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Association of Washington School Principals

FALL 2014

## BUILDING **STRONG** RELATIONSHIPS





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# WashingtonPrincipal

Association of Washington  
School Principals

Fall 2014

## FEATURE SECTION

### BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

*When it comes down to it, ensuring school success for each and every student is all about relationships. This issue of Washington Principal serves to highlight some of those crucial relationships and share different ways educators can work with colleagues, parents and students to keep schools running smoothly.*

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**Cover photo:** Keisha Scarlett, Middle Level Principal of the Year, turned South Shore PK-8 School (Seattle) into a school with a waiting list at each grade level. Read more on page 29.

Photo by Chris Tumbusch



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# WashingtonPrincipal

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Elementary School Principals Association of Washington  
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 Washington Association of Secondary School Principals

### National Affiliates

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

# Unicorns and Glitter

Some things are just much better *together*.

**By Caroline Brumfield**

*Managing Editor*

**M**any of you are probably familiar with the Progressive Insurance commercials that feature the iconic saleswoman "Flo" and her quirky sense of humor. One of my favorite Progressive commercials shows Flo having a discussion about insurance bundling with a pregnant woman and her husband. Their conversation goes something like this:

*Flo: "[Insurance bundling]...It's like peanut butter and jelly."*

*Husband: "Or burgers and fries."*

*Pregnant Woman: "Or pickles and ice cream."*

*Flo: "Or...unicorns and glitter!!!"*

The pregnant woman and her husband proceed to shake their heads at Flo's far-fetched suggestion. While Flo's ideal "relationship" between unicorns and glitter may be lost on the majority of us, she makes a good point: some things are just much better together.

Imagine for a moment what your job would be like if your school didn't have strong central office leadership—or teachers—or student leaders—or parent volunteers? While each role is critical to the school setting in and of itself, the relationships formed between each role give them their strength. Without help from any one role, the responsibilities of the others becomes much more difficult. It's the "bundling" of our skills, goals and personalities that brings out the best in each one of us.

When the relationships and culture in your school are strong, your students are given a solid foundation to learn and grow, and are also provided with a model for their own relationships. This issue of *Washington Principal* serves to highlight some of those crucial relationships and share different ways educators can work with colleagues, parents and students to keep schools running smoothly.

When it comes down to it, reaching students—and ensuring school success for each and every one—is all about relationships.

Here's to hoping that all of your professional relationships may be like unicorns and glitter. ■



*Caroline Brumfield is the Marketing and Publications Manager for AWSP. She serves as Managing Editor for Washington Principal.*

## AWSP Welcomes Kim Marquette and Scott Friedman to the Team!



**Kim Marquette**

Kim Marquette joined AWSP in August 2014 after working the last 25 years for the Tumwater School District. The last 14 years she worked as the Administrative/Athletic Secretary at Tumwater High School. Kim graduated from Tumwater

High School and attended Olympia Technical Community College. She enjoys spending time with her family, scrapbooking and hanging out at her family cabin. She and her husband, Jim, live in Tumwater. They have three adult children and one dog, Rascal.

Kim will serve as AWSP's executive assistant, lead event planner, and business partnership coordinator. Send Kim a "Welcome!" email at [kim@awsp.org](mailto:kim@awsp.org).



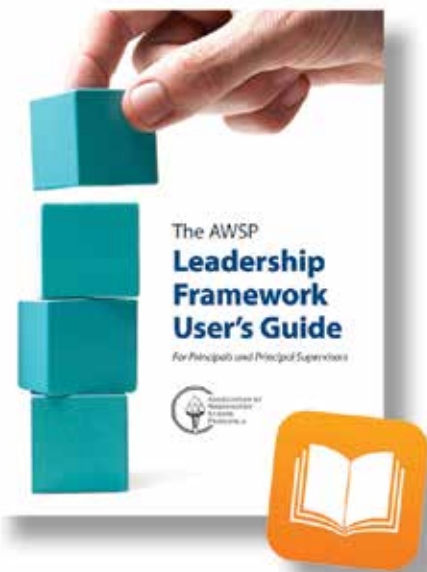
**Scott Friedman**

Scott Friedman joined AWSP in July 2014 after giving up his position as a principal to accept a fellowship to help conduct professional development around principal evaluation, STEM, and other key issues in education for the 2014-2015 school year.

Before coming to AWSP, Scott was the principal at Nine Mile Falls Elementary School (Nine Mile Falls SD). Scott and his wife, Heidi, have two children and live in Spokane. Scott is an avid cyclist and technology enthusiast.

Send Scott a "Welcome!" email at [scottf@awsp.org](mailto:scottf@awsp.org).

## The Interactive AWSP Leadership Framework User's Guide



We have created an interactive, digital version of the User's Guide available for purchase from Apple's iBooks Store, which can be accessed on an iPad or any Apple computer with iBooks installed. The iBook contains videos and other resources that will enhance the User's

Guide experience. Features include:

- Free, downloadable updates
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- Photo galleries, and much more.

**Price:** \$24.99 from Apple's iBooks Store

### Why should I download it if I already have the print version?

The interactive book will receive periodic updates and already has new content that was added after the printed copy went to press, including an appendix item on summative scoring guidance. In addition to new content, the interactive version of the Guide features many benefits that just aren't possible with print.

### Questions?

Learn more at [www.awsp.org/usersguide](http://www.awsp.org/usersguide) or email [david@awsp.org](mailto:david@awsp.org).



## 2014 AWSP Torch of Leadership Award Winner: Senator Christine Rolfes

Congratulations to Sen. Christine Rolfes, 23rd Legislative District (D), winner of the 2014 AWSP Torch of Leadership Award. Sen. Rolfes was chosen for her commitment to K-12 education during the 2014 legislative session.

"As evidenced by the bills she introduced, Sen. Rolfes clearly cares about all kids and the schools who serve them," notes AWSP Director of Governmental Relations Jerry Bender.

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

## New Washington Principal Feature: Evaluation Criteria Listing

You will notice this year that each Washington Principal article is prefaced by a reference to corresponding Principal Evaluation Criteria. This is to help principals apply the magazine content to their work in meeting the evaluation criteria, and provide ideas to use when collecting artifacts and evidence.

Here is an example of how the listings will appear throughout *Washington Principal*:

**PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**  
*Creating a Culture, Planning with Data, Managing Resources, Improving Instruction*



## 3, 2, 1, ... The AWSP Blog Has Launched!

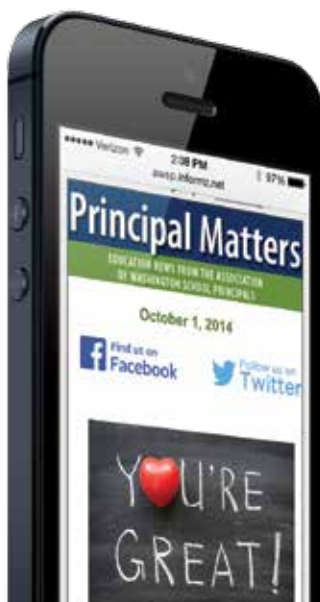
This September, AWSP launched a new blog to help keep members informed. The blog is your one-stop shop for principal news, resources, and ideas, whether you're looking for updates about education policy, resources that can help you with your job, or even funny videos you can use to make a staff meeting more entertaining. You can use the tags to search and sort the blog, which will treat the content like an indexed resource library. The newly-launched blog is just one part of our new communications strategy for the next school year. Stay tuned!

## Student Leadership is Now AWSL

AWSP's student leadership division has a new look and a new name! The Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL) will continue to provide programs and resources to enhance student engagement through leadership



opportunities. Your student leaders are logical partners as you strengthen your school in the eight AWSP Leadership Framework evaluation criteria. Support the work of your students by joining AWSL today. Learn more or join at [www.awsp.org/AWSLmembership](http://www.awsp.org/AWSLmembership).



## AWSP E-Newsletters Feature New Responsive Design

We've redesigned each of our three e-newsletters—*Principal Matters*, *In the Loop*, and *Legislative Update*—to be "responsive," allowing the layout to adapt to the size of your desktop or mobile screen. Based on member feedback and research, our redesign will make the newsletters easier to read and link back to longer stories and blog posts. Did you miss an issue? Find archives at [www.awsp.org/publications](http://www.awsp.org/publications).

## Did you know...?

It's important that our members' interests are accurately represented and their concerns are fully understood. To accomplish this, over 125 AWSP members volunteer to serve on AWSP boards and committees that cover issues affecting the association as a whole; the elementary, middle and high school grade levels; and our state's broad geographic and cultural diversity.



# APPYHour

AWSP's "tech experts" review a few of their favorite apps of the quarter.



**iOS 8:** Why pick one app for Appy Hour when you can pick a whole operating system upgrade! iOS 8 is a major release that changes what's functionally possible on an iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch. Improvements to the messaging app, interactive notification banners and lock screen notifications, better file organization through iCloud Drive, and keyboard improvements (including the ability to download 3rd party keyboards) are just a few of the features designed to make you more efficient. The big news comes from a set of features called extensibility and continuity, which for example, will let you save a webpage right to Evernote from Safari, edit a photo in the Photos app using photo filters from a different app, open a file from Dropbox from the Pages app, and start an email or task on one device and continue it from another.

Wondering how iOS 8 can improve your productivity, efficiency, and outreach? Get in touch with Scott Seaman ([scott@awsp.org](mailto:scott@awsp.org)) or David Morrill ([david@awsp.org](mailto:david@awsp.org)) to find out about training opportunities.



**Graphite:** The search is over. Graphite is a free service from Common Sense Education that makes it easy to discover the best apps, games, and websites for classroom use. Tools like Edmodo, Educations, ClassDojo, and Socrative have been thoroughly reviewed by Graphite's expert educators and received numerous teacher reviews they call Field Notes. Graphite has also reviewed lots of Common Core-aligned products like StudySync, PBS Learning Media, VoiceThread, IXL Math, and Khan Academy. Visit [www.graphite.org](http://www.graphite.org).



**SafeShare.TV:** Need a way to play YouTube videos at school without worrying about what suggested videos will pop up next? SafeShare.TV is the safest way to watch and share YouTube videos. Check out their FAQs at <http://safeshare.tv/faq/english> or download their app for iOS on the App Store.

Would you like to review an app, or do you have a cool app to share? Email [caroline@awsp.org](mailto:caroline@awsp.org).

# ASK A PRINCIPAL

## Who Has Made an Impact on Your Life and Career?

We asked our members, "What is one professional relationship that has made a positive impact on your life and career?" Here are some of the responses:

**Dr. Gene Sharratt** and his boundless positive energy, kind-hearted persona, and effervescent spirit was a steadfast mentor for me during my WSU Superintendent Program... His ability to break down problems to the most common denominator while doing so with a positive twist has been nothing less than astonishing and inspiring.

**Gary Neal, Principal**

*West Valley High School, West Valley SD #363*

**Dr. Jim Koval** had an amazing impact on me both personally and professionally. Not only was he the superintendent who hired me, he was also my high school assistant principal. When he stopped into the building, he knew staff, asked about their families and connected with each employee personally. Educating "the whole child" can be cliché. Jim meant it. He recently passed away, but I believe that Jim's spirit and heart lives on in the leaders he touched.

**Ron Sisson, Principal**

*Lakes Elementary, North Thurston PS*

**Dick Smith** has had a profound impact on my life and career, and I can easily say "I was nothin' before I met him." Dick mentored me through both my principal and superintendent internships. He encouraged me, guided me, and offered a helping hand. Dick honed my skills in listening to others, leading through service, and honoring the work of others.

**Beth Porter, Principal**

*Snohomish High, Snohomish SD*



# The Importance of Relationships

## in School Improvement

**By Rex Larson**

*Principal, Gause Elementary  
Washougal SD*

**Growing up,** I babysat as a way to make a few bucks during my middle school and early high school years. As a summer job in college, I drove the berry bus, which transported the pickers to and from the fields, as well as supervised the berry pickers during their workday. (OK, I just aged myself, since it has been a long time since middle and high school students could do such work!)

But nevertheless, both of these experiences—along with my early college child psychology classes—showed me that I enjoyed working with young people, that it was easy for me to build relationships with them, and that I was very curious about the art and science of teaching. As a result, I developed an interest in becoming a teacher and was hired to teach fifth grade after graduation.

As a beginning teacher I would watch and study my more experienced colleagues. I quickly realized the most effective teachers were the ones who took the time to build positive relationships and rapport with their students. I found this was likely the most important characteristic of an effective and successful teacher. When I became a principal, I valued this ability even more and worked hard to build positive relationships and rapport with all the stakeholders in my school.

Building positive cultures in the classroom, and later in the schools where I became principal, helped me work and collaborate with others while working hard to improve students' learning. I strongly believe that teaching is all about relationships. Think about the teachers and/or mentors you have had in your life. Weren't the most effective and now dear-to-you professional relationships the ones in which you had a strong connection and mutual trust? Working with our staff to improve our schools, and now becoming effective at implementing TPEP, is no different.

There is no shortage of professional literature out there about what it takes to develop positive relationships and trust with fellow educators, how to build leadership capacity in them, how to use strong collaboration to improve instruction through the use of data, and especially, how to work with others to create and maintain a school culture where all adults are committed to school improvement and not just compliant to state and district directives. Our AWSP Leadership Framework has many excellent sources for building culture in the research section of Criterion 1.

Someone I respect very much once told me, "Rex, your students may forget what you teach them, but they will never forget how you spoke to and

“ I quickly realized the most effective teachers were the ones who took the time to build positive relationships and rapport with their students.

treated them.” I have never forgotten that advice and I always strive to create and maintain positive relationships with others: students, teachers, parents, fellow administrators, community members, etc. I have found that by doing so, a positive school culture—where both educators and students make progress—is usually the result. ■



*Rex Larson has served as principal at Gause Elementary since 2001. A long-time AWSP member, Rex is serving as president this year.*

# "Soup and SIP"

## —Involving Parents in a New Way

**By Teena McDonald**, *Clinical Assistant Professor, WSU Spokane*

**Gordon Gates**, *Professor, WSU Spokane*

**Karen Douglass**, *Principal, Stevenson Elementary, Stevenson-Carson School District*

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

#### Engaging Communities

Principal Karen Douglass meets with Stevenson Elementary parents to ask for their input.





*Few principals* question or deny the importance of parent involvement in schools. Research reveals the participation of parents benefits the academic performance of students no matter their background or demographic characteristics (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Federal and state governments have enacted policies that require school personnel to initiate and provide programs targeted at increasing parent engagement (Nakagawa, 2004). Many programs have been developed and instituted to help parents understand and carry out activities educators define as supportive and fruitful (e.g., monitoring homework,

attending school functions, volunteering in classroom, etc.) (Lawson, 2003). Recent studies conclude such programming overlooks what is more critical to parent engagement, which is not only concerned with increasing student achievement, but school outcomes concerned with their social, emotional, and physical development.

Following this shift in understanding the efficacy of parent involvement, experts point out the value of parent-educator interactions that model and reflect respect, friendliness, caring, and welcome. It is about these qualities that we wish to share the work of Karen Douglass, a principal in Southwest Washington.

## Leadership Frameworks Address Partnering with the School Community

No longer is it sufficient for the principal to have regular communication via newsletters, open houses, and conferences where they can only have conversations with those parents who always show up. Not only is it research-based best practice to clearly involve families in two-way dialogue, but a school leader who engages in a feedback loop that is invitational and trusted by parents will meet the expectations of the new principal evaluation frameworks. The principal will be more likely to gain

*Continued on page 12*



CALEB WHEELER



a proficient or distinguished rating on either of the school leadership frameworks endorsed by the state on *Criterion 7: Engaging Communities* if they provide that feedback loop. The language in the AWSP Leadership Framework is clearly focused on a genuine partnership model between the home and the school. (See Criterion 7 of the AWSP Leadership Framework at [www.awsp.org/leadershipframework](http://www.awsp.org/leadershipframework).)

## One Principal's Unusual Approach

Elementary principal Karen Douglass clearly demonstrates leadership in engaging families to help her and her staff make important instructional decisions and build trusting relationships. Karen is in her 26th year in the Stevenson-Carson School District in the beautiful Columbia Gorge area. She is also the Title I director and takes on a multitude of other district leadership roles, including being the McKinney-Vento homeless liaison and coordinating the professional growth opportunities for staff. Even though her job is multi-faceted and difficult, she never cuts corners in her building, especially when it comes to developing ways to have authentic, transparent relationships with parents in order to impact student well-being and achievement.

One of the ways Karen collects data and engages with families is through her "Soup and SIP" program. Every year, Karen uses a random sampling method to develop a list of parents to invite to participate in this unusual and effective program. First she sends out an invitational letter with a large banner at the top of the page that says, "Parents Wanted for School Improvement Planning Team." In her letter she shares that one of the common ingredients of highly successful schools is a parent community that is actively involved in their school's mission and culture. She then extends a personal invitation to be

a part of the School Improvement Team to help make Stevenson Elementary a successful school.

In an open, conversational tone, Karen shares background of what a school improvement plan (SIP) is, requirements schools have to set goals and targets for the year, and strategies to accomplish the goals. She again invites the parent to be a part of the process, letting them know child care is available and a light soup dinner will be provided. Parents are encouraged to email or call Karen and confirm participation.



What makes Karen's process different than most focus group meetings with parents is that she makes the process safe to give authentic feedback.

The invitation doesn't stop there. Over the course of the next few weeks, Karen's administrative assistant confirms by phone every participant's attendance and then makes reminder calls the week of the meeting. Karen typically aims for about 20-25 parents to participate, so she starts out with at least twice as many invitations, knowing there will be some parents that have conflicts.

On the evening of the event, after the dinner together, Karen helps the group set and agree to abide by meeting norms. The norms usually look similar to these:

- Stay on agenda and accomplish work.
- Use basic conversational courtesies (talk straight, listen respectfully,

avoid side conversations, and assume positive intent), and monitor your own air time.

- Show respect for others by honoring diverse opinions and keeping confidential those things that need to be kept confidential.



CALEB WHEELER

The Soup and SIP Program allows Principal Karen Douglass to bring back valuable parent feedback to teachers and their classrooms.

- This meeting is to discuss topics, not people.
- Share generally about what was discussed with others, do not share "who said what."

What makes Karen's process different than most focus group meetings with parents is that she makes the process safe to give authentic feedback. First, no school employees (even if they are parents) participate in the evening meeting, and second, Karen herself does not participate in the active discussions. She engages a moderator from the community to help facilitate the discussion. Karen reminisces that the first year she did this program, she sat in her office on the edge of her seat, counting the minutes of the open

discussion guided by the facilitator, and dreading what could be brutal facts about her school and the work being done by her and staff members. She states that each year the fear is less, but it is still there even after six years of productive, reflective, and respectful conversations about her school.

## Protocol Helps Parents Give Valuable Input While Feeling Safe

“The key to making this Soup and SIP evening so successful is having the right facilitator and sticking to the discussion protocol,” Karen shared. After she helps the group agree to the norms, she then shares a discussion protocol that is firmly adhered to and followed verbatim.

She uses the following protocol:

### A Discussion Protocol

1. Principal shares information about the building, student data, and recent changes. *(30 minutes)*
2. Participants ask CLARIFYING questions. (A clarifying question is one the principal has a factual answer for—on the spot, without much thinking.) *(5 minutes)*
3. Principal leaves during discussion. *(60 minutes)* Facilitator helps the participants reflect and answer questions from these prompts:
  - What did you hear this evening that is positive, worth celebrating, or you at least want to make sure keeps happening?
  - What did you hear tonight that caused you to wonder?
  - What did you hear this evening that disappointed you?
  - What did you NOT hear this evening that you would like to know about?
  - If you were the principal, what would you consider

implementing or researching this year?

- What are your hopes and dreams for your child’s school?
4. Principal returns and facilitator summarizes the key points voiced that evening. *(10 minutes)*
  5. Principal provides an exit sheet that parents complete that further gives the parents a voice, asking them to share the most important thing they heard during the evening; the thing the principal didn’t hear that the person wanted to say; three things that are working that shouldn’t be “messed with;” three things the principal should think about, consider, change or improve; and finally, a rating of the evening, with “10” being the parent would come help again if asked to “1” being a total waste of time.

## Parent Involvement Impacts the School Improvement Plan

After the evening meeting, Karen’s work really begins. She collects all of the data and shares the information with her staff members in meetings focused on school improvement planning. She triangulates the data by gaining input from staff about both positive attributes and concerns shared by the parent committee. The staff then uses the information to revise their school improvement plan, based on the needs shown from the parent group. Karen ultimately shares the revisions with not only the parent group, but all parents through email, social networking, and newsletters.

Karen will tell you this parent involvement process makes a huge impact. One example involves writing assessments. The staff developed writing prompts and scoring rubrics for an assessment to be given at the begin-

*Continued on page 14*

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Continued from page 13

ning and the end of the year. Parents asked for a mid-year assessment. The staff added that component to the SIP, understanding how parents wanted more formative assessments.

Another change that happened because of the process was addressing misperceptions. Parents in attendance didn't think the school did enough in the community. This was Karen's opportunity to highlight all of the school's outreach activities, which resulting in the parents encouraging the school to publicize the great work being done. Karen followed through and shared it in newsletters, on the district Facebook page, and in the local newspaper.

### Relationships are Key

As Karen reflects on why this process is so successful in her district, she will tell you that the key is relationships with parents and community members who are viewed as valuable partners. She understands how important nurturing and sustaining these relationships is to the ultimate success of the school and looks forward to her yearly "Soup and SIP" program. ■

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Freeman School District Superintendent Randy Russell (right) and Nine Mile Falls School District Superintendent Brian Talbott discuss transition planning for incoming administrators—including relationship building and communication—at the 2014 AWSP/WASA Summer Conference in Spokane.



# The Principal-Superintendent Relationship: **BUILDING TRUST** through **COMMUNICATION**

**By Randy L. Russell, Ph.D.**

*Superintendent, Freeman SD*

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

**M**uch has been written and discussed over the years about the importance of solid relationships as the foundation in education. Student to student, teacher to student, teacher to teacher, teacher to parent, and teacher to administrator relationships are all important for successful classrooms and schools. Equally important is the principal-superintendent relationship.

Having had the opportunity to work with and for several superintendents over the past twenty-four years, there are two superintendents that stand out to me: Harry Amend and Dr. Gary Livingston. These two leaders and

gentlemen are hall-of-famers who focused on building relationships and developing their team members. They mentored and developed their principals and are still mentoring people to this day. I learned many lessons from each of them that I have applied to my own professional relationships.

### **A Team and “Customer Service” Approach**

Harry Amend focused his efforts on developing people through a “team approach.” His  $2 + 2 = 5$  equation was the foundation for building relationships by developing trust in and between the team. Individuals and teams build trust through communication, and trust adds value to each individual and to the entire team.

Dr. Livingston created an atmosphere of trust through his communication and customer service to the people he served with. Upon being hired as a new administrator and meeting Gary for the first time, he made a comment I will never forget: “Randy, tell me what we can do to help you be successful?” Talk about customer service and making me feel valued!

### **Staying in-Sync**

Developing a solid principal-superintendent relationship begins with trust and communication. Trust and communication are the building blocks for developing the principal-superintendent relationship. The superintendent relies on his or her principals

*Continued on page 16*

as colleagues and depends on their role in instructional leadership. This emphasizes the extra special network of communication and trust, thus creating K-12 curricular congruence. When the principal and superintendent are “in sync” with one another, the relationship positively impacts the entire school district. Even when the two parties disagree in private, they

- A “No Surprises” Approach
- Planned Time Together
- A Focus on “Kaizen”

These three strategies are straightforward, fundamental approaches which build credibility, develop trust, open communication lines, develop priorities, and focus on continuous improvement. These strategies are also the foundation of building relationships between the principal and their staff, as well as between the superintendent and their school boards.

### **No Surprises**

The “No Surprises” approach—where neither the principal nor superintendent is ever surprised or surprises the other person—is the single most important way to build trust. Regardless of the situation, don’t surprise each other. Even if one of you feels like the situation might be minor, take the “no surprises” approach. This not only develops trust, but it keeps the communication lines open at all times.

### **Planned Time Together**

No matter what, the principal and superintendent need to intentionally and consistently plan time together. Not only does the time need to be intentional and consistent, but it needs to be focused. In increasingly busy times for administrators, this is a must to get regularly scheduled time together. This starts with your calendar—it must be a priority. We value what we put in our calendar and we protect it.

### **“Kaizen” (Improvement)**

“Kaizen” is Japanese for “improvement,” or “change for the better,” which refers to philosophy or practices that focus upon continuous improvement of processes. When the principal and superintendent are focused on

“Loyalty is developed when a relationship between the principal and superintendent grows over time and weathers a few situations in a “foxhole” together.

continuous improvement—for the students, for the staff, for the building, and for the school district—then there is an opportunity for growth. Important components of “Kaizen” are developing processes, continually getting out of your comfort zone and helping others get out of their comfort zone. Asking tough questions about where we are, where do we want to be, and how we are going to get there strengthens relationships by creating trust through candid and caring conversations.

Loyalty is developed when a relationship between the principal and superintendent grows over time and weathers a few situations in a “foxhole” together. It is easy to have a solid relationship when there is no pressure or stress. Relationships are built and loyalty is earned when principals and superintendents take a “No Surprises” approach with each other, spend intentional and consistent time together, and focus on continuous improvement together. Ultimately, the strength of the principal-superintendent relationship will directly impact the success of a school district. ■

*Randy L. Russell, Ph.D., currently serves as the superintendent of the Freeman School District in Rockford, WA. He has served as a teacher, coach, assistant principal and principal prior to his superintendency. Dr. Russell is a proud member of ASCD, AASA, and WASA.*



Supt. Randy Russell chats with Helene Paroff, Assistant Executive Director of the Washington Association of School Administrators (center), and Lisa Phelan, principal at Freeman Elementary, during a professional development session at Russell’s district.

must be on the same page in public—this is critical. Without this level of trust, there is no relationship.

### **Making the Effort: Three Strategies**

How do the principal and superintendent build their relationship? They begin by developing trust through communication. Does this happen naturally? No, it does not. The principal and superintendent must make it a priority. It is never too late to begin building, or re-building, a positive principal-superintendent relationship by building trust through communication.

The following three strategies will help develop a solid principal-superintendent relationship:

# The Principal-Counselor Relationship:

# A CUSTOMER SERVICE MODEL

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Managing Resources, Improving Instruction, Closing the Achievement Gap*

### By Kurt Foure, Principal

*Lackamas Elementary, Yelm Community Schools*

### Shannon Gubser, Counselor

*Lackamas Elementary, Yelm Community Schools*



Kurt Foure (principal) and Shannon Gubser (counselor) shown in front of Lackamas Elementary's gymnasium.

*Shannon Gubser was named the 2014 Elementary School Counselor of the Year by the Washington School Counselor Association. Shannon was chosen for being a strong advocate for kids and a great resource in helping students reach their full potential.*

**S**outhwest Airlines has long been known for being one of the top airlines in the country in both the areas of profitability and customer service. If you do a Google search on them, you'll find countless numbers of ranking and awards they have received since their inception in 1971. When asked by Forbes Magazine's Carmine Gallo (9/10/13) about the success

of the company, co-founder Herb Kelleher stated his philosophy to a winning brand is, "People first; profits second," as well as stating that, "profit is the by-product of customer service." In the education world we do not seek profit but instead seek to exceed "the standard." In our relentless pursuit of that ever-changing target, we can never lose track of the human element in our work.

## The Formula

When we were approached to write an article together on keys to a successful principal/counselor relationship, we pondered what our "formula" is to working together for the betterment of our school's academic and climate aspirations. For us, the answer to this question is simple: How are we serving one another and our school? Whether the mega-business Southwest Airlines

or the principal and counselor from a little school in Yelm, the model is the same—success will follow when we are serving well.

## Principal-Counselor Alignment

Our work together starts with a weekly meeting. During this uninterrupted time, we tackle several topics. We begin by looking at our students, specifically those who have come to

Shannon with problems or concerns in the last week. Whether they are issues at school or home makes no difference. When students don't feel safe, they have a hard time focusing on learning (AWSP Leadership Framework Criterion 2.2: Ensuring social, emotional and intellectual safety). With each issue, we look for causes and potential solutions drawing from our combined knowledge

*Continued on page 18*



of available resources. No problem is too big or small. If there is a need out there, we will look high and low for a way to meet it. We then move to talking about recent discipline issues and discuss causes, as well as potential strategies for preventing future occurrences. When students worry about their physical and/or emotional safety or make poor behavioral choices, their academic performance often suffers, resulting in learning gaps (*Criterion 8.1: Identifying barriers to achievement*). Lastly, we are intentional about looking over our school-wide and individual schedules. This allows us to assign targeted tasks and bring awareness to what our focuses are for that week. Outside of our weekly meeting, our work together is more intuitive rather than planned. We have become very skilled at reading each other, staff and students. We are able to communicate needs in passing, which is often the situation. This allows us to offer assistance and respond in a timely and

appropriate manner. Additionally, we have developed a mutual trust over time by performing our assigned “jobs” at the highest level possible, but also have freedom to ask for help when needed.

## Remember the Foundation

It may sound like our system is a smooth, well-oiled machine and that our path is always successful. Reality is much different. We can never predict what situations might come our way and sometimes our best efforts aren’t effective. There are even days when we both throw our hands in the air. But it is in those moments that we try to come back to our foundation of service to others. We put in front of ourselves the question, “What is best for the student?” and go from there. Sometimes this means serving others whether they have “earned” it or not. Sometimes this means extending grace to ourselves and/or others. You might hear a warning here: Serving is not always convenient, it is not always flat-

tering, it may not always be noticed, but the by-product will always be for the good of the people (and therefore the students), and the school in the long run.

## People First

As we see the needs of others, and as we do what we can to meet those needs, we hope for our school to feel more like a team, more like family. When we know we are not alone in the trenches, the true by-product is that we are better educators and therefore our kids get *our* best. We hope for servant-leadership to catch fire with our staff as well as our students. We hope in the end to see results similar to those that Southwest Airlines saw in the 2014 ranking as one of the top 25 businesses in the country for which to work. Wouldn’t we all like our school to be a place where people want to be, want to work, want successful programs, and want to exceed the standard? It starts with people first. ■



Principal Kurt Fourre leads Lackamas Elementary’s four-day student “Boot Camp” during the first week of school.

### Kurt Fourre, Principal

“As the principal, it is my role to set the tone for the staff and students at my school. Three years ago, I had the opportunity to hire a new counselor. As I went through the tedious process of looking at candidates, my goal was to find someone who would complement my skill set and could help maintain a healthy school climate. I purposely set out looking for a servant-leader, somebody who I knew would put others first even when times were tough. I found this person in Shannon. The idea of serving others is at the core of our work together. I intentionally cultivate a strong working relationship with her as she has unique insight into the ‘heart’ of our school.”



Counselor Shannon Gubser hugs a Lackamas Elementary student during the school’s “Boot Camp,” which is designed as a fun way to teach behavior expectations for the rest of the school year.

### Shannon Gubser, Counselor

“The best way I serve my principal, my school, and my community as counselor is by ‘playing’ my role on the team to the best of my ability with the best effort I can give. I will continue to learn and improve to be the best I can be as a school counselor. But, additionally, we are a school—our job is people. Just like a teacher in the classroom, counselors have the opportunity to set the climate in their school and establish, maintain, and cultivate the relationships there. If we will choose to cultivate relationships through service, the by-product will be success whether in or out of the school setting.”

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Midway Elementary School Principal Rebekah Kim collaborates with office manager Lynda Benthin about what information should be posted on Midway's website.

TOVE TUPPER

# Principals Go Digital

## Highline Public Schools Launches Mobile App

**By Tove Tupper**

*Web and Social Media Manager,  
Highline Public Schools*

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap*

**T**he definition of a good principal continually evolves, but a number of common threads remain constant. Good principals encourage critical thinking and hard work of their students. They challenge their staff, expecting success. And perhaps most importantly, good principals are effective communicators.

Many communication tools are available, and principals in Highline Public Schools are using digital options to communicate with key stakeholders. Principals have to be in constant communication with their community of students, staff, families, and peers. These digital tools are proving both effective and convenient in strengthening partnerships.

### Provide Easy and Quick Access

Principals can now reach families and staff with a touch of a finger. Highline is the first school district in the Puget Sound region to launch its own free mobile app.

In addition to the latest news, users also have access to district and school calendars, emergency notifications, staff contact information, school meals, grades, attendance, and more.

"It is so convenient," said Rebekah Kim, principal at Midway Elementary School in Des Moines.

Midway families can subscribe to updates and notifications specific to their school. Kim and her office staff are able to send reminders about back-

to-school events and parent meetings through the district app. Families receive the notifications in mere seconds.

Research shows a growing number of people own and rely on smartphones to access the internet. In January 2014, the Pew Research Center reported 58% of American adults have a smartphone and 42% adults own a tablet computer.

"A large majority of our parents are digital natives. This type of communication speaks to them," said Kim. "But we also recognize that not all of our families have a smartphone, which is why the mobile app is just one tool we use to engage our school community."



## Make the Website a Gathering Place

Content on Highline's mobile app comes directly from each school's website. For Kim, a school's website is just as important as the school's physical entrance.



A screen shot of Highline Public Schools' mobile app.

"The website and the front of the school are always going to be the first impression. They could also be the last impression," said Kim. "The website is a reflection of our culture, school community, and how we take care of the school. We want parents and the community to walk away feeling like they are part of community that cares about their school."

In addition to information and news, school websites can also be a gathering place for families and the community to find resources.

For years, parents have been asking their child, "What did you do in school today?"

"Kids aren't going to give their parents the rundown of what they did during the day," said Casey Jeannot, principal at Hazel Valley Elementary School in Burien. She views the website as a way for parents and families to be involved with school even if they can't physically be there because of work or other responsibilities.

"We're in a huge transition period,"

Hazel Valley Elementary School Principal Casey Jeannot explains the various ways families can stay informed during the school year at a back to school event.

said Jeannot. "I see the website as a place for families to learn about what their students are doing at school each day, and access rich resources that allow them to easily help their child learn at home."

As an example, let's say students are focusing on reading. Jeannot would see her school posting five questions online that families can ask their students, encouraging critical thinking about the text.

By providing resources, Jeannot hopes families will start to lead the conversation by asking critical thinking questions that support the learning at school.

## Make It Convenient for Teachers

School websites are also turning into valuable professional development tools. A portion of Jeannot's website is hidden from public view and dedicated to her staff. There, she posts videos, articles, and resources for teachers to use as they plan their lessons and improve their instruction.

"We know our teachers' lives are so busy," said Jeannot. "This is a convenient place for my teachers to get resources and also feel connected."

Jeannot admits that finding and posting content does take time and is a commitment on her part.

"Yes, it is more work but it's also providing me with a resource," said Jeannot. "If my teachers are asking me how to align math lessons with the Common Core, I can go through that database I created online and find a video I posted last spring."

## Take Advantage of Social Media

Social media is not just for social interaction anymore; it can provide rich opportunities for professional connections, too.

When Kim first began implementing a blended learning model at Midway, she struggled finding relevant information about best instructional practices. She turned to Twitter and found exactly what she was looking for.

"When you're doing something innovative and you're passionate about it, you're hungry for as much research, best practices, and lessons learned as there are," said Kim. "Twitter has been some of my best professional development."

Kim follows the Twitter accounts of other schools and districts that are implementing blended learning, as well as organizations and businesses in the education-technology industry. When she visits other schools or attends workshops, she follows the people she meets so she can maintain those connections.

*Continued on page 22*



TOVE TUPPER

"We're busy as principals. It can be hard to find the time to really be able to connect with people you want to feel connected to," said Kim. "In the convenience of my own home and own time, I can surf through Twitter easily, stay connected, and see the other great work that is happening across the country."

Twitter allows users to share ideas, links to articles, research, and videos. Users can direct content to other users or everyone who follows them. When used for professional development, a user's timeline can become an archive of research, best practices, and learned lessons related to topics of interest.

"It allows you to develop your own professional learning network comprised of educators from all over the country and all over the world," said Trevor Greene, an Instructional Leadership Executive Director for Highline and 2013 National High School Principal of the Year. "I can access and communicate directly with university professors, teacher practitioners, and administrators."

### Don't Neglect Personal Communication

While digital tools are making it easier for school communities to stay connected, in-person communication is still essential.

"The personal touch is really important," said Jeannot. "I think it's really important to communicate with families in the morning at drop-off and after school as students leave. The one-on-one connection is huge."

Principals are finding digital tools an effective and convenient way to communicate and strengthen partnerships with families, giving them more time to make those personal connections. ■



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# STUDENT-LED



# STRATEGIES

## For Meeting the Principal Evaluation Criteria

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

**Compiled by the AWSL Student Steering Committee**

**P**art of the development of the Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL) is to deepen the partnership between principals and student leaders. We believe that student leaders in your schools are in a unique position to help you expand the eight principal evaluation criteria from just principal leadership to entire school leadership. With the whole school involved, (1) Creating a Culture, (2) Ensuring School Safety, (3) Planning with Data, (4) Aligning Curriculum, (5) Improving Instruction, (6) Managing Resources, (7) Engaging Communities, and (8) Closing the Gap become much more inclusive.

As the Student Steering Committee for the Association of Washington Student Leaders, we created these belief statements to guide the work of student leaders. (See next page.)

On the following pages, you'll find a collection of ideas and activities for student leaders that demonstrate how their leadership can connect to the eight criteria. These examples are just a start. We encourage you to share the AWSP Leadership Framework with your student leaders and show them these examples. Students can be your strongest partners in achieving your dreams for your school.

*Continued on page 26*

### AWSL Belief Statements:

**Criterion 1:** We believe students and staff thrive in a culture where they feel valued and supported.

**Criterion 2:** We believe every student deserves to experience physical and emotional safety which leads to belongingness and success.

**Criterion 3:** We believe principals are informed best with data collected by student leaders who can articulate the voice of their fellow students.

**Criterion 4:** We believe in making it a priority to increase student learning by developing new study strategies and leading by example in the classroom environment.

**Criterion 5:** We believe classroom instruction can be improved by giving teachers feedback and actively participating in class.

**Criterion 6:** We believe student leaders must establish a relationship with principals in order to properly use ASB funds and maintain resources within the school.

**Criterion 7:** We believe that as student leaders, we have an obligation to make our schools active members in our communities.

**Criterion 8:** We believe student leaders need to advocate for equitable opportunities to promote the success of all students regardless of circumstance.





Themed assemblies help create an inclusive school culture.

## Unified Theme Assembly

*High School*

Creating a culture needs to be synergetic and involve everyone. One way to create an inclusive culture is with a themed assembly. For example, this assembly might cover the school's yearly goals. When the message comes from their peers, students may feel more inclined to participate.

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 2, 8

## Yard Signs

*High School*

How often do you get the chance to see high school spirit displayed in the surrounding community? One easy, student-driven way to engage the community is to distribute election-style yard signs that read, "Home of a Proud [mascot]" or "Proud Supporter of the [school sports team here]."

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 7

## Bracelets/T-Shirts

*All Levels*

There's nothing easier than unifying a group of people at any age with a matching tee shirt. Depending on age, things like custom "Silly Bandz" are another fun connector.

Helps Meet Criteria:  
1, 2, 7

Custom bracelets can help bring unity to your group.



## Teacher Appreciation

*All Levels*

Happy teachers who feel valued are more likely to invest in their students. Teacher appreciation can take place in all grade levels. In elementary school, cut outs of a teacher or staff member's picture can be paired with positive words about the teacher taped or written around a border. Middle school students can cut out hand shapes and give five fabulous adjectives about their teachers and staff. High school students can go a touch farther and put a poster on teacher and staff doors/offices with a letter of appreciation and excitement for the coming year.

Helps Meet Criteria: 1



Bilingual outreach helps close the gap.

## Bilingual Outreach

*High School*

Home life can affect the success of students. Student leaders can do their part by reaching out to even those families that do not speak English. One easy way to help these families is by sending out the school newsletter/other announcements in their language. In doing so, students are helping to close that gap, as well as engage the community.

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 7, 8



## RSVP

*All Levels*

One potential way for students to reinforce the student body's voice is through an RSVP program (Raising Student Voice and Participation). Via school summits, electronic polls or slips of paper, student leaders can practice planning using data, creating a culture, and closing the gap by getting tangible feedback on ways to improve the school.

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 3, 8



Allow older students to teach inclusive games to younger students.

## Inclusive Games/Workshops

*High School with Middle Level and Elementary Students*

Grade-level integration is one way to close the gap, and having students and staff unite over inclusion and servant leadership is profound. Allow high school students to teach inclusive games and provide leadership workshops to younger students.

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 2, 8

## GPA Goals

*All Levels*

In order to create a positive and unified culture and close the gap, student leaders can work with the student body to set a goal for an average GPA, attendance record, or other school success target. This helps to provide the student body with a common goal.

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 3, 4, 5, 8

## Student Mentor Program

*High School*

Building and promoting a mentor program is a great way to make everyone feel included in and out of the classroom. Senior-freshman programs, as well as class-class programs, are one idea to create a positive climate for all students. Not only are students connected throughout the school, it helps develop a conducive learning environment.

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 4, 5, 8



Mentor programs help everyone feel included.

## Multi-Grade-Level Events in High School

*High School*

A great way to further open up the high schools currently open to the community is hosting various events (movie nights, sports games targeted at feeder schools) for the local elementary and middle schools. Doing so results in a better sense of community as positive relationships develop between high school and middle level/elementary students.

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 7, 8

## Student Anti-Bullying

*Middle Level*

In middle school, many transitions are going on, and mind-sets are still developing. We believe that this is a crucial time to ensure school safety. By organizing an anti-bullying campaign, student leaders can establish a student-supported safe school environment.

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 2

## Elementary Assemblies

*All Levels*

Provide opportunities for high school and middle school leadership programs to put on assemblies for elementary students concerning integral focuses of their own leadership programs (ie. kindness, honesty, respect, etc.)

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8

*Continued on page 28*



An all-age community event like a park cleanup creates a positive relationship with otherwise uninvolved community members.

## Community Park Cleanup

*All Levels*

In order to create a more supported and ultimately successful climate for student achievement, we must cultivate a sense of unity and service among the community. An all-age community event such as a simple park cleanup put on by student leaders creates a positive and cohesive relationship with otherwise uninvolved community members.

Helps Meet Criteria: 7

## Inclusion/Awareness

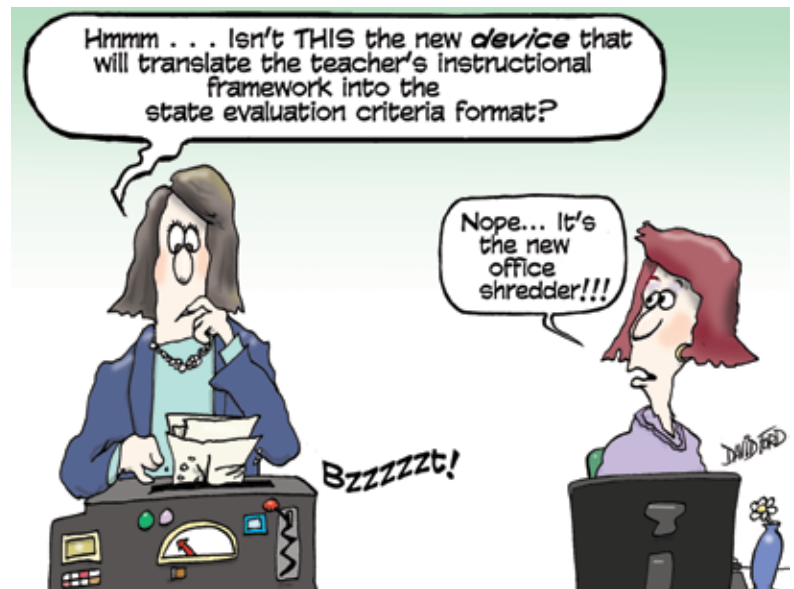
*High School, Middle Level*

Student leaders have a unique and significant opportunity to advocate for a change to the status quo. In an era where definitive laws exist against discrimination, it is essential that the needs of all students—regardless of circumstance—be met. With that mindset, it is key that any events with the purpose of promoting inclusion are not acts of charity, but acts of justice. Those who we look to include must be treated as friends and colleagues, rather than “projects.”

Helps Meet Criteria: 1, 2, 8 ■

# Humor me!

Created by **David Ford**, Principal, Tenino Elementary, Tenino SD.  
Download these cartoons at [www.awsp.org/cartoons](http://www.awsp.org/cartoons).





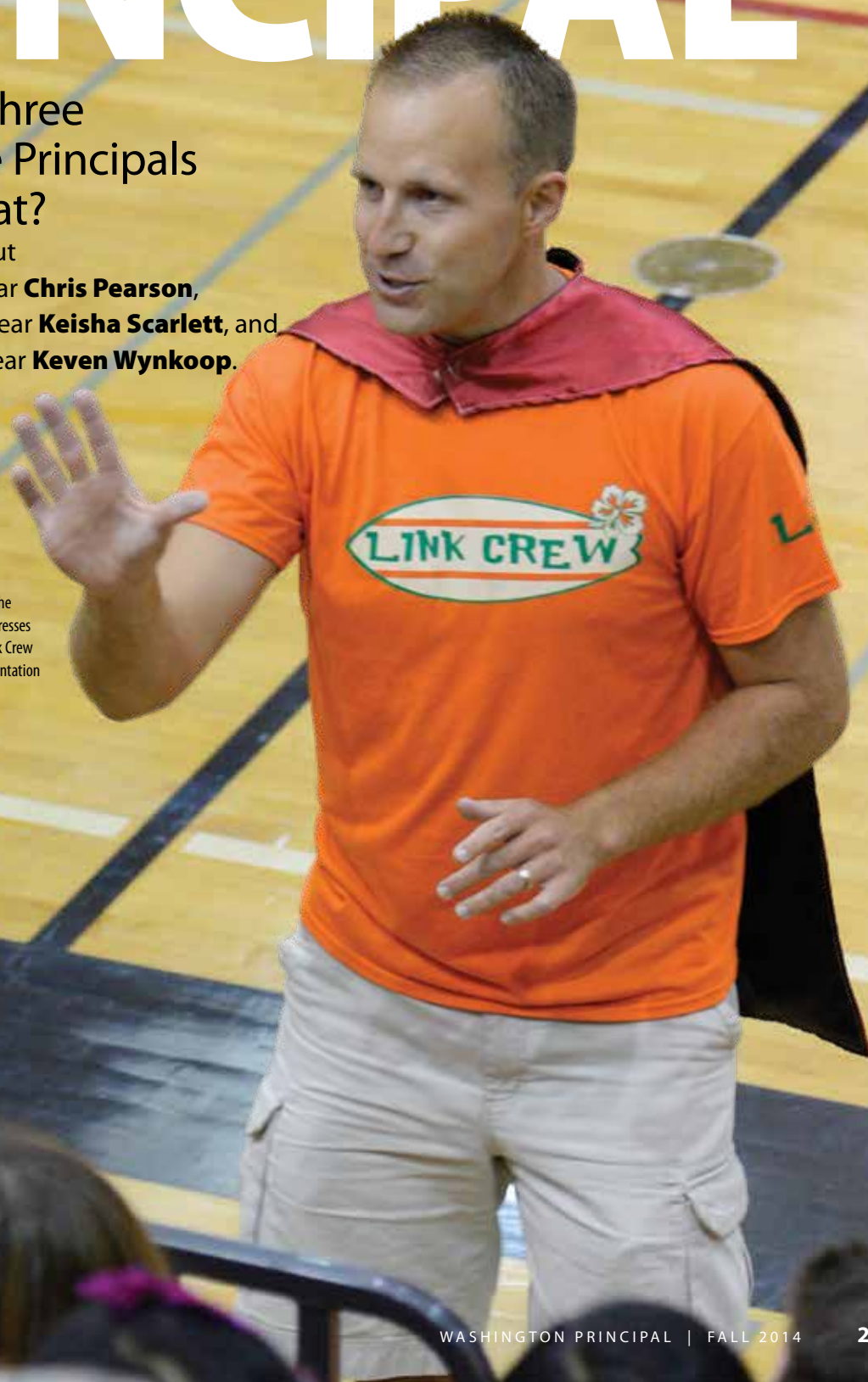
# The makings of a **GREAT** **PRINCIPAL**

What makes the three  
Washington State Principals  
of the Year so great?

Read on to find out more about  
Elementary Principal of the Year **Chris Pearson**,  
Middle Level Principal of the Year **Keisha Scarlett**, and  
High School Principal of the Year **Keven Wynkoop**.

*Continued on page 30*

High School Principal of the  
Year Keven Wynkoop addresses  
his ninth graders and Link Crew  
senior leaders during orientation  
at Ballard High in Seattle.





# Chris Pearson

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

**A**t West View Elementary School in Burlington-Edison School District, **Chris Pearson** commits himself to “*Cada Niño*” or “Each Child.”

Pearson became principal at West View Elementary in 2011. West View is a Title I school that serves predominantly low-income Hispanic students. Over 79 percent of the school’s 364 students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches.

West View is also a “turnaround” school; in 2010 it was identified as persistently low-performing and was on the “priority” federal list. Today, it has a waiting list to enroll. In 2013, West View was honored by the Washington Education Association (WEA) as a “High-Performing Priority School” and featured in the *Seattle Times* for its reading proficiency scores, which climbed from 40.1 percent to 62.5 percent in the two years under Pearson’s leadership. The school was one of only 34 in Washington state to make double-digit growth in both math and reading scores.

### The Family Center

For Pearson, it’s all about community. He believes that the partnership between school and community is essential for supporting the achievement of all students. Pearson has



Principal Chris Pearson and a West View Elementary student share a laugh.

sought to cultivate this relationship in a variety of ways, including the establishment of an evening Family Center. The Family Center brings the school together with community agencies to embrace families and their needs. Parents can access technology, GED classes, and ELL services while students get tutoring support from teachers.

“The Family Center has opened doors for parents to not only learn strategies to support their child’s learning, but in many cases learning English,” explains Laurel Browning, Burlington-Edison Public Schools superintendent. “[Pearson] has promoted a climate of, ‘we can do it, no excuses.’”

“In addition to inspiring parents to become advocates for their children, Mr. Pearson is also an advocate for parents,” writes parent Joey Wasson.

### Student and Staff Safety

School safety is also of utmost importance to Pearson. It’s his goal each day to make sure his students and staff feel safe by implementing regular safety drills, being an active presence in the school building, and greeting all students by name. He champions the phrase “*Cada Niño*” as the school motto.

“I have found that the most impactful way to make students feel safe is by making them feel known and loved,” says Pearson. ■

*Pearson began his principal career at Allen Elementary (Burlington-Edison SD) in 2007. Before that, he served for a year as Dean of Students at Burlington-Edison High School. Pearson graduated in 1999 from American University in Washington, D.C., with a master’s degree in education. He earned his administrative certification from Western Washington University in 2009 and is currently working on his doctorate from the University of Washington.*

*In the spring of 2013, in partnership with Western Washington University, Pearson founded the Northwest Principal Leadership Collaborative, which provides collaboration and mentorship opportunities for principals through a summer institute and monthly site visits during the school year.*







# Keisha Scarlett

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Planning with Data, Managing Resources, Improving Instruction, Engaging Communities*

**K**eisha Scarlett believes the most important part of her role as principal is to develop strong teachers. Scarlett has been principal at South Shore PK-8 School since 2010, where more than 89 percent of the students are of color and more than two-thirds of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch programs. The school was founded in 2002 in partnership with Seattle Schools, the New School Foundation and the City of Seattle. The school is known for its innovative whole-child PK-3 program, an approach that aims to give students a firm foundation in academic, cognitive, social and emotional skills and habits.

### No More Revolving Door

Scarlett was hired at South Shore in 2010 as the fourth principal in eight years. The school had been struggling with a large number of family departures after grade 3, and an influx of new students from a nearby closing school. It was also dealing with a high teacher attrition number.

Says Scarlett, "Over the past four years, I have worked to attract and retain high quality teachers. With only 240 students and each core teacher instructing an entire grade level, it is imperative to create a culture of excellence."

Scarlett's work has paid off. South Shore now boasts staff positions



Principal Keisha Scarlett chats with South Shore PK-8 students and staff in the halls.

that include a full-time art teacher, a part-time STEM teacher, a new music teacher and a Chinese/Mandarin teacher, all of which answer to the community's feedback on what it would take to retain students through to the middle school program.

Today, South Shore is the fourth highest performing K-8 school in the district. Continuous enrollment has increased to the point they now a waiting list at each grade level, with many families attempting to move their students to South Shore even during their eighth grade year.

### Community Feedback Leads to Stronger Curriculum

A survey was sent out to parents and the community for feedback on the school's program and curriculum. The school's master schedule was changed to support a more personalized environment, including a daily 20-minute advisory period for socio-emotional literacy skills and an hour-long Flex-

Friday period for small group projects and social skills. Under Scarlett's leadership, South Shore's math program was accelerated. And, Scarlett worked to bring in the best teachers possible with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education.

Kelly Aramaki, Seattle Public Schools' Executive Director for the Southeast Region and 2013 Elementary Principal of the Year, says this about Scarlett: "When I'm discouraged or frustrated by challenges in our profession, I go to her for wisdom and inspiration. Last year I happened to be named Washington State Elementary Principal of the Year, yet Keisha is ten times the principal I was." ■

*Scarlett has worked as an educator in Seattle Public Schools since 1999. She taught STEM at Asa Mercer Middle School until 2005, when she moved to the central office to become a STAR Consulting Teacher. In 2007, she became a math coach at Denny Middle School, and in 2008 she took an assistant principal position at McClure Middle School, where she worked until taking a principal position at South Shore PK-8 School in 2010.*

*Scarlett graduated from Clark Atlanta University in 1996 with a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry. She earned her Master of Teaching degree in elementary education from Heritage University in 1999, and her administrative certification from the University of Washington in 2008.*

*Keisha Scarlett is now a Principal Leadership Coach for Seattle Public Schools.*

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# Keven Wynkoop

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Planning with Data, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap*

**K**even Wynkoop became principal at Ballard High in 2010 and was Ballard High's assistant principal for five years prior. His connection to the school goes even deeper, as

Wynkoop himself is a third generation Ballard High School graduate.

## Alumni Association Helps Struggling Students

Wynkoop's goal is that all families—rich or poor, majority or minority—feel the special connection to Ballard High School that he feels. To make this happen, Wynkoop has worked diligently with Ballard High's alumni association and the Ballard Foundation to strengthen support of struggling students. One major example of this effort is the GAINS Program (Graduation Assistance Identifying the Needs of Students), created by Wynkoop and funded by the Foundation.

"The program is in its second year and making a difference in the lives of students that might have been otherwise forgotten," says Wynkoop.

## The Freshman Transition

Wynkoop has also placed a critical focus on the transition to high school, pairing incoming freshman with seniors through the Link Crew mentoring program. The program began



Ninth graders at Ballard High School are welcomed by a raucous "gauntlet" of upperclassmen.

in the 2005-06 school year when Wynkoop was assistant principal. Since its implementation, the school has seen dramatic changes. The number of ninth graders with at least one failing grade dropped from 89 in the program's first year to 46 in 2012-13. In that same timeframe, the number of ninth grade suspensions has dropped from 30 to 18, with three years of only seven suspensions.

"Not only do students benefit from this program as freshmen when we learn time management, organization and problem solving skills, but seniors also learn to mentor, understand how to lead a group and gain valuable knowledge about working with a classroom," says recent Ballard graduate Anna Cechony.

"Keven has embraced the ideology that every student can and will be successful at Ballard High School and is working diligently to create the best

climate and culture possible for his students," says Scott Seaman, AWSP Director of High School Programs.

## Valuing Staff Input

Wynkoop has also worked to create a culture in which staff is involved in helping make school decisions and where their input is valued.

"Keven shows a lot of trust in his staff and he guides them to fulfill their duties while allowing them the freedom to take ownership in their decisions," says teacher Michael James. ■

*Wynkoop began his administrative career at Ballard High School in 2005 as assistant principal. He graduated in 1998 from Pacific Lutheran University with a bachelor's degree in social studies education. Wynkoop earned his Master's degree in Educational Administration in 2005 from Western Washington University.*

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Developing People Means Helping Them

# Find Their Voice

By Beth Ashley

*Education Consultant and Success at the Core Fellow  
(Former Principal at Mount Baker Middler School in Mount Vernon School District)*

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Managing Resources, Improving Instruction*

**A**s I look forward to another season of *The Voice*, I am reminded of the powerful coaching of Usher, Adam, Shakira and Blake and wonder if the new coaches this season will have what it takes to move their best contestants to the finals. Last spring, as I watched the coaches, I was struck by their passion and enthusiasm for their singers' success. Every season I have observed how the coaches work with their teams, including their song selections, their interactions with each contestant, and their techniques for "breaking it down." The singers evolve from amateurs to confident stars with the ability to capture the audience through their own unique talent.

As a school principal, *The Voice* has given me insights about how principals work with not just teachers, but all staff members to help them rise

to their highest potential. Harvey S. Firestone once said, "The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership." When school staff members are empowered, they in turn empower our most important commodity: the students.

“Much is written about how to inspire students and how to develop instructional skill, but the insights I have gained are about what it takes to truly grow people.”

Captivated by the coaches on *The Voice* and reflecting on my own experience, I have found many connections to school leadership. To expand my

thinking, I searched through some journal articles from education, business, and even medicine and talked to a business executive, a principal colleague, and a teacher, to hear different perspectives. Much is written about how to inspire students and how to develop instructional skill, but the insights I have gained are about what it takes to truly grow people.

Here are some key ideas from what I've learned:

**Recognize talent and identify people who are open and responsive to feedback.**

We know that it is the principal's job to hire the best people and develop the talents of those currently on staff. Talent comes in many forms. A dynamic leader is able to look beyond lack of skill or lack of experience and see a person's potential. Reviewing someone's life and work experience provides us with



insights about how that person will fit into a collaborative school setting and be motivated to continually learn. Do they show enthusiasm, a passion for kids, and an understanding of what it takes to inspire learning? If so, are they team players and energized by the process of self-reflection and exploring ideas for improvement? Are they in a staff assignment that is the best fit (or, as Jim Collin's would put it, the right seat on the bus)?

### Create a collaborative learning culture.

Each season, I watch competitors on *The Voice* sing together and support one another. As each person takes new risks and pushes on, the others affirm his efforts. It is equally important for principals to build trust and develop systems and strategies for high levels of collaboration around student learning. When teachers are given the tools for this kind of work, they inspire growth in one another, share ideas, solve problems together, and restore commitment to high standards for student and professional learning. Effective principals make sure the work is focused and data-driven, and that successes are celebrated along the way. The result is a school characterized by high energy and enthusiasm for embracing new ideas and continuous growth.

### Believe in them.

When I asked several people what was the most important thing someone did in their lives to help them grow, the answer was consistent: "They believed in me." How do we convey to others that we believe in their abilities to reach their potential? We tell them and we show them through our actions. We come along-side. As a principal, one of my greatest joys was connecting teachers and staff members to resources and opportunities that allowed them to explore their talents and nurture their creativity. Opportunities such as additional training, shared leadership and using their expertise for school-based professional learning helped

them develop a new skill set and foster growth school-wide. The time we take to invest in our teachers through listening, coaching, modeling,

“

I want teachers in my school to say, "Although the demands of teaching were high, I thrived in my career because I taught in a stimulating environment. I was valued for my contribution, and I had a principal who believed in me and challenged me to grow."

and reinforcing their progress pays dividends in their development. Steve Keating, from the private sector, says, "Investing yourself in the future success of the *people* in your organization is leading ... They need to know they matter to an organization and that what they do makes a difference."

### Challenge them.

As I watch the coaches on *The Voice*, I am impressed with the depth of their knowledge of music and showmanship. They challenge their team members to stretch and grow as musicians and performers. Something as simple as suggesting a certain song choice or pitching a song in a different key can make all the difference in that singer's ability to move to the next level. In order to challenge someone, you have to know that person's strengths and areas for growth, and you have to be a master of your trade. Principals must know research-based effective instruction when they see it, and they must use sound coaching strategies as they challenge teachers to learn and grow.

In our profession, turnover is about four percent higher than other professions. Approximately 15.7 percent of teachers leave the classroom every year and 40-50 percent leave within the first five years of their career (Riggs, 2013). I want teachers in my school to say, "Although the demands of teaching were high, I thrived in my career because I taught in a stimulating environment. I was valued for

my contribution, and I had a principal who believed in me and challenged me to grow." ■

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# Challenge Courses

## Help Build Strong Team Relationships

**By Martin E. Fortin, Jr.**  
*Director of Learning Centers, AWSP*

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

**I**t takes a plan to work well together. In order for the plan to be successful it must include strategies to build positive relationships. Our research has identified the essentials when building a team. We found group members must share the same goals and objectives, be willing to work with each other and be dependent upon each other to achieve the goals. In addition, each group member must possess a talent, skill, or information necessary to reach the team goals, and all members must be willing to recognize and utilize each other's talents and knowledge.

### Building a Great Team

By design, AWSP's Learning Centers at Cispus and Chewelah Peak have a way to assist in your plans to build a great team. The common name is a *Ropes Course*, but we call ours the *Challenge Course*. Although we have many of the high elements as often seen in the media, we concentrate on those elements that are close to the ground and require very little physical strength but a significant amount of cooperative action.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of the team and in consideration of safety, it is necessary to sequence the activities that we have available. When selecting the challenge, our facilitators consider the group balance, its mental and physical ability, and the intensity of the experience. As the day unfolds we ask the participants to challenge themselves to take a safe risk and take one step further today than they would have yesterday.

### The Challenge Course Experience: Six Steps

Six steps progress throughout the experience. Let's look at each one.

**Step #1: Ice Breakers and Get Acquainted Activities.** These tone-setting games are designed to warm up the group. Group Juggle is a sample activity where we toss and catch stuffed animals in an established

The Marble Roll helps teams learn to problem solve and work together.

“As the day unfolds we ask the participants to challenge themselves to take a safe risk and take one step further today than they would have yesterday.

pattern. A major goal is to laugh and have fun.

#### **Step #2: De-inhibitizing Activities.**

These activities are designed to loosen up the group. We look for the time that members of the team become willing and able to get physically close to each other to solve problems.

**Step #3: Trust and Spotting.** The facilitators give instruction and lead activities that insure the safety of group members. Once the group shows they can work closely together, we teach them how to physically support each other.

**Step #4: Briefing.** The rules of the challenge are given, including constraints and artificial handicaps for an activity. Here the facilitator pauses and assesses the group's status. Do they know each other's names, will they work to attain both individual and group goals, will they adhere to safety and behavior guidelines, and will they listen to positive and negative feedback and agree to change when





appropriate? If the answers are all yes, the team is ready to proceed—and sometimes we let them struggle. The elements of these initiatives are designed for group problem solving. We watch for communication dynamics and insist on a good plan before beginning.

**Step #5: The Challenge.** This is the actual initiative and its plan. We define an initiative as a challenge with many possible solutions, as opposed to a trick that only has one answer. You may hear the facilitator state “it is important to be able to say at the end of our activities today that you challenged yourself in at least one way. Your challenge may be physical, emotional, social, or intellectual.” We listen for the plan before allowing them to start and occasionally intervene if things are not going well. Once they start, we may substitute the activity, modify it, refocus the group, or quit and move on.

**Step #6: Debriefing:** This is the key to team building as we learn best not from the experience, but by reflecting on the experience. It is vital that we lead a debriefing conversation after each major initiative. Here the facilitator’s role is to listen, pose questions, and see that all members contribute. We stress that they must discuss the process, as well as the product, of their efforts. At some point, a facilitator may report their own observations of the dynamics of the group. We often ask team members if during the problem solving process, they listened more or talked more.

## Overcoming Team Dysfunctions

Patrick Lencioni, the author of many books on team management, describes five team dysfunctions: the absence of trust, a fear of conflict, a lack of commitment, the avoidance of accountability, and an inattention to results. As a principal, consider the student and staff teams in your building. These teams come together



Students engage in a team building activity called The Cube Challenge.

for many purposes: sports, ASB officers, cheerleaders, standing committees, the yearbook or newspaper staff, dance and drill teams, club officers, Boosters and PTOs, office staff, or

faculties. It is our goal that the time spent on our challenge course goes a long way in overcoming these dysfunctions and setting the course for developing an effective team. ■



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# “You Have to **REACH ‘EM** to **TEACH ‘EM**”

**By Vicki Bates**

*Director of Principal Support and Middle Level Programs, AWSP*

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Ensuring School Safety, Improving Instruction, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap*

**W**ith his closing presentation at the 2014 Summer Conference, Dr. Adolph Brown asked us, “Who’s in your wheelbarrow?” and challenged, “If the kids in your wheelbarrow only look like you, kids won’t know there’s room for everybody.” Just as Doc inspires educators to build relationships with all students, Washington schools are ensuring the conditions to allow all students—and in particular those often marginalized or underachieving—to experience social, emotional and intellectual safety, and to benefit by instructional and family engagement practices that leverage recognition of student diversity. As Dr. Brown says, “*You Have to Reach ‘Em to Teach ‘Em.*”

### Positive School Climate for LGBT Youth

At Kent-Meridian High School, Assistant Principal Susan Whitehall states diversity is seen as a strength and acceptance of all is a “matter of pride.” This culture is cultivated through intentional middle-to-high-school transition activities, Royal Pride Days, advisory lessons, staff engagement, and an inclusive student activities program. The Gay-Straight Alliance is an active organization on campus, contributing to

events centering on multicultural awareness, anti-bullying, and service. In this setting of acceptance, a problem-based, open-ended academic assignment in their Tech Academy program launched a group of LGBT girls and classmates last spring into partnering with local community agencies to create a safe space for support systems and fellowship in the community for their peers. The instructional engagement strategies of their classrooms set in the positive culture of the school allowed learning to advance in the context of the life experiences of these girls.

### Strong Partnership with Native Tribal Community

A committed and collaborative relationship between the La Conner School District and the resident Swinomish Indian Tribal Community currently results in a variety of school program supports for students. While joint efforts support collaborative preschool programming for the youngest learners in the community, at the secondary level a commitment of funds from the Swinomish Tribe provides nine highly qualified and educated tribal paraprofessionals specifically supporting and advocating for native students. These supplemental La Conner School District staff support regular attendance, monitor conduct and grades, and provide additional support to students during and



Dr. Adolph Brown illustrates during his Summer Conference presentation that all students—regardless of appearance, background, or social status—need to be in an educator’s “wheelbarrow.”

“ How do each of the students in your school see a place for each of them there? Reaching them is a critical prerequisite to teaching them.

after school for academic success.

Twice a year, La Conner K-12 staff facilitate student-led conferences at the Swinomish Social Service building on the reservation. In October and May, the Tribe hosts an education dinner and celebration, bringing



together educators and families to recognize students' accomplishments.

"The conferences and dinner allow us to meet and celebrate our efforts to create success with all of our students," explains La Conner Middle and High School Principal Marsha Hanson.

On their website, the middle school staff pledge, "we must understand the traditions and cultures of our students in order to activate prior knowledge and engage students at a deeper level." This understanding is built as relationships are continually fostered.

### Parent Engagement in ELL & High Poverty Settings

The Johns Hopkins Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) provides a framework for family engagement planning in the Kennewick School District, within which school teams tailor their efforts to the needs of families and students in their communities. The ATP format has helped principals and their teams in Kennewick's high poverty schools form even stronger relationships with families than is typically seen in more affluent settings.

#### Eastgate Elementary

Principal Niki Arnold Smith and the ATP at Eastgate Elementary School in Kennewick recognized their school and students would benefit by the increased participation of more and different families, particularly recognizing 70% of the school's parents are native Spanish speakers. They knew they had to reach a broader range of parents to teach them, too. With that goal in mind, the *Trabajando Juntos/Eastgate Parent Partnership* was formed to encourage diverse parents to attend meetings and be active in the school community. Teachers were asked to call and invite at least two parents, and the teacher who recruited the most parents earning a Starbucks gift card.

The group also "invites early" with traditional calendar and newsletter strategies and "invites late," sending students home on meeting days wearing stickers

inviting parents to attend meetings and activities. Parent programs are co-delivered by native English- and Spanish-speaking parents, and purposeful meeting agendas allow parent input and questions. Parent feedback truly drives future social and academic programming for families. Since the group was established five years ago, more than 50 new families attend meetings annually. Strong school-family relationships at Eastgate are driven by a student-centered focus and authentic feedback.

#### Amistad Elementary

The ATP at Amistad Elementary, where 98% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, have made home visits and homework centers a focus of their plan for the past five years. As featured in the winter 2013 issue of *Washington Principal*, Principal Andy Woehler has made as many as 300 home visits a year to provide blue ribbon recognition to families who have set up spaces for productive homework completion in their homes. The team now narrows

their focus with approximately 80 invitations to visit homes a year, targeting through teacher identification the most high-needs students and working to sustain contact with those families over the course of the year. Last year 75% of invited families agreed to home visits and outreach resulted in better attendance of these families at other school events as well. More effort is then spent at monthly parent meetings to teach these parents and other parents activities they can take home and use with their students that night.

#### Who's In Your Wheelbarrow?

So, as we embark on another school year, who's in your wheelbarrow? How do each of the students in your school see a place for each of them there? Reaching them is a critical prerequisite to teaching them. ■

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# Jeff Estes

Director of STEM Education at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL)

*Jeff Estes is currently the Director of the Office of STEM Education at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), a U.S. Department of Energy National Laboratory operated by Battelle. He has served as Director for 15 years. Prior to that, Jeff was a Science Education Specialist at PNNL (10 years), an energy/science education outreach specialist at the Hanford Science Center (3 years) and a K-12*

*classroom teacher in Richland and Tacoma (10 years).*

*Jeff began teaching in 1975. He taught in a K-8 school in south Tacoma and was responsible for teaching science and social studies. Jeff then moved to Richland where he taught fourth- and sixth-grade self-contained classrooms, including one year in gifted education. He took a leave of absence from the*



*school district to work as an energy and science education specialist at a local science museum/center. In 1988, Jeff was hired by Battelle.*

## **You're involved in multiple roles linked to education. Could you briefly describe those and how they connect?**

I am responsible for execution and evaluation of PNNL's efforts to 1) strengthen and advance K-12 STEM education in Washington state, 2) improve the Lab's programs for students, educators and community stakeholders, 3) deliver against the STEM education expectations of the U.S. Department of Energy, and 4) connect PNNL to Battelle's national STEM education efforts. That translates into work on the State Board of Education; local and state collaboration projects like Delta High School, Washington State LASER, Washington State MESA and the Mid-Columbia STEM Education Collaboratory; and state and national networking efforts

with organizations like AWSP, OSPI, Washington STEM and STEMx.

## **You recently joined the State Board of Education (SBE). How does that role connect to the rest of your work?**

Policy should enable and provide direction for impacts at the school program and classroom practice levels. Therefore, policies and rules developed by the SBE should be informed by research and best practices. Although my role on the SBE is broader than STEM, it is fair to say that I take a particular interest in STEM issues because I think they are critical for helping students be career and college-ready. In fact, I am really interested in how the SBE can help develop the abilities, skills and qualities for 21st century success.

## **What do you view as some of the challenges of education reform: TPEP, Common Core, and Next Generation Science Standards?**

I like to think of challenges as opportunities for innovation. When I think of TPEP, Common Core and NGSS, I see these as innovations that can help us better achieve the four learning goals we have established in this state which underpin our learning standards. At a very high level, I think we have two fundamental challenges for education reform. *Do we have the will and are we creating the capacity to fully realize the benefits of education reform?* Growing our collective will and capacity to fully implement innovations like TPEP, Common Core and NGSS are at the heart of our work. These innovations provide the opportunities for leaders to step forward and courageously



lead the changes that are required to achieve the improvement aspirations that underpin TPEP, Common Core and NGSS. A clear challenge to education reform is the number of innovations happening at the same time, and if we treat them as separate and distinct from one another, we run the risk of everyone feeling overwhelmed (i.e., initiative fatigue). But if we think of them as tools that we can use to create a stronger education system, I think we can succeed.

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

We have many great organizations and collaborators providing important leadership, but there are infrastructure and technical supports needed to fully realize the promise of education reform. I have quite a few colleagues from around the country who continually remind me of how envious they are of what Washington has been able to accomplish, particularly in the area of science education.

### **How did the PNNL/Battelle partnership with AWSP come to be, and what was the motivation behind the partnership?**

PNNL, as a co-leader of Washington State LASER, had been doing a lot of work with teachers and district leadership teams. Gene Sharratt, Executive Director of the Washington Student Achievement Council, was familiar with the work of PNNL and LASER and was a matchmaker early on. AWSP also had this wonderful professional development program to which we could add value. Gary Kipp and Paula Quinn were thinking about how to reinvigorate AWSP's summer retreat, and they had the foresight to see that their membership could be well-served with a focus on STEM education. Almost all principals in the state are members of AWSP, which we knew would give PNNL and LASER access to an established and credible program for developing principal knowledge and skills.

### **What do you view as basic education?**

I am in agreement with RCW 28A.150.210...."a basic education is an evolving program of instruction that is intended to provide students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens, to contribute to their economic well-being and that of their families and communities, to explore and understand different perspectives, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives." I really think the four learning goals that are the foundation of our academic standards in our state do a nice job of articulating basic education. I view TPEP, Common Core and NGSS as tools and pathways to a strong basic education.

### **With all that you do, what do you do to relax and maintain balance?**

My wife and boys are very important to me so I enjoy the time we spend together. My wife and I like watching

movies together with popcorn, Milk Duds and our favorite beverage. We all love to go out to dinner. In fact, I think dinner together is one way we all relax and stay connected. I try to exercise and get away from it all and do something totally non-work related. Heck, I even like mowing my yard. When I get really stressed, I start to straighten up things so I can feel a little order in my life!

### **What is one lesson that you've learned that you'd like to share with principals?**

Lesson #1: Leadership matters, but leaders who only *hope* that things will make a difference generally do not have an effective strategy and set of tactics. Even a solid strategy and set of tactics must be executed with fidelity—strategy, without execution, is a hallucination. ■



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### *WASSP Staff Coordinator*

**Elizabeth Schultz**, High School Programs  
Coordinator and Legislation Support  
AWSP

# Now You're Speaking My Language

Principals must be interpreters of “Educationese” when building relationships with families and communities.

By Gary Kipp

AWSP Executive Director

**Last spring**, my wife and I took our first trip across the pond, as they say, spending time in France and Italy. It was a fantastic adventure. One of the things that struck me right off the bat was how language serves as either a support or deterrent to creating relationships. When we found someone who spoke English, our conversations went far beyond the necessities of meeting our immediate needs and went quickly to the more relationship-building type of questions and answers. When we encountered people who did not speak English, it was like the common poles on a magnet pushing each other away. We quickly turned and looked for someone who did speak English, or tried to make due with minimal conversation, relying on hand gestures to convey a question and then wondering about the answer. Did they really understand that we were looking for the Vatican, not a Sani-Can?

native tongue, even when it's English. Principals must be interpreters of *Educationese* when building relationships with families and communities. They need to help teachers understand that *differentiate* might be an appropriate word to use when speaking to their colleagues, but *personalize* works better when speaking to the community.

Educationese can emanate from our technical language, our acronyms, and even our slang. To parents and the community, *TPEP* means putting Red Bull in your chamomile, and *MSOC* is something the Mariners put on before putting on their cleats. Likewise, *face validity* is not some kind of rejuvenating mud mask and a *rubric* isn't a colorful cube to be solved. We educators don't seem to *analyze* things much anymore, instead we *unpack* them. To us, these terms have a common meaning, but that meaning is not common to those outside the

“ To parents and the community, TPEP means putting Red Bull in your chamomile, and MSOC is something the Mariners put on before putting on their cleats.

Framework User's Guide. These themes connect the teacher evaluation criteria with the principal evaluation criteria. Both teachers and principals are expected to connect with parents and the community to make learning more likely in the classroom. Principals have the leadership responsibility of helping teachers master this skill.

At the heart of the matter is building relationships with those outside of the tight-knit professional education community. Exploring the language that we use inside that community and translating that language for those who don't live in schools every day is critical to creating those relationships. ■

“ Both teachers and principals are expected to connect with parents and the community to make learning more likely in the classroom. Principals have the leadership responsibility of helping teachers master this skill.

Clearly, enabling communication is critical for connecting with students and families with varied home languages who are in our schools, but we have a common language issue that cuts across all families regardless of

profession, and using them without explaining them is just plain rude.

*Engaging Communities* is one of the Five Themes of Mutual Accountability found in the AWSP Leadership



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



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