback you give to improve teaching in your school? Join us for virtual, monthly sessions on the following topics:

- Setting student growth goals
- Developing your evaluation system
- Fostering student agency
- Enhancing school improvement initiatives
- Universal design for learning
- Revised learning standards
- The School Leader Paradigm
- Conducting coaching conversations

Sessions run from 4-5 p.m., and are recorded. The \$99 fee includes Leadership clock hours and an Amazon gift card to purchase *The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever*. Learn more at www.awsp.org/MEP.



Building Effective Leadership: Take Your Skills Above and Beyond in 2024-25

Principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders in year two and beyond won't want to miss this powerful opportunity to experience dynamic, scenario-based learning that mirrors the complex challenges school leaders face every day.

Navigate real situations and connect your leadership to your strengths. Leadership clock hours are included.

- Stage 1: Sept. 23 in Olympia
- Stage 2: Nov. 18-19 in SeaTac
- Stage 3: March 10-11 in SeaTac

Learn more at www.awsp.org/BEL.



From Surviving to Thriving: Assistant Principals Institute | Oct. 3 in Vancouver

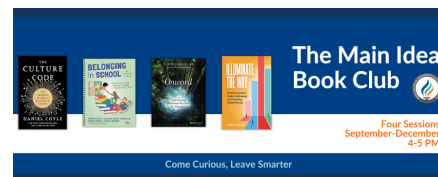
School leadership is supposed to be fun, fulfilling, and rewarding! And, yes, it is very challenging. AWSP and Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year Dr. Nick Davies will give assistant principals, principal assistants, vice principals, and deans of students the initial tools to move from surviving to thriving in school leadership.

APs will start to make that a reality starting the moment they leave this engaging workshop. Join us Oct. 3 in Vancouver. Learn more and register at www.awsp.org/API.



Women in Leadership Fall Kick-Off Event: Oct. 8

Members from AESD, AWSP, WAMOA, WASA, WASBO, WSPA, and WSSDA are invited to this free virtual kick-off event on Tuesday, Oct. 8 from 8:30-10 a.m. We'll hear from several dynamic education leaders including Dr. Rachele Rogers-Ard, connect in breakout rooms by ESD region, and see the calendar of statewide and regional events taking place throughout the year. Our associations are committed to paving a smooth pathway of support for women who are aspiring to or serving in educational leadership roles. Learn more at www.awsp.org/WIL.



The Main Idea Book Club: Come Curious, Leave Smarter

Keep hope alive this fall with four Main Idea Book Club sessions starting Sept. 23. Join Jenn David-Lang and your fellow school leaders as we dive into book summaries to help you problem-solve, connect with others around each book's central theme, and walk away with concrete implementation ideas. Get the skills to grow yourself and grow your school. Registration is open at www.awsp.org/bookclub.

If you're looking for professional learning, AWSP has you covered at every step of your career! We have several brand-new workshops kicking off this fall. Leadership and Equity clock hours are available with many offerings. Check out the lineup below.

For Leaders of COLOR



Launching School Leadership Series: For New and Newly Assigned School Leaders

Three-Part Series Continues with Stage 2 on Nov. 18-19 in SeaTac

Are you new for 2024-25? This series brings new and newly assigned school leaders three opportunities to maximize their leadership during the first year. Attendees will hear from practicing principals and other educational experts in each workshop, which are based on one of three stages during a new leader's first year. Missed stage 1? No problem! Visit www.awsp.org/LSL.



Leading Change: An AWSP Equity Series (Starts Oct. 2)

AWSP is partnering with 2024 Secondary Principal of the Year, Dr. William Jackson, to bring you *Leading Change: An AWSP Equity Series*. The series runs each Wednesday for six weeks starting Oct. 2. Topics include Shaping Culture and Leading Change, Transformative Teaching and Learning, and Centering Student Voice for Justice In Schools. Join us from 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Equity and/or Leadership clock hours are available. This series is free to AWSP members through Oct. 2! Register at www.awsp.org/equityseries.



Leaders of Color Network: Monthly Pro Learning

AWSP's Leaders of Color Network strives to create a safe and brave space for Black and Brown leaders by providing opportunities for members to learn together, build collegial relationships, network, and provide a sense of belonging. Several in-person and virtual opportunities are coming up this fall. Our monthly Zooms kick off Oct. 24 with "Navigating Context: Leading as a Leader of Color." Clock hours available! Learn more and register at www.awsp.org/LOCNET.



Dear Sista: An Affinity Group for Black Women Leaders

AWSP created "Dear Sista," an affinity group for Black women leaders to connect, support, and grow together to sustain in the principalship. The title *Dear Sista* is a tribute to Veronica Very's book of poems that speaks to truth, healing, and supporting the sisterhood. The group meets virtually via Zoom. There is no cost to join us but please RSVP! Lock in the 2024-25 dates posted on our website and register at www.awsp.org/LOCNET.



iGrow Washington Summit for Leaders of Color: March 14-15, 2025 in Seattle

Leaders of Color, don't miss our second-annual iGrow WA Summit, taking place in **Seattle on March 14-15, 2025**. Whether you're a seasoned principal, an aspiring leader, district leader, or an educational partner, this event is tailored to inspire, connect, and grow your leadership journey. The theme of the Summit is "We hear you. We see you. We need you." The Summit features:

- Inspiring Keynotes
- Collaborative Sessions
- Networking Opportunities

Registration is coming this fall to www.awsp.org/iGrow.

Leaders of Color, Connect On WhatsApp!



Leaders of Color, stay connected with AWSP and each other during the 2024-25 school year! Scan this QR code for direct access to AWSP's LOCNET WhatsApp Community.



ANCHORED *in* HOPE

This school year, remember your *forever impact*.

Dr. Scott Seaman Executive Director, AWSP

Welcome back to a new school year! On behalf of the entire team at the Association of Washington School Principals (and your Foundation—the Washington School Principals Education Foundation), I want to extend our deepest gratitude for the incredible work you do each and every day. As you return to your schools, we want to remind you of the profound impact your leadership, dedication, and compassion have on the lives of your students, staff, and the broader school community.

Every interaction you have—whether it’s a conversation in the hallway, a decision made in a meeting, or a moment of support offered to a struggling student—carries the potential to leave

“You are the anchor that provides stability and reassurance, not just for your students, but for your entire school community.”

a forever impact. These seemingly small moments accumulate to shape the culture and climate of your school, fostering an environment where students can thrive, feel valued, and be inspired to reach their fullest potential. Your daily actions and choices create ripples that extend far beyond the immediate, influencing not just the present, but the future trajectories of the young people in your care.

In a world that is constantly changing, your steady and hopeful presence is more vital than ever. You are the anchor that provides stability and reassurance, not just for your students, but for your entire school community. Your ability to navigate challenges with grace and determination serves as a beacon of hope, inspiring others to believe in the possibilities that lie ahead.

This year, let hope be your guiding principle: hope for the growth and success of every student, for the resilience and strength of our school communities, and for the brighter future we are all working to build together. Even in the face of adversity, it is our collective hope that drives us to continue cultivating a positive school culture for everyone.

As you lead your schools into this new year, remember that you are not walking this path alone. You are surrounded by a network of dedicated colleagues, supported by our team at AWSP, and bolstered by the belief that what you do matters—every single day. Your work is not just about man-

“Your work is not just about managing schools; it’s about shaping lives, building futures, and leaving a legacy of positive change that will be felt for generations.”

aging schools; it’s about shaping lives, building futures, and leaving a legacy of positive change that will be felt for generations.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the students, staff, and families of Washington. Your leadership, your decisions, and your care make a forever impact—one that will resonate long after the school bell rings.

Keep up the great work for kids! ■

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



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